*Greece & Rome, Vol. 50, No. 2, October 2003*

# TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CLASSICAL ATHENS*

*By* T. E. RIHLL

## Introduction

The classical period witnessed a flowering of philosophy and science. Amongst others less famous, men like Gorgias, Protagoras, Demokritos, Sokrates, Plato, Diogenes the Cynic, Aristotle, Epikouros, and Zenon of Kition, were thinking and working during this time. Presocratic, sophistic, socratic and scientific ideas and methods were being invented, debated, developed, and deployed to create new philosophical problems and systems. The ideas and methods themselves have become the subject of a large and comprehensive body of modern scholarly literature. However, the dissemination, at the time, of these ideas and methods has received little attention, and is the subject of this paper. So, the questions are: how did scientists and philosophers of the classical period learn about their predecessors', and each other's, ideas, to test and build upon them? How did they pass them on to the next generation, to build upon or modify or ignore as the case may be? To find the answers requires us to locate these people on the streets of Athens – which is not without its comic aspect. The ancients were less reverent towards one another than we tend to be towards them; they liked to laugh at themselves, and invented comedy and satire as well as tragedy and philosophy. The source material is punctuated with jocularity and personality, which I have tried to retain in the discussion of it.

The evidence available to try to answer these questions is largely anecdotal, and often late (third century AD or thereabouts), so first I must say a few words about it. Diogenes Laertius is routinely used to supply key biographical information about major ancient philosophers.[1]

* This is a revised version of a lecture I gave at the Hellenic Society AGM in June 2001. I wish to thank those who invited me on that distinguished occasion, those who stopped by to listen a while, Ken Saunders for tracking down a rubber chicken without knowing to what use I would put it, and Christopher Rowe for taking in his stride all the insults to Plato contained herein.

[1] E.g. H. B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford, 1980), 2–3; T. B. Heath on Arkhutas in *A History of Greek Mathematics* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1921), 213; G. L. Huxley on Eudoxus of Cnidus in

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Nevertheless he is sometimes held in low esteem by modern scholars. That is partly because Diogenes is more interested in the philosophers as men than he is in the philosophy that they espoused, and as a result there is little here to attract the interest or admiration of scholars of philosophy. But for the historical questions that I am asking, about the philosophers as men, he is full of interest, and in this context his apparent impartiality towards the different and rival 'schools' – whether it stems from a personal philosophical scepticism or a layman's indifference – is a bonus. Moreover, Diogenes Laertius in particular gives the impression of having read widely in the works of the men, and about the men, whose life stories he tells: Hope counted 1, 186 references to 365 books by about 250 named authors and more than 350 anonymous ones.[2] His work can itself be considered a collection of fragments and testimonia. He had access to a great many texts lost to us, and some of the anecdotes he relates can be found in 'authoritative' and contemporary sources such as Aristotle, which is presumably where they originated and where Diogenes Laertius or his sources found them. And, most importantly for us, he refrains from self-censorship. For example, in the Life of Khrusippos he refers to a work *On the ancient natural philosophers*, which other people, including bibliographers, have not mentioned, he says, because it was in part blasphemous or obscene (7.187–8). And indeed his is the only surviving reference to this work.[3] His purpose is not declared at the start and can only be guessed from the work itself: it would appear to be a history of philosophy, nothing less, for an intended audience of people interested in, but not serious practitioners of, philosophy. He states explicitly that the stories *about* philosophers were intended to take priority over their doctrines, which are offered only in outline and in an elementary manner (3.47). He would appear to have had a specific recipient in mind during composition, who was already knowledgeable on Platonism at least (idem). The work is also of course intended to entertain, and certainly succeeds in that.

My approach to using anecdotal biography like this as historical evidence is to treat it like an impressionist painting. No single stroke,

*The Dictionary of Scientific Biography* vol. 4 (New York, 1981), 465–6. Sometimes he is being cited via a modern collection of fragments and testimonia, as in the first example above, or is not mentioned until the bibliography, as in the last example above.

[2] H. S. Long, Introduction to the Loeb edition, vol. 1, xix.

[3] I. Arnim (ed.), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1923), II, 212 is a scholion, and p. 314 is the DL citation.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

blob or spot of paint warrants close and careful scrutiny: none is crucial on its own. What matters is the overall impression: the subject matter, the palette used, and the composition. When dealing with specific factual statements, some are potentially falsifiable, such as that 'X is mentioned in Y's work Z'. If Z survives, then we can assess the accuracy of the statement and the author who made it, and anyone in antiquity with access to Z could have done the same. That is not a guarantee that the author is right. But it does allow us, as it allowed those in antiquity, sometimes to say that he is wrong. When this occurs, and it is important, I have drawn attention to it in the notes.

There are also topoi, short themes or story-lines, that are told with more or less detail, attached to a particular philosopher or a number of philosophers who have something in common – philosophical outlook, personality traits or whatever. These topoi must have originated somewhere, and the most economical hypothesis is to suppose that they originated in the activities or beliefs of the person or one of the persons to whom they refer. Individual stories can and do float from one philosopher to another. For example, clever retorts are as apt to move through time and space to be presented as coming out of the mouth of a philosopher renowned for his repartee as, in constitutional histories, good laws are apt to be made the products of great lawgivers. In Diogenes this leads to a few lives reading more like a *Dictionary of Quotations* than a *Life*. But if these topoi do not give us a window on to the actual behaviour and beliefs of ancient scientists, then at the very least they do give us a window on to what ancient people thought about the behaviour and beliefs of their scientists. Thus it is not so much the particulars in stories attached to particular people that matter when dealing with anecdotes, it is the topoi themselves.

We begin our exploration with the formation of 'common knowledge'. How were philosophical-cum-scientific ideas promulgated to become 'common', and thus have a better chance of surviving to later generations? How did anyone at the time come to know of someone else's opinion on life, the cosmos, numbers, or whatever?

## How opinions became common knowledge

One thing is immediately clear: it was not just through some philosophers teaching a few score self-selected teenagers. Evidently some ancient intellectuals were, in their day, famous for being intellectuals.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Diogenes Laertius uses citation by comic poets in the theatre as a sort of general performance indicator for philosophers. For example, he says that 'Monimos became a famous man; so much so that the comic poet Menander[4] even mentioned him in *The Groom*.'[5] Aristophanes' ribbing of Sokrates and his associates was not an isolated occurrence.[6] Plato's ideas and behaviour were known well enough in Athens to become the butt of jokes in at least 13 different plays by 7 different comic poets, and one of these, incidentally, is about his teaching on 'soda and onion', not on his physical or verbal mannerisms.[7] On Diogenes' performance indicator this suggests that Plato was a real celebrity in his day. 'One is not really one, even two is scarcely one, according to Plato,' jeered Theopompos, presumably in reference to the incomprehensible *Parmenides*.[8] The audience in the theatre were expected to find such parodies funny, and evidently did because Plato was ribbed so often. It does not follow of course that most of the audience had attended on Plato or really understood his ideas, even if he did sometimes set them, and sometimes probably recited them, in public, on festival days, when many people would be out and about in the public places, and would be in holiday mood. For example, he set the *Timaios* on a festival of Athene (21a),[9] and the *Republic* on the recently introduced festival of Bendis (354a).

Publicity of any sort would help promulgate one's ideas and attract 'students' to attend one's lectures. But there were more specific methods, targeted at individuals. Hieronumos (third century AD) compared philosophers' recruitment techniques to the tactics of Skythian archers who, he said, shoot when in flight as well as when charging forward. Some philosophers, he said, catch their students by pursuing them, and some catch their students by fleeing from them.[10] 'Pursuing

[4] 342–*c.*290 BC.

[5] 6. 83. See also e.g. 7. 27 (also 7. 15) on Zenon; 2. 27 on Sokrates; 9. 50 on Protagoras; and 2. 140, where he says that Lykophron wrote a satyric drama entitled *Menedemos* as a tribute to the philosopher of that name. The surviving fragment is in Nauck *TGF*, ii, 818. This is not comedy as such, but it indicates celebrity status again.

[6] Confining ourselves to Aristophanes, note that Meton is a character in *Birds*, and Prodikos appears in *Clouds* and *Birds*.

[7] Alexis (in four plays, the first of which has the 'soda and onion' reference; Meineke *CGF* iii 382, 451, 455, 468), Amphis (two plays, *CGF* iii 302, 305), Anaxilas (three plays, *CGF* iii 342–52), Anaxandrides (*CGF* ii 796), Kratinos (*CGF* iii 378), Theopompos (*CGF* ii 796), and Timon (*CGF* vi 25) all made jokes at Plato's expense (all conveniently in DL 3. 26–28).

[8] DL 3. 26 = Meineke *CGF* ii 796. Plato tries to get his own back on his impersonators with his section on mimicry in the *Sophist* 267a–e.

[9] Exactly which one has been the subject of some debate. The Lesser Panathenaia, Greater Panathenaia, and Plynteria have all been suggested.

[10] DL 9. 112 (quoted n. 14 below). Note that by using the verb *θηράω* Hieronumos seems to

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

them' types appear to include Antiphon[11] and Krates.[12] 'Fleeing from them' types appear to include Antisthenes,[13] Timon,[14] and Zenon (of Kitium).[15]

## Where did 'lectures' take place and how long did they last?

Lectures were evidently of very variable length and were given in a variety of environments. Some people read out works they had written to whoever cared to hear them; the title and venue for these tend to be announced in advance. Plato's famous lecture on 'the good' is an example of this type: 'Most of those who came to listen to Plato's lecture on The Good had expected to learn how to realize one of the things customarily regarded as good, such as wealth, health, strength, or some marvellous good fortune. But when it transpired that Plato's arguments were about mathematics, numbers, geometry, astronomy, and finally that one is good, I think it seemed to them utterly peverse. Accordingly, some were rather contemptuous of his talk, and others complained loudly about it.'[16] Others enunciated to a small pre-arranged party things they had been thinking about – many of Plato's dialogues assume this format. Others seem to be informal and more or

subscribe to the view that philosophers hunt pupils (they just vary in their methods), an activity which Plato tried to confine to sophists in *The Sophist*; see esp. 223b.

[11] 'On one occasion, wishing to draw away Sokrates' students, Antiphon approached him in their presence and said, "I thought, Sokrates, that philosophers should be happier than other people, but you seem to me to get just the opposite out of philosophy . . ." ': Xen., *Memorabilia* 1.6.2. I am persuaded by the arguments of M. Gagarin, 'The ancient tradition on the identity of Antiphon', *GRBS* 31 (1990), 27–44, and id., *Antiphon. The Speeches* (Cambridge, 1997) that Antiphon the orator and Antiphon the sophist are one and the same man.

[12] E.g. 'When Krates dragged Zenon by the cloak from Stilpon . . .': DL 7. 24.

[13] See e.g. DL 6. 21: 'On reaching Athens Diogenes approached Antisthenes. Being pushed away by him, because Antisthenes made attachments with no-one, Diogenes forced him to give in by forever being around.' DL 6. 4: 'In answer to the question why he had only a few students, Antisthenes replied, "Because I use a silver rod to drive them away." '

[14] Hieronumos' comment comes up in the context of Timon: 'There is a story that Hieronumos the peripatetic said of him, "just as among the Skythians those in retreat shoot as well as those who give chase, so among philosophers, some catch their students by chasing them, and some by running away from them, as for instance Timon" ': DL 9. 112.

[15] Of whom it is said that 'he set out his arguments while walking back and forth in the painted stoa . . . wishing to stop people loitering there' (DL 7. 5). See also e.g. 7. 14: 'When many people stood about Zenon he pointed to the wooden railing round the altar at the end of the stoa and said "this was once situated in the middle, but because it was an impediment to people walking it was moved there. If then you will remove yourselves from the middle you will be less of a nuisance to us." '

[16] Aristoxenos, *Harmonics* 39. 9–40. 4; more obliquely Amphis *CGF* iii 302. Both were contemporaries of Plato.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

less spontaneous discussion between a small number of participants, and what distinguishes this from any other sort of talk is that the subject matter is chiefly philosophical, rather than chiefly political or social or anything else people talked about when they were together. Many occurred in public places, where one could drop in, and drop out, during the course of the day and between other engagements. Evidently people could and did wander off, and some speakers would stop when the last men left, whilst others would continue talking into thin air. 'Pyrrhon would maintain the same composure at all times, so that, even if you left him when he was in the middle of a speech, he would carry on with it, although in his youth he had been less resolute.' (DL 9. 63). Stilpon popped off in the middle of a debate with Krates in order to buy some fish, noting that the argument would remain but the fish would not (DL 2. 119). Or they might see it through to the end, whenever that was: 'someone had been reading aloud for a long time, and when he was near the end of the roll he pointed to a part with no writing on it. "Cheer up my men," said Diogenes; "land ahoy!"' (DL 6. 38).

Performing in public in this environment took some courage. It is therefore to be expected that philosophers probably made their debuts in more private and friendly environments. We are told, for example, that 'the first of his books that Protagoras read out was that *On the gods* . . . He read it at Athens in Euripides' house, or as some say, in Megakleides', others say in the Lykeion.'[17] This performance was obviously prepared, but once some confidence was gained, a performance might arise spontaneously. 'When someone making inquiries was talking quietly with Khrusippos in private, and then, noticing a crowd approaching, began to be confrontational, Khrusippos said, "Oh no, brother, your eye is agitated: / you are changing into a raving madman, yet were thoughtful a moment ago."'[18]

When teaching took place in public spaces, anyone in or moving through the area could, in principle, form the audience, for as much of the presentation as they liked. Others walked from miles away to hear the wise words that might fall from a philosopher's lips. So Antisthenes, who lived in Peiraieus, is said to have walked nearly five miles (40 stades) to Athens every day to hear Sokrates (DL 6. 2). Simon the cobbler, however, seems to have waited for Sokrates to come to him. He

[17] DL 9. 54, but cf. n. 53 below.

[18] DL 7. 182. The internal quotation is from Euripides *Orestes* 253–4. Khrusippos was particularly well versed in the Euripidean tragedies and quoted them often and at length.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

then made notes of the discussions in his shop and wrote them up afterwards, thereby initiating the dialogue form of philosophical literature – so they say (DL 2. 123). What a wonderful story! This is an entirely plausible explanation for this peculiar genre, peculiar to philosophy.[19]

Favorinus (*fl.* 80 AD), who was probably not trying to be funny or vindictive, told that, 'Aristotle alone remained with Plato when he read his book *On the Soul*; all the rest of the audience got up and left.'[20] This sort of behaviour, as well as pillorying by comedians, may have had something to do with Plato's decision to make the Akademy, about three-quarters of a mile (6 stades) beyond the Dipylon gate, the meeting place for his students (see Fig. 1). Living in the Akademy is equated with being removed from society in the *Life of Polemon* (DL 4. 19). Plato must have been confident that his desired audience would make the special effort needed to meet him there rather than in the Agora – which, as Sokrates' favourite haunt, was probably where they met in the first place – but it would have been harder to recruit new students henceforth. He may have viewed *that* as an advantage. The story that he set up his school near the cottage of Timon the misanthrope, 'who was unpleasant to everybody',[21] chimes with that interpretation. He must have been confident of his reputation by this time.

## Who came to listen?

Anybody and everybody might come to listen, it would appear. Even people described as *ponêroi* might listen to lectures: 'Once, when Antisthenes was applauded by *ponêroi*, he said, "I am afraid that I have done something wrong."' (DL 6. 5). This is the man who was credited with causing the exile and death of the men who prosecuted

[19] But this, like so much else, is just one variant of a story of origins. Elsewhere the same source for this pearl offers alternatives: 'they say' that Zenon of Elea was the first to write dialogues; Favorinus said that Aristotle said that it was Alexamenos of Styra or Teos, and 'I' (DL or his source) think that 'in fairness Plato should carry off the prize for perfecting it and in that sense discovering it' (DL 3. 48). The Anonymus, *Prolegomena to Platonic philosophy*, ed. L. G. Westerink (Amsterdam, 1962), 15. 36–40 offers, as the last of seven reasons why Plato used the dialogue for his philosophy, the explanation that it 'keeps us attentive to his words through the different speakers, and thus avoids us always having the same teacher, which is liable to make us nod off . . .'

[20] DL 3. 37.

[21] Anon., *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* (n. 19), 4. 14–17.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

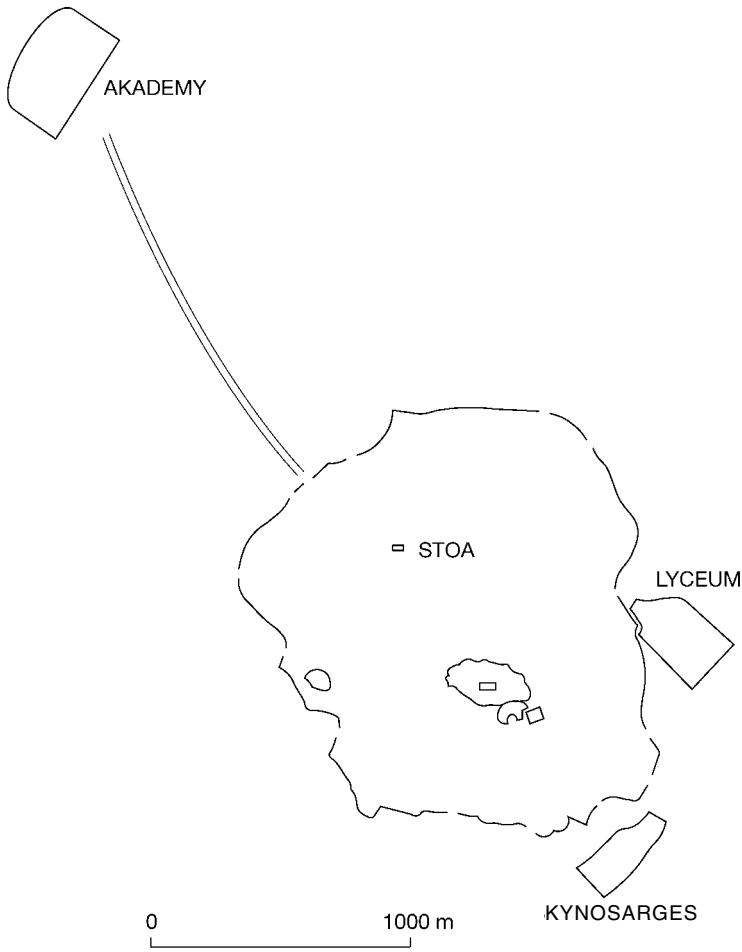



Fig. 1: Gymnasia used by philosophers around Athens: after J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* nos. 219 and 417, pp. 169 and 318.

Sokrates.[22] On another occasion, 'when he was reproached for keeping company with *ponêroi*, he said, "Well doctors associate with the sick but are not sick."'[23] Perhaps the nature of the anticipated audience (in

[22] Anutos and Meletos respectively. Antisthenes would have been about 45 years old at the time.

[23] DL 6. 6. This topos, the analogy of doctors associating with the sick, is used elsewhere of other philosophers, e.g. DL 2. 70 on Aristippos. *Ponêroi* has three obvious possible references with respect to Antisthenes: either (i) in its general derogatory sense referring to the bottom end of Athenian society, or (ii) to Antisthenes' philosophy of there being nothing wrong with hard work and toil, or (iii) in a specific derogatory sense, to tanners. Antisthenes taught at Kynosarges (see Fig. 1), in which, or near which, was a sanctuary of Herakles. This gymnasium was on the south

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

addition to the avowed objection to the topic) is what prompted Plato to decline Antisthenes' invitation to attend one of his public readings, which evidently was announced in advance (DL 3. 35). Similarly, Ariston was described as 'a persuasive speaker who was held in repute by the crowd' (DL 7. 161; see also Aelian, *VH* 3. 33). Kleon's speech to the Athenians in the second Mytilenean debate, as presented by Thoukudides,[24] implies that the audience in the Ekklesia was essentially synonymous with the audience for a sophistical debate.[25] This is echoed in another anecdote from the fourth century: when Stilpon, already a celebrity, came to Athens, it was said that 'people ran out of the workshops to gaze at him' (DL 2. 119). Look, rather than listen: that was one of Kleon's complaints about the audience in the Ekklesia. Diogenes the cynic could obviously envisage young, old, rich and poor amongst the audience: 'Education', he said, 'is *sophrosune* to the young, consolation to the old, wealth to the poor, and ornament to the rich.' (DL 6. 68).

We can usefully distinguish at least two types of audience: *those who want to be entertained*, and *those who want to learn*. 'When someone reproached Khrusippos for not going with *hoi polloi* to hear Ariston lecture, he replied, "If I had followed the many, I should not have studied philosophy."'(DL 7. 182). Evidently there is a distinction between, on the one hand, listening to clever men talk or dispute and, on the other, studying philosophy.

## Those who want to be entertained

Those seeking entertainment can be subdivided further into two quite distinct categories: philosophically-inclined friends, who take it in turns

bank of the Ilissos, just below Kallirrhoe spring, and was therefore alongside precisely the stretch of river preferred by tanners for soaking their hides. Kleon naturally springs to mind, though I do not remember even Aristophanes calling him a *ponêros*. Tanning was banned 'above the temenos of Herakles' by decree in an inscription dated *c.*420 BC, and thereafter the tanners were required to move downstream. The combination of tanners and the odour that results from their activities offer at least as much justification for the *ponêroi* label as does the very poorly attested *nothoi* connection with Kynosarges – on which see S. C. Humphreys, 'The nothoi of Cynosarges', *JHS* 94 (1974), 88–95, and D. G. Kyle, *Athletics in ancient Athens* (Leiden, 1987 & 1993), 84–92. See M.-F. Billot, 'Cynosarges, Antiochos et les tanneurs. Questions de topographie', *BCH* 116 (1992), 119–56, for full discussion of the evidence.

[24] Esp. 3. 38.

[25] As pointed out by J. de Romilly, *Les Grands Sophists dans l'Athènes de Périclès* (Paris, 1988), cited from the English edition, trans. J. Lloyd, (Oxford, 1992), 138, and see nn. 29, 30 below. Some in the audience enjoy anticipating what the speaker might say and spotting verbal allusions and novelties.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to perform and to be entertained, and are seeking intellectual stimulation; and those who do not perform but only spectate, among whom we can include the frivolous and occasional students.

(a) Those seeking intellectual stimulation are the audience that we tend to assume exists, since it is this sort of audience which is portrayed in the philosophical literature, especially the Platonic dialogues. Consider for example the scene-setting opening of Plato's *Timaios*,[26] where the language is of entertainment, of feasts for the mind, rather than the body, and of guests and friends partaking together. This is not a 'schoolroom' type learning situation with one 'master' and a number of 'pupils' who have gathered to be instructed in the great man's dogmas. I and others before me have come away from this dialogue with the distinct impression that, at least when it comes to the origin of the universe, Plato is suggesting that one story is as good as another, as long as it is coherent and rational and consistent with what has already been accepted by the group of people who are discussing it. Intellectual stimulation seems to take priority over any learning as such.

(b) The spectators are the audience we tend to overlook, since it is this sort of audience that is portrayed only in the literature *about* philosophy. I imagine these gathering round anyone performing in public, whether they be what *we* would call entertainers, such as fire-eaters, jugglers, lion-tamers or dancing bears,[27] or people arguing, or fighting – in which case one's sense of civic duty should impel an interest in the case – or people peddling intellectual wares, like historians, poets, or rhapsodes, or people performing some *tekhné*, e.g. doctors, painters, or actors,[28] or indeed anyone performing something which caught one's fancy. For the verbal activities at least, unless one stopped to listen for a while, it might not be obvious what sort of entertainment was on offer on any particular occasion. 'One day when Diogenes was speaking seriously and no-one paid attention to him, he began whistling. As people gathered around him, he reproached them with coming earnestly to hear drivel, but dawdling when the noise made was important.' (DL 6. 27). The opposite problem was spectators that one did not want. Theophrastos was said to have had 2000 'pupils' attending his lectures (DL 5. 37) and is simultaneously said to have remarked 'It is not easy to get an

[26] 17a–b; see also 27a–b. This is a common opening format to Platonic dialogues.

[27] Fire-eaters: Theophrastos, *On Fire* 57; jugglers: Isokrates, *Antidosis* 269, also Plato and Demosthenes; lion-tamers and dancing bears: Isokrates, *Antidosis* 213.

[28] Demosthenes is said to have paid an actor called Neoptolemos 10,000 dr. to teach him to control his breath, so that 'he could speak a whole well-rounded sentence without getting breathless': [Plutarch], *Lives of the 10 Orators* 8, 844f.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

audience[29] or even a select circle[30] of the sort one would like' (idem). Aristotle's style was later thought to have been obscure *deliberately*, with the express purpose of excluding the unworthy.[31] Lecturers could always try to dissuade people from associating with them by one means or another: Zenon apparently 'shunned the crowd . . . nor would he walk about with more than two or three. Sometimes he would ask the bystanders for coppers, so that, in fear of being asked to cough up, people might refrain from crowding around him.' (DL 7. 14).

If the problem was with one rather than many, other tactics could be tried: 'A Rhodian who was handsome and rich but nothing else attached himself to Zenon. Not wanting to recoil from him, Zenon first sat him down on the benches that were dusty, so that he would dirty his cloak, then in the place where the beggars sat, so that he would rub up against their rags; as a result the young man left of his own accord.' (DL 7. 22). It is not obvious from the context here whether the beggars are part of the audience or merely happen to be there, but a somewhat earlier mention of beggars (DL 7. 16) suggests that they are part of the audience. 'Dusty benches' imply a certain amount of under-utilized seating in the area of the Stoa Poikile anyway, which is consistent with it being the location for a court meeting of 501 jurors on at least one occasion.[32] Diogenes had another method for selecting students: 'someone wanted to study philosophy with him. Diogenes gave him a fish[33] and ordered him to follow him. In self-respect the man threw it down and left . . . Diogenes laughed and said, "the friendship between you and me was broken by a fish." '[34]

[29] *πανήγυρις*, 'assembly' in political contexts.

[30] *συνέδριον*, 'council' in political contexts.

[31] E.g. Ammonios, Olympiodoros, Elias, Philoponos, and Simplikios all made this point in their introductions to Aristotle. See L. G. Westerink (n. 19), xxvii.

[32] IG II$^2$ 1670 ll. 34–5, dated *c.*330 BC. It also served as the 'court' for a jury, size unknown *c.*350: IG II$^2$ 1641 ll. 25–30. It was also used for public arbitrations: Dem. 45 (Stephanos) 1. 17.

[33] In another, stronger version of the story in the same place it is a half-obol cheese. The fish in question, a *σαπέρδης*, is usually translated as tuna, but it is used of fresh-water, sea-water, Nile and Black Sea fish, and for fish of little value, so it is perhaps better not to make an identification with a specific species, especially tuna. For discussion see D'Arcy Thompson, *Glossary of Greek Fishes* (Oxford, 1947), 226. The precise identification does not matter for this story; one needs recognize only that Diogenes is treating the would-be student like a slave, to follow the master carrying his shopping.

[34] DL 6. 36. Or cheese worth half an obol.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

## Those who want to learn

Those who want to learn are the serious-minded students and colleagues. Here the anecdotes are often dealing with one-to-one learning situations, as well as classes proper. There were a variety of things that might be studied. We are told[35] that Plato, after his 'standard' schooling by Dionysios for letters, Ariston for gymnastics and Drakon for music, went to the dithyrambic poets to learn their manner, tragic poets to immerse himself in the grandeur of their style, comic poets to learn their diction, then he studied mimes 'to complete his technique of character drawing'. Then he went to painters to learn about colour mixing, which experience is said to have underpinned his discussion of colour in the *Timaios*, and then, in his twentieth year, he became a student of Sokrates. After Sokrates we are told that he associated with Kratulos and Hermippos to learn the doctrines of Herakleitos and Parmenides respectively.[36] On the basis of a passage in the *Laws* (820e–822c), we can be fairly sure that he also learnt the theory of Eudoxos on planetary motions, and no doubt there are many more of other people's ideas in the Platonic corpus – which is why he was accused by some of his contemporaries and successors of plagiarism[37] – but the relevant treatises, such as *On Velocities* in the case of Eudoxos, have not usually survived to us. Now Eudoxos is said to have been a student of Plato; perhaps so, *on his first visit* to Athens, aged about 23. But when he returned in his thirties, sometime before 367, he is better thought of as a colleague, and someone who had a great influence on the young men then associating in the Akademy, e.g. Aristotle.[38] The learning process amongst members of a group who associated together need not be assumed to have been one-way, from so-called master to so-called pupil.

Plato and Aristotle famously chose gymnasia for their teaching grounds. Isokrates had considered the subtleties and precision of astrology (*sic*), geometry, 'and studies of that sort' as gymnastics for the mind (*Antidosis* 261–6), so it was perhaps an obvious sort of place to choose. Dialectic offered opportunities for intellectual wrestling, and

[35] Anon., *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* (n. 19) 2. 24–3. 16.

[36] Ibid 4. 1–7. Note that the Anonymus puts the visit to the Pythagoreans in Italy before the association with Kratulos and Hermippos.

[37] For example, Aristoxenos said that almost the whole of Plato's *Republic* 'can be read in the *Contradictory Arguments* of Protagoras' and Porphyrios was inclined to believe him ( *FGrHist* II 282 F 33).

[38] See e.g. *Nic. Ethics* 10. 1.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that is exactly how it could be seen. Antisthenes called himself a wrestler,[39] and Plato extends the meaning of pancratist to include eristic.[40] Gymnasia were frequented by all ages we assume, but were probably favourite haunts of adolescents, and it is young men – by which I mean the 12–18 year olds – who seem to form the core of a philosopher's audience. The scene set for Plato's *Lysis* is near a palaistra, newly built just outside the city on the road that skirted the walls and connected the Akademy and the Lykeion,[41] where 'a lot of young men' (elsewhere called 'children') were 'hanging around together' and 'passing most of their time chatting' (203–4a). Aiskhines is explicit about palaistrai being frequented by 'boys', and about the laws in place to protect those boys, which governed their opening times and activities, just like the well-known rules on schools where they learnt their letters, which are cited in the same place.[42] If potential pupils were *technically* children, that is, not yet registered in the deme, then they were unlikely to be found in the agora.[43] Perhaps Zenon's decision to teach in one of the stoas there was his method of ensuring that *that* category of undesirable students[44] (along with the dishonourable (*atimoi*) and sundry others disbarred from the agora[45]) could not pester him. More sociable philosophers, meeting in gymnasia or anywhere else outside the centre of Athens, could hope to attract an audience of young people with relatively open minds, plenty of leisure, probably some money,[46] and a wealth of inexperience, not to say ignorance – of the real world, and of other opinions, other philosophers, and other activities which

[39] παλαιστικός: DL 6. 4.

[40] *Euthydemos* 271a ff. See more generally the *Sophist*, esp. 225a–226a, and 231c.

[41] And so anywhere on the north side from 10 to 3 o'clock, between gates 4 (Dipylon) and 8 (Diokhares); see J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (London, 1971), 167 fig. 217, for a map showing this road. This private palaistra is described in some detail: it resembled an ordinary house with an enclosure of sorts and had a single door on to the road (203b, 204a).

[42] *Against Timarkhos* 9–11. The whole of 9–17 concerns boys; in 18 he stresses that the laws are different for men: 19ff. concern those. He reiterates the distinction in 22.

[43] Xenophon, *Memor.* 4. 2. 1: '[Sokrates] first saw [Euthydemos] when, because of his youth, he was no way entering the agora, so if he wanted to discuss something, he sat in one of the saddler's shops near the agora.' See also Isokrates, *Areopag.* 48, though this contains obvious exaggeration of the 'good old days': '[the young men] shunned the agora to such an extent that even if they were forced to go through it, they did so with great embarrassment and discretion.'

[44] We are given a strong and consistent picture of Zenon's attitude to youths. See e.g. DL 7. 18, 19, 21–3.

[45] For the rules of exclusion see H. A. Thompson & R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora* 3 (1957), 218 items 713–14; and on *atimoi*, M. H. Hansen, *Apagoge, endeixis and ephegesis against kakourgoi, atimoi, and pheugontes* (Odense, 1976).

[46] Poorer youths would be working, unless they had night jobs like Kleanthes (DL 7. 168–70). Note Aristippos' comment that he 'took money from acquaintances not for his own use, but so that they might know that this (education) is a proper thing on which to spend their money' (DL 2. 72).

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

might attract their attention, and their cash, as Plato observes wryly (*Sophist* 234b–e). Epikouros 'began to study philosophy when he was twelve years old, and started his own school when he was thirty-two' (DL 10. 14).

One of Plato's many complaints about the Athens of his day is that 'those who take up [philosophy] are youths, only just out of boyhood, who, between running a house and making money, approach the most difficult part of it, and then abandon it' (*Republic* 498a). Elsewhere he is more sanguine: ' "For I suppose that you have not failed to notice that lads (μειρακίσκοι), when they first get a taste of reasoning, apply it themselves like children, always using it to contradict, and, imitating refuters, they confute others, ever rejoicing like puppies in dragging and pulling to pieces those nearby with words." "Absolutely", he said.'[47]

Plato's frustrations with the youth of Athens are understandable if a significant proportion of his 'pupils' were teenage 'freshers', so that he constantly had to repeat elementary material, and the 'class' suffered from a high dropout rate, with young men disappearing into the world of work. Parents and 'pupils' alike may have been happy for the latter to occupy some of their time between school-years and work-years doing philosophy, especially if it involved no expense. But for a philosopher of Plato's abilities and inclinations, trying to educate such an audience of mixed ability, mixed motivation, and mixed experience pupils was a real challenge. Zenon seems to have found a solution (see above), and perhaps others, like Isokrates, developed the set-piece course of lectures to overcome some of the drawbacks of Platonic-dialogue-style learning situations. Most teachers of such courses would have only so much to say, and charged for their services (see below); those who claimed to be able to teach *everything* were the exception that proves the rule.[48] Most people are not going to pay to hear the same thing twice – though we do hear of dullards like Ephoros of Kumai (the 'historian'-to-be) being sent back by their father to repeat the course.[49] This is perhaps why philosophers cluster in large *poleis* or are itinerant; they either live somewhere where there are plenty of people to form audiences, or

[47] 539b. He goes on to say: 'And when they have confuted many and been confuted themselves by many, they violently and quickly attack the beliefs that they formerly held as good for nothing, and the result is that they personally, and philosophy per se, are discredited amongst other men.'

[48] E.g. the Hippias of Plato's dialogue of that name (*Hippias Minor*). Such people were criticized by other intellectuals for being shallow and superficial (idem) and seem to have moved around a lot selling their intellectual wares to new audiences (see *Hippias Major* 282 b–c, referring to Gorgias and Prodikos as well as Hippias).

[49] [Plutarch], *Lives of the 10 orators* 4 (Isokrates), 839.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

take their lectures to new audiences. The default teaching situation was to have a class of freshers, time after time.

At gymnasia, people like Euthudemos and his brother Dionusodoros – the pancratist brothers – could train the mind and the body simultaneously, in one place and at one time, whilst people like Aristotle could train the mind while the body was warming up: 'Aristotle chose a public walk (peripatos) in the Lykeion and did philosophy walking back and forth with his students, right up until they were oiled.'[50] This could be a nuisance to other users of the gyms. We are told that one gymnasiarch asked Karneades not to shout so loud.[51] On the other hand, the flow of philosophic thought must have been interrupted on more than one occasion by a company of horseman charging past. Not to mention the need to take one's walks well away from any possible landing zone of a stray javelin . . .[52] Gymnasia were, after all, first and foremost places for men to run and wrestle and ride horses and practise the arts of war; they were also and equally importantly places of religious significance and worship; the philosophers were an adjunct to the core activities there.[53]

But audiences were not composed solely of youths. We are sometimes told the background of some of those who began as *grown-up* members of the audience, got hooked, and went on to become sufficiently famous writers or philosophers in their own right to be noted by our sources. These 'mature students' were, presumably, unusual only in that they became deeply interested in the subject or reasonably good at it – or at least, better at *it* than they were at whatever they did before. They come from a variety of backgrounds: an unemployed chorus-dancer (Timon: DL 9. 109–110), a poor and unknown artist whose mediocre picture of torch-racers could be seen in the gymnasium in Elis (Pyrrhon: DL 9. 62), a porter who invented the shoulder-pad (Protagoras[54]), a pugilist who arrived in Athens with a mere four drachmas – so not a very good pugilist one assumes (Kleanthes: DL 7. 168), a reluctant rhetor, the ex-slave son of a twice-enslaved salt-fish seller who was caught for tax

[50] DL 5. 2. The site of the palaistra at the Lykeion was discovered and excavated in 1996: preliminary report in *AR* (1996–7), 8–10 (Odos Rigilles site).

[51] Presumably in the Akademy (DL 4. 63).

[52] Antiphon's second tetralogy. See also the next note.

[53] Note that DL says that Demetrius said that Khrusippos (*c.*280–206) was the first person to have the courage to hold a *skhole* in the open (*hupaithros*) in the Lykeion (7. 185).

[54] DL 9. 53. Like much in DL, this is attributed to an earlier source or two. In this case both Aristotle (*On education* F63 Ross), and Epikouros ('somewhere' says DL) mentioned it in their writings. Another transport topos relates to Speusippos, who was credited with inventing a means by which faggots of firewood were bundled (DL 4. 3).

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

evasion (Bion: DL 4. 46–7), a scene-painter and builder (Menedemos: DL 2. 125), a slave banker who acted like a madman and was consequently released by his owner, who did not want him throwing money around (Monimos: DL 6. 82), and a shipwrecked trader (Zenon: DL 7. 4–5). We even have, besides the two famous female students who attended Plato (DL 3. 46) and Speusippos (DL 4. 2), another woman – one Pamphila, who, *qua* female, surely did not participate in meetings in the gyms, nor study with anyone *qua* girl, i.e. whilst a minor; but she witnessed enough philosophers at work to justify writing 32 or more books of *Memoirs*[55] which survived to Diogenes Laertius.

Some of that subset of serious students who pursued their studies for years, like those just mentioned, became capable of starting a school of their own: they would then have been in direct competition with him or those who taught them. 'Zenon spent time with Diodoros . . . advancing ahead, he would go modestly to Polemon . . . who, they say, said to him, "You do not go unnoticed Zenon, sliding in through the garden door, stealing my doctrines, and giving them a Phoenician make-over."' (DL 7. 25). It is not surprising then that there was sometimes bitterness amongst masters and ungrateful ex-pupils, as we are wont to call them. Epikouros seems to have been one of the worst offenders. Others avoided competition by doing something else or going somewhere else: we are told that Aiskhines[56] 'lacked the courage to give sophistic lectures, because of Plato's and Aristippos' good reputations. But he was hired by people and in due course composed legal speeches for those who suffered an injustice.' (DL 2. 62).

There are also lots of references to what might be called intellectual heckling. The quantity and quality of the surviving anecdotes on this sort of behaviour show that lectures, when there was a wit in the audience, could generate a barrel of laughs, often at the lecturer's expense – especially if that wit was one Diogenes of Sinope. On one occasion 'when somebody said that there is no such thing as motion, Diogenes got up and walked about' (DL 6. 39). The following amusing

[55] Of philosophers? Plato was mentioned in book 25 (DL 3. 23), Theophrastos in book 32 (DL 5. 36).

[56] This is not Aiskhines the orator. This Aiskhines is said to have been the son of Kharinos the sausage-maker or of Lusanias; to have been the man who really advised Sokrates to escape from prison (not Kriton, *pace* Plato); and to have been another who sought the patronage of Dionysios. In the *Life of Aristippos* it is said explicitly (and implied elsewhere, e.g. 2. 61) that Aristippos was senior to Aiskhines (2. 83: πρεσβύτερος). His dates must be *fl.* 400–350. Aiskhines the orator was the son of Atrometos, a teacher, and lived *c.*395–322. The latter also composed forensic speeches for litigants, of course, and never got the better of Demosthenes in public speaking in the assembly or courts.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

story seems to refer to the first public reading of the *Statesman*[57] and Plato's attempt therein to classify living things into different categories, subcategories and sub-subcategories, as was his wont:

> Plato devised the following definition: Man is an animal, biped, and featherless; and he was saluted for it. Diogenes plucked a chicken, brought it into the school, and said, 'here is Plato's man!' (DL 6. 40)

That gives Aristotle's ever so famous definition of man (*Politics* 1253a2–3), to wit, a political animal, a sociological as well as an intellectual context, and with it a different complexion.[58] It may also help to explain why Aristotle went to such extraordinary lengths to identify the differentiae of the species in the *Historia Animalium*: he did not want to be ridiculed for making over-simplistic distinctions. The disputatious phase which philosophy went through in the fourth century was not an irrelevance to the development of ancient science. The development of a critical approach to explanations about the world – so fundamental to the development of science – was stimulated by the stings of eristic and, I believe, of laughter. Both made would-be natural scientists much more careful, of their facts and of their phraseology.

## Pay

Finally, let us have a look at the question of pay. The informal mode of teaching might be thought of as intellectual busking, akin to rhapsodes reciting Homer, or Herodotos telling stories, which might generate gratuities from those who stopped to listen. For example, we are told that 'when some people complimented a person who had given Diogenes some money, he said, "You do not compliment me, who was worthy to receive it."' (DL 6. 62). Diogenes could be much more frank about it: 'he asked a profligate spender for a mina (= 100 drachmai). The man inquired why he asked other people for an obol ($1/6^{th}$ of a drachma) but him for a mina. "Because," said Diogenes, "I expect to receive from others again, but it lies on the knees of the gods whether I shall ever get anything from *you* again."' (DL 6. 67).

[57] See esp. 266e.

[58] In terms of biological 'taxonomy' of the sort attempted by Plato in the *Statesman*, Aristotle tried to distinguish man from the other animals in a multitude of ways in the *HA*; for a discussion of that see G. E. R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology* (Cambridge, 1983), 14–43. For the most recent discussion of the definition in terms of Aristotle's political philosophy, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle* (Oxford, 2002), 247–53.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

According to the Anonymus, Plato was the first person to teach without charging a fee, which the Anonymus says was an innovation in ethics (I 5. 24–5). This is not consistent with a story in Xenophon which probably goes back to a time when he was a boy,[59] that Antiphon, whilst trying to poach Sokrates' students, remarked, 'It seems to me that you are a fair man, Sokrates, but wise, not at all. And it seems to me that you recognize this yourself; at any rate, you demand no payment from those with you. Yet knowing that your cloak or house or any other of your possessions has a value in money, you would not give it to anyone for free, but would take not less than its worth.' I think most moderns would agree that Sokrates, not Plato, gets the prize for priority on this score. Either way, the consequence is that *all* the pre-socratics and contemporaries of Sokrates whose views were passed on in writing or in the form of 'living books', that is, 'pupils', should be viewed by default as teaching for a fee, either in kind[60] or in cash.[61]

The payment teachers received for attendance upon them, or attention from them, was sometimes in advance, like the anonymous teachers that Aristotle criticizes for taking the money and then not delivering (*Nic. Ethics* 1164a27–30), and sometimes in arrears: Plato makes Protagoras claim 'I use the following method for charging for lessons. A student of mine, as he wishes, either hands over the amount I ask, or, if he does not want to do that, then he pays whatever amount he says, under sacred oath, the lessons are worth.'[62] Protagoras' achievement was to be 'the first to exact a fee of a hundred minai' (DL 9. 52) – that is 10,000 drachmai, or over one and a half talents! This presumably has something to do with his association with Kallias son of Hipponikos

[59] Xen., *Memor.* 1.6.11. It was argued by Taylor (*Commentary on the Timaios* (Oxford, 1928), 20–2) that this 'is a genuine tradition' which is older than Xenophon himself. On this see also M. J. Edwards, 'Notes on Pseudo-Plutarch's *Life* of Antiphon', *CQ* 48 (1998), 82–92, at 86. Compare the Anonymus' date of (probably) the sixth century AD.

[60] There are several stories about Plato being 'provided for' by others, which could be interpreted as payment in kind for his teaching; see e.g. DL 3. 20 and Aelian *VH* 3. 27 on stories about his poverty. Similarly we are told, in the context of payment for teaching, that Sokrates accepted grain and wine (DL 2. 74); that Alkibiades offered Sokrates a large site on which he could build a house (2. 24); that Kharmides offered him some slaves to rent out (2. 31); and see also 2. 80, where comparison is drawn between how much Aristippos has earnt and how little Sokrates. When he needed money he called upon his wealthy friends; for example, he is said to have 'made Kriton ransom Phaidon' (2. 31).

[61] In the *Hippias Major* attributed to Plato it is alleged (282c–d) that 'none of the great men of the past thought it appropriate to demand a fee'; Pittakos, Bias, the school of Thales and 'others nearer our own time, down to Anaxagoras' have earlier been named as such great men (281c). It is impossible to reconcile this with the tradition of either Sokrates or Plato being the first not to charge.

[62] *Protagoras* 328b; see also DL 9. 56 for another case of what is evidently payment in arrears.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Plato, *Theaetetus* 65a), the richest man in the Athens of his day, and owner of mining concessions in Laurion.[63]

Prodikos was perhaps more typical: he charged 50 dr. per lecture, according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1415b12–17). Isokrates, writing around 390 BC,[64] suggests that the average sophist charged 3 or 4 minai (3–400 drachmai) for a course of classes, paid in advance to a third party, who would look after the money and hand it over to the teacher only when the course had finished.[65] This is just ten years after Sokrates' death, and the elaborate procedures for ensuring that the pupil pays *and* the teacher performs suggest that teaching for money had a long history by this time.

Really determined students would find a way to learn no matter how poor they were. Kleanthes, it was said, 'wrote down what Zenon said on ostraka and the blade-bones of oxen, because he lacked even the small change to buy papyrus' (DL 7. 174). There is also a nice anecdote about Demosthenes not being able to afford the 1,000 dr. fee set by Isokrates, so asked to pay 200 dr. for one fifth of the course. Isokrates' alleged reply is reminiscent of the debates over modularization in our own times and teaching institutions: 'We do not slice our education into pieces, Demosthenes, but just as people sell fine fish whole, so to you, if you wish to be my student, I will sell my course whole.'[66]

People also paid for hard copy of other people's doctrines, that is, something on papyrus.[67] For example, we are told that 'when a dialectician once showed him seven logical forms . . . Zenon asked how much he wanted for them; hearing a hundred, he gave him two' (DL 7. 25). Plato is said to have paid 100 minai (=10,000 drachmai) for Philolaos' books on Pythagorean doctrine (DL 3. 9), and Aristotle three talents for Speusippos' very extensive collection of books (DL 4. 5). These prices seem extraordinarily high, even allowing for folklore exaggeration and the celebrity status of the buyers and sellers in these stories. Why are they so expensive?

[63] Kallias III: J. K. Davies *APF* (Oxford, 1971), 261–3. By Dionusius' time it would appear that rich men no longer (*οὐκέτι*) sought out philosophers, but philosophers sought out rich men (DL 2. 69).

[64] D. C. Mirhady & Y. L. Too, *Isocrates I* (Austin, 2000), 61.

[65] Isocrates, *Against the Sophists* 3 (charges) and 5 (paid in advance to third parties).

[66] [Plutarch], *Lives of the 10 orators* 4, 837d-e. A story later on in the *Life* (838f.), that Isokrates did not charge fellow Athenians, is inconsistent with this.

[67] T. J. Morgan, 'Literate education in Classical Athens', *CQ* 49 (1999), 54, points out that 'it was considered appropriate to use books in learning practical or professional skills' by the 350s BC, and that 'in the early fourth century we see a sudden rise in the concern of intellectuals . . . about the status of education acquired from texts' (p. 60).

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The answer, perhaps, lies at least partly in the pragmatics of getting access to scrolls. For example, Aristotle's 'Lyceum' did not have a private building, so there was nowhere there to house his 'books', so they must have been written and kept at home – which must have been a rented home since he was a metic. All the arguments about the effect on the school of the loss of his books on his death, if they were lost, are beside the key point, which is that the 'school' did not have a library in it when Aristotle taught there. If copies were made of his books in his lifetime, then they must have been made by people copying them out in his digs or in their own homes – if he let his originals be borrowed. He surely did not find time to copy them himself, or dedicate his slaves' time to such a task when there was so much data acquisition, analysis, and writing to be done. And until he let *someone* copy them, there was no way for 'book-sellers' to obtain a copy to make more copies to sell.

Until it was copied, each treatise was a one-off, unique, work.[68] This may explain why students' notes were sometimes copied and circulated, because half a loaf is better than none. By purchasing a work that had not yet been copied, the buyer obtained exclusive access to it (and which perhaps is the circumstance to explain Zenon's offer to pay twice the asking price for some logical forms: DL 7. 25, quoted above). The seller might then or later attempt to reproduce it from memory, especially if he wrote it, but this method is unlikely to lead to the creation of an exact copy. Everyone else could gain access to it only through the new owner, for which access they might have to pay,[69] or, as a second best, through attending the lectures of the author, if he was still alive – and if he was still interested in the particular topic in question, and if he had not changed his mind and altered, more or less subtly, his assumptions, hypotheses, and arguments. As Theophrastos is supposed to have observed, modern colleagues will no longer tolerate one who fails to revise their opinions in the face of criticism.[70] Hence the different versions perhaps, and the problems that came with variations – even with such a well-known and well-loved text as Homer.[71]

[68] See e.g. the supposed letter of Arkhutas to Plato concerning the works of one Okkelos (DL 8. 80).

[69] See e.g. DL 3. 66, on consultation fees charged by owners of the first critical editions of Platonic texts.

[70] DL 5. 37.

[71] DL 9. 113: 'They say that Aratos asked Timon how he might obtain a reliable text of Homer, to which he replied, "if you happen to come across ancient copies, and not the corrected ones of today".' 'Today' was the early to mid-third century BC. The whole business of books is a large question, with many facets, none of which are straightforward.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

So people also spent money travelling to learn others' ideas;[72] Plato is said to have gone to Megara to study with Euklides (of Megara, not the geometer of *Elements* fame, who probably was not yet born), then to Kyrene to visit Theodoros the mathematician, then to Italy to visit Philolaos and Eurutos, then to Egypt to visit the prophets.[73] Most moderns reject the last destination as a fictitious topos, but Cicero believed it (*De Rep.* 1. 10), and the phenomenal growth of Alexandria more or less from the moment of its foundation – only 25 years or so after this alleged visit to Egypt – makes me doubt the wisdom of modern scepticism on reported Greeks' visits to Egypt.[74] Whatever, Plato is said *then* to have returned to Athens and founded the Academy (DL 3. 6–7).

Most of the people we have been considering were not men of independent means who did not have to work hard for a living.[75] Potential patrons were very few and far between – Dionysios of Syrakuse and Philip of Macedon leap to mind, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the two figures who tower above all others in this period, Plato and Aristotle, received these men's patronage. For the rest, some we know were poor by birth or by circumstance. Most were metics at least for part of their adult life – the years spent abroad learning or teaching – so were not growing their own food, so needed cash to buy it daily from the market. They needed to sell their intellectual products, in order to eat. A short verse from Krates' *Day-book* has a curiously contemporary ring about it:

> Put down for the cook a thousand drachmai, for the doctor one,
> For a flatterer thirty thousand, for a mentor smoke,[76]
> For a prostitute six thousand, for a philosopher three obols.
> (DL 6. 86)

[72] See e.g. Isokrates, *Antidosis* 224–6.

[73] And Euripides is said to have gone with him to Egypt, says DL, writing in the third century AD. Euripides would not have been much of a companion, since on current chronology he had been dead for about 5 years by this time . . . Predictably, the Anonymus, writing in about the sixth century AD, puts Plato's travels earlier, so it would be possible.

[74] There is a tendency amongst moderns to dismiss stories of wise men visiting Egypt as a literary topos with no basis in fact. However, when Alexandria is founded, a generation or so after the date of this story, it grows phenomenally, unlike any other city of the ancient world, and it rapidly becomes the single most important site in the history of Greek science. Thus wise men did want to, and did, go to Egypt once Alexandria was in existence, and I am now less inclined than I once was to dismiss as groundless these stories of earlier *sophistai* going there. If later Greeks wanted to go to Egypt, and many even moved to live there, why should not earlier Greeks have wanted to visit, and have visited?

[75] So Isokrates, *Antidosis* 155–8.

[76] That is, nothing.

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The Great Age of Greek Science was about to arrive, and it would not have come were it not for the efforts of men such as these, teaching others in circumstances such as these.

## Conclusion

Dissemination of scientific and philosophical ideas was not a marginal or low profile activity in classical Athens. Ordinary Athenians in their thousands were exposed to philosophical ideas in the agora, gymnasia, and theatre, amongst other places. There were formal lectures and informal gatherings, which could take place in public or in private, and which could be spontaneous or arranged. Depending upon the needs and desires of the teacher, and the status of teacher and student as citizen or metic, a 'student' might come and go freely, or have to pay for attendance on or attention from the teacher. Most paying customers were teenagers, but for the serious student of whatever age the 'teaching and learning environment' in classical Athens was a varied one. Spurning would-be pupils seems to have been an effective method of recruiting well-motivated individuals whilst discouraging the frivolous, which suggests that there were enough potential pupils for at least some teachers to select whom to admit to their circle or school.

Great thinkers in ancient Greece did not go unnoticed by the populace at large. They were a subject of gossip, discussion, jokes, and even ridicule in public arenas. Some intellectuals who were 'popular' in this sense capitalized upon the attention they generated to make their names, recruit acolytes and disciples, and sometimes make a fortune as well. Plato's criticisms of the latter are well known. If one wished to be uncharitable (as some of the sources are) one might attribute his ire, in part at least, to envy – a familiar phenomenon amongst the ancient Greeks. Yet there is something much more important revealed here: his condemnation of others is a proof that, however unworldly he may sometimes appear, he too was influenced by the society around him – not just in a general, vague and inconsequential way, but in this concrete particular. He did not take money for teaching, we are told – but he did capitalize upon the practice too, by making a major issue of it, and contrasting his own behaviour with that of others. Plato, no less than Protagoras, was aware of and interested in the fact that people could and did make a lot of money from teaching 'philosophy' in classical Athens (and elsewhere: Sicily for example). No one

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

developed their methods and theories and systems just under the influence of and in response to existing and previous 'academic', abstract, or theoretical ideas. Aristotle developed a very sophisticated method for trying to sort all known animals into coherent groups. But he may have been prompted to do that not just because, for example, his empirical work revealed clearly the inherent weaknesses of the methods he inherited, but *also* because every Theo, Dion, and Hippias might laugh at him, as they had laughed at Plato, if he over-simplified the case.[77] Would he ever have thought to define man as a political animal if people had not laughed at Diogenes' plucked chicken? I suspect not.

[77] Going too far in the opposite direction could lead to ridicule too, as seems to have happened to Aristotle, though he is the butt of a lot fewer jokes than many others in the surviving literature.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

STEPHANIE WEST: Tutor in Classics and Fellow Librarian, Hertford College, Oxford

T. E. RIHLL: Lecturer in Classics, University of Wales, Swansea

GIDEON NISBET: Lecturer in Classics, St John's College, Oxford

ARMAND D'ANGOUR: Fellow and Tutor in Classics, Jesus College, Oxford

VICTORIA BAINES: School of Humanities Research Scholar, University of Nottingham

https://doi.org/10.1093/gr/50.2.168 Published online by Cambridge University Press