

Phillip Stanley Skeen. ISOCRATES, PANHELLENISM, AND THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC DISORDER IN GREECE. (Under the direction of Dr. Anthony Papalás) Department of History, East Carolina University, April 1979.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the content of Panhellenism for the Greek thinker Isocrates, and the way in which the social, political, and economic situation in the Greek world of the fourth century affected this content. As the meaning of Panhellenism for Isocrates is explicated, other concerns will be seen to predominate in his overall program. These concerns are examined, in turn, and their motivations and consequences considered in some depth.

Isocrates did not invent "Panhellenism," and accordingly thinkers before Isocrates who used this term are examined. Two main types of Panhellenism are discerned. In particular, the writings of Aristophanes, Thucydides, and Euripides suggest a Panhellenism which asked the poleis to sacrifice for the common good. On the other hand, figures such as Pericles and Lysias suggest that a common practice existed which used Panhellenism to advance purely Athenian interests.

Isocrates' first and greatest work on Panhellenism is the Panegyricus. This work shows that Isocrates wished Athens to lead a great Greek campaign against the Persians. This campaign would net great wealth for the Greeks who would use these riches to ease troublesome domestic problems in the Greek world of that period.

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This interpretation is supported by discovering the somewhat hidden meaning of Isocrates' Encomium of Helen which mirrors the interests of the Panegyricus. An examination of other works such as On the Peace and the Philippus shows how Isocrates' grand scheme was variously presented as conditions in the Greek world changed. The weight of the evidence thus seems to indicate that Isocrates was primarily concerned with certain social, political, and economic problems. His Panhellenism was urged only insofar as it furthered his solution to these problems. Isocrates did not add any additional meaning to the concept of Panhellenism.

A careful look at a work by Isocrates on Athenian domestic difficulties, the Areopagiticus, gives further credence to the views given above. The Areopagiticus reflects Isocrates' concern with the landless poor, and the fear he has for the security of the property of well-to-do citizens. His proposals are offered in order to solve this problem.

A discussion of the Areopagiticus presents an opportunity for noticing the numerous instances of contradictory statements made by Isocrates in his works. In particular, two conflicting opinions from the Areopagiticus and the Panegyricus provide an example for resolving this difficulty.

Another problem that arises in Isocrates' works is the degree to which they influenced contemporary Greeks. When, however, one considers

the practicality of his proposals and the actual course of events in Greek history, those who see an important and insightful role for Isocrates and his counsels are probably incorrect. But in one area, Isocrates' advice to Philip to treat Athens kindly, there is evidence of the possibility of a shaping role for Isocrates in a major policy decision.

To help evaluate the Isocratic program, Isocrates is compared and contrasted with two famous contemporaries, Demosthenes and Plato. While Demosthenes' proposals were perhaps more practical, it can be seen that he also used Panhellenic arguments to advance Athenian interests. The comparison with Plato demonstrates the inadequacy of Isocrates' counsels. Undeniably, however, Isocrates is held in high esteem by many writers. The reason for the prevalence of this seemingly erroneous judgement are suggested.

An awareness of the problems which fourth-century Greece faced makes Isocrates use of Panhellenic-sounding arguments for advancing his cause of political, social, and economic concerns more understandable. None the less, even when such factors are taken into account, Isocrates' proposed solutions to those problems which concerned him seem to be both imprudent and ill-advised.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Life of Isocrates

The first seven decades of the fourth century B.C. marked a turbulent era for the city-states of the Greek world. Yet the history of these years is often neglected at the expense of the "Golden Age" of the fifth century or the advent of the Hellenistic period initiated by the charismatic Alexander. This fact is not particularly surprising since the events of these years brought about a precipitous decline in Greek standards and a willing sacrifice of purely Hellenic objectives which so weakened the vitality of the Greek poleis that they became easy prey to a conquering Macedon. These "twilight" decades were characterized in part by many ephemeral and opportunistic alliances hastily contracted and broken for the sole purpose of the self-preservation of individual poleis as well as a dismal display of polis spirit. Such factors present a stark and unflattering contrast to the proud accomplishments (whether local or national) of the Greek past. Nevertheless, this period of the decline in importance of the Greek poleis provides the historian with a fascinating field of study; and the abrupt changes in the Greek patterns of living and survival are worthy of serious investigation. This can best be accomplished by examining the reactions of contemporary Greeks, especially those whose adult lives bridge the gap between the fifth and fourth centuries. There were few better witnesses to these events than Isocrates, whose lifespan of ninety-eight years coincided with the period from the

outbreak of the Peloponnesian War to the victory of Philip II at Chaeronea. It is a particularly fortunate occurrence in his case that writings from practically every period of his life are extant; consequently, his reactions to the changing conditions in Athens and the Greek world in general can be examined in some detail.

This study of Isocrates will concentrate on his ideas and theory of "Panhellenism"--held by many to be the most significant concept advanced by him during his long career. The most immediate and important question to be answered below is how important was Panhellenism for Isocrates. But this question, in turn, raises others; and these other questions must be answered first in order to make the assessment of Isocrates' Panhellenism intelligible. Consequently, one must first describe what Panhellenism was in the ancient Greek world, and trace its development to the time of Isocrates. By thus ascertaining the content of Panhellenism during this period, Isocrates' views on this matter can be put in perspective. His originality and importance in advancing Panhellenic ideas can also be gauged.

As the investigation proceeds, it will become apparent that motivations other than Panhellenism were significant for the actions Isocrates proposed. These other factors will be examined in light of their having more importance for Isocrates than his supposed Panhellenic sympathies. And consideration will then be given to the way in which these factors affect one's perception of the overall Isocratic program. Not only will the viability of Isocrates' proposed solutions to the great problems besetting the fourth century Hellenic world

be weighed, but his proposals will be compared and contrasted with other Greek thinkers of his day. In such a way Isocrates' proposals will be put in proper perspective, and a greater understanding of fourth century Greece and its problems will be achieved.

One further significant issue that is only indirectly related to Panhellenism but is a problem which any study of Isocrates' thought must confront is the conflicting statements that can be found in his works. Indeed, at times there almost seems to be two Isocrates at issue here. There is, for example, the Isocrates of the distinguished historian Norman H. Baynes.¹ Baynes' Isocrates is a confused, materialistic thinker who exerted little influence on his contemporaries. To a scholar such as Paul Cloche, however, Isocrates becomes a profound philosopher on a par with Socrates.² And this dichotomy does not stop with these two authors, but is characteristic of the entire Isocratic literature. Also, time does not seem to be clarifying the problem to any great degree as recent studies of the orator continue to go in quite opposite directions.³ The difficulty here, one quickly adds, is not primarily with incompetent scholarship; rather, each observer can buttress his arguments with a wealth of quotations from

¹Norman H. Baynes, "Isocrates," in Byzantine Studies and Other Essays (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 144-167.

²Paul Cloche, Isocrate et Son Temps (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963), pp. 129-130.

³Gunther Heilbrunn, An Examination of Isocrates' Rhetoric, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1967 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1975), this work argues forcefully for the Cloche Isocrates.

Isocrates' works, apparently making such opinions conclusive. This quite glaring problem will be examined here and a solution to it will be suggested. One suspects, however, that there will never be enough evidence adduced to satisfy all those concerned. But one can at least aid in the clarifying process and so advance the analysis beyond its last point. The "absolute truth" may indeed never be reached by this method, but the understanding of Isocrates and his work will perhaps be significantly furthered.

Isocrates was born in the Athenian deme (section) of Erchia in 436 B.C. His father, Theodorus, was a reasonably prosperous flute-maker and was able to give his son a good education.⁴ Isocrates was a pupil of most of the famous sophists. In particular, he is known to have had a close association with Prodicus, Protagoras, and Theramenes; these learned men helped Isocrates to form a correct style by studies in grammar. Of all the sophists, it was Gorgias who exerted the strongest stylistic influence on Isocrates. At first this was done only through Gorgias' writings, but in 390 Isocrates met Gorgias in person and perhaps as a result was inspired to write the Panegyricus. Another teacher who had a profound effect on Isocrates was Socrates.⁵

It would perhaps be instructive to consider here the sophistic

⁴(Plutarch) Lives of the Ten Orators IV. 836.

⁵R. C. Jebb, The Attic Orators from Antiphon to Isaeos (2 vols.; New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), II, 2-5; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus Isocrates 1.

background of Isocrates as representing an important influence in his life. To begin with, it can be seen that Isocrates had an excellent background for a rhetorician. Prodicus and Protagoras were both renowned authorities on the Greek language. Protagoras was said to be the first to analyze the language according to parts of speech. Prodicus is shown in Plato's dialogues as one concerned with the precise meaning of words, frequently involving the discovery of distinctions among words otherwise regarded as synonymous. Gorgias, on the other hand, was the most famous orator of his day as the result of an eloquent, if at times rather flowery style.⁶ And it was Gorgias who exemplified an attitude common to most of these rhetorical sophists--a thoroughgoing epistemological skepticism.

As proponents of the power of oratory, the sophists frequently boasted that effective rhetoric "makes all things its slaves by willing submission, not by violence."⁷ Thus, what is supposedly thought true can be made to seem false, and vice versa, if one's language is skillful enough. Gorgias and Protagoras concluded from this that truth is merely relative; it is only what any man can be convinced of, in which case it is "true" for him and only for him.⁸ These views are quite convenient for a teacher of rhetoric. Of course

⁶W. K. C. Guthrie, The Sophists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 220, 222.

⁷Plato Philebus 58a-b.

⁸Guthrie, Sophists, pp. 180-182.

rhetoric was important in Athens anyway as a result of her form of government. But these arguments could be used to counter such critics as Plato, for they exalted rhetoric as the highest art since ends (Plato's main concern) cannot be known, only the means (rhetoric) can be known and therefore taught.

Isocrates experienced a disheartening turn of events because of the Peloponnesian War. Not only did he lose his entire inheritance, but in 404 he left Athens under pressure as a result of his past association with Theramenes who had recently been executed by the ruling group, the Thirty. After a short stay in Chios, Isocrates returned to Athens in 403 when the democracy was restored. From 403 to 393 Isocrates was a professional speech writer for the law courts, a fact which he was loath to admit in his later life.⁹

In 392 Isocrates opened a school of rhetoric in Athens, an enterprise which helped make his reputation. The following year he published his first major work, Against the Sophists.¹⁰ Isocrates' school of rhetoric turned out to be one of the most successful in all of antiquity, and made him one of the wealthiest men in Athens.¹¹ And with the publication of the Panegyricus in approximately 380, his name became known throughout the Greek world. At first his only students

⁹Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 6-7; Isocrates Antidosis 161; and (Plutarch) Lives of Orators IV. 836-837.

¹⁰J. F. Dobson, The Greek Orators (London: Methuen and Company, 1919), p. 128.

¹¹(Plutarch) Lives of Orators IV. 837; and Isocrates Antidosis 159ff.

were Athenians, but by 376 he was attracting students from Sicily in the west to Pontus on the Black Sea in the east.¹² Isocrates' reputation as a trainer of public orators received perhaps its greatest acclaim in 351 when all the entrants for a great oratorical contest held by Artemisia, the widow of Mausolus of Caria, were said to have been pupils at his school.¹³

Meanwhile, in 378, Isocrates accompanied the Athenian admiral Timotheus on a voyage to the Archipelago and the Ionian Sea, and served as Timotheus' secretary and companion. The power of Athens had undergone a resurgence by this date, and it was in connection with the organization of the recently formed Second Athenian League that Timotheus' campaign was undertaken. The remainder of Isocrates' life was divided between teaching and writing, with the latter tending to predominate. In this period he wrote the Areopagiticus, On the Peace, On the Antidosis, and the Philippus.¹⁴ Isocrates died in 338 B.C., just a few days after the decisive battle of Chaeronea where Philip of Macedon gained undisputed sway over the mainland Greeks.¹⁵ Legend has it that Isocrates died from despair over the loss of Greek liberty; this, however, is almost certainly not true since in some ways the outcome of the battle furthered many of his hopes.¹⁶

¹²Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 10.

¹³Dobson, Greek Orators, p. 128.

¹⁴Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 10-12.

¹⁵(Plutarch) Lives of Orators IV. 837.

¹⁶Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 31-32.

Chapter II

Panhellenism Before Isocrates

The notion of Panhellenism had a long evolution, and several Greek men of letters and civic life before Isocrates' time introduced and utilized this concept in their writings in various ways. It is helpful, therefore, to examine a sampling of these pre-Isocratic usages in order to determine, if possible, how they might have influenced Isocrates. By so doing one can also better gauge the extent of his originality and the importance of his contribution.

The earliest extant literary works of the Greeks are the epics of Homer. At first glance, the Iliad seems to describe an overtly Panhellenic situation, but a closer scrutiny reveals that this is not the case. Despite the fact that Homer appears to be conscious of a national identity, as demonstrated by the collective names he uses in reference to the Greeks (e.g., Danaans, Argives, Achaeans), the Greek expedition against Troy was clearly an action undertaken by independent and autonomous states.¹ It is true that the word "Panhellenes" appears in the work.² From the context, however, it is clear that the term is used here merely as another example of a collective tribal name.

Hesiod and Archilochus, writing in the seventh century B.C., also

¹Victor Ehrenberg, From Solon to Socrates (London: Methuen and Company, 1967), p. 174.

²Homer Iliad II. 530

used the word "Panhellenes," but employed it in a broader sense than did Homer. This more comprehensive meaning can be inferred from a fragment of Archilochus' poetry which is quoted by Strabo, a Greek geographer of the first century after Christ: "The woes of the Panhellenes centered upon Thasos." Strabo cites this line as evidence of the fact that Archilochus used "Panhellenes" in a manner that approximates its later and broader sense.³

During the sixth century B.C., poets used the expression "Panhellenes" to refer to all the Greeks; consequently, a more developed conception of Panhellenism took shape, especially in the poetry of Pindar and Simonides. Both men were professional poets who wrote for individual aristocrats in various Greek states. Their fame eventually spread throughout the Greek world to such an extent that they have been regarded as Panhellenic poets. But this can only be understood in a broad, figurative sense. Perhaps it is best to describe these men, Pindar in particular, as aristocrat and conservative above all else. Although it is probably safe to say that they desired concord among Greeks, their basic conservatism precluded any thoughts of the city-states giving up a significant degree of autonomy. Consequently, their greatest loyalty went not to "Hellas" but to the aristocrats of the Greek world and to individual cities, especially Thebes in Pindar's case.⁴

³Strabo Geography VIII. 6. 6.

⁴Ehrenberg, From Solon to Socrates, pp. 174-175.

The events of the Persian Wars did promote a certain feeling of national unity among the Greeks. As in the enterprise of the Trojan War, the defense of the Greek mainland in 480-479 had been undertaken by autonomous city-states; but the astounding Greek victory greatly affected the thinking of the Greeks. The recognition of the important differences between Greeks and barbarians began to grow, and this in turn led to a greater awareness of those things which the Greeks shared in common (e.g., certain cultural and religious factors, as well as the fact of their geographical location).

The Persian Wars also had a great effect in the political sphere since the Greeks came to realize that they owed much of their success to their love of liberty and political autonomy; consequently, in this sense the Persian Wars were something of a divisive factor. It should be kept in mind that "Greece" did not defeat the Persians; rather, the Persians were beaten by a group of independent city-states which varied widely in their commitment to the cause. One can rightly observe that in this respect the Persian Wars were a justification for the autonomous polis.⁵ Certainly, then, the Greeks were not prepared to sacrifice the sovereignty of their poleis. Still, however, they did become more conscious of the common bonds which set them apart from other peoples, especially the Persians, a fact which stimulated some efforts towards solidarity.

⁵Alfred Zimmern, The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth Century Athens (5th ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 177.

Evidence of such common bonds can be seen to some degree in the formation of the Hellenic League in 481 in response to Xerxes' invasion. The Hellenic League was a symmarchy (alliance) of thirty to thirty-five states (mostly from the Peloponnesus) organized to defend the mainland and defeat the Persians--objectives apparently accomplished in 479 at Plataea. After Plataea, an attempt was made to transform the League into a permanent body, but the effort came to naught.⁶ The League of 481 did achieve its limited goal; but the fact that its membership was limited and by no means representative of the entire mainland, coupled with the relatively short duration of the Persian menace served to nullify the effort to permanently establish the League. In addition, the Greek tendency to promote the autonomy of the polis precluded the voluntary formation of any national, supra-polis organization.⁷

As mentioned above, the work of Herodotus helped sharpen the differences between Greeks and Persians, and in so doing furthered to some degree the growth of a Greek national feeling. The historian of the Persian Wars saw the conflict as the inevitable result of the irrevocably different concepts of freedom held by the East and West.⁸

⁶J. A. O. Larsen, Representative Government in Greek and Roman History (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1955), p. 48.

⁷A. R. Burn, The Pelican History of Greece (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 169.

⁸Herodotus, The Persian Wars, trans. by George Rawlinson, with an Introduction by Francis R. B. Godolphin (New York: Random House, 1942), p. xxxii.

Herodotus continually refers to the contrast between freedom-loving Greek and servile barbarian.⁹ Herodotus also lavishes praise on the freedom of the Athenians (V. 78), and it becomes clear that he considers this love of freedom to be perhaps the most important factor that separates Greek from non-Greek.

Herodotus also isolates the uniqueness of the Greeks in other ways. One of the best examples of this occurs in a passage at the end of Book VIII. The setting is the period between the battles of Salamis and Plataea during which the Persians sent ambassadors to attempt to make a separate peace with the Athenians. The Spartans naturally chafed at this and sent envoys of their own to Athens in order to see that no such peace would be made. In a brief speech to the Spartan envoys, the Athenians state that they would never betray the interests of the Greeks by signing a pact with the Persians; and they reaffirm their belligerent intentions against the Persians owing to the latter's desecration of Athenian temples. The Athenians go on to point to "our common brotherhood with the Greeks: our common language, the altars and the sacrifices of which we all partake, the common character which we bear--did the Athenians betray all these, of a truth it would not be well." (VIII. 144)

Even though the Athenians talk about "our common brotherhood with the Greeks," one should not press the point too far. There is no evidence in the work of Herodotus to suggest that he envisioned

⁹See, for example, VII. 135.

or even favored any type of Greek national state. It is true that he disliked internal strife among the Greeks (c.f., VIII. 3), but it is also apparent that he never considered a practical alternative to the autonomous coexistence of the Greek city-states. It was the Greek love of freedom, after all, which Herodotus prized so greatly; and for Herodotus as for other Greeks, freedom necessarily took the form of autonomous city-states. As noted above, this aspect of the conflict actually promoted an unyielding loyalty to the polis.

The echoes of Panhellenism which appear in Herodotus' History indicate that there was at least some feeling among the Greeks that they had some kind of mutual tie which differentiated them from other peoples. But this notion was extended later in the fifth century by another conception of Panhellenism which went beyond the passive role reflected by the first type. This second form sought to put an end to the internecine struggles of the Hellenes, and encouraged active cooperation and a lessening of local particularism among all Greeks.¹⁰ Implicit in this conception was the wistful hope that the desired results would happen voluntarily since there was never any attempt to specify and enforce a federal system to insure unification. This second strain of Panhellenism comes to light in the works of Thucydides, the historian of the Peloponnesian War.

Even though it is sometimes difficult to distinguish Thucydides' personal opinions concerning the events of the Peloponnesian War in his

¹⁰Harold Baker Dunkel, Panhellenism in Greek Tragedy (Chicago: University of Chicago Libraries, 1937), pp. 12-13.

narrative, it is at least possible to observe certain Panhellenic sentiments in some of the speeches included in his history. One type of such sentiment consists of appeals that are made for the ultimate benefit of all the Greeks. At one point, for example, a speaker refers to "the common cause of Hellas" (III. 14). But this phrase is vague at best, and one should not read into it any advanced Panhellenic sentiments.

A more explicit example of active Panhellenism occurs in Book IV (59-63). Here, Hermocrates of Syracuse addresses an assembly of Sicilian Greeks with a stirring appeal to put aside purely local interests and unite for the common good of Sicily.¹¹ In his call for a united Sicily and the attainment of a secure internal peace by ignoring old grievances and differences of race, the plan of Hermocrates stands in marked contrast to the situation of endemic city-state rivalry existing in the Greek mainland. Furthermore, in light of the overwhelming Sicilian victory over the Athenians in 413, it is possible to believe that Thucydides might have designed this speech in order to point out the possible advantages of mutual cooperation and internal harmony. But Pan-Sicilianism is not Panhellenism; and one should not expect Thucydides, a historian who prided himself on his thoroughly realistic view of Greek affairs, to promote anything so idealistic and difficult to achieve as a voluntary Panhellenic League.

¹¹For detailed comments on this speech see A. W. Gomme, A Historical Commentary on Thucydides (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1956), III, 513-519.

Another chronicler of the events in Greece during this eventful time was the noted pupil of Socrates, Xenophon. Xenophon had a certain indirect influence on the course of Panhellenism and so deserves mention here. It should be kept in mind that Xenophon belongs to the fourth century, and that his life and works were shaped by the conditions of the post-Peloponnesian-War Greek world. Xenophon does not make any explicit contributions to the theory of Panhellenism, but certain of his works contain implications (which certainly might have had an influence on Isocrates) regarding a practical means of effecting a Panhellenic alliance and what such an alliance might accomplish. Xenophon's Anabasis describes the fate of the thousands of Greek mercenaries stranded in the heartland of Persia in 401. Under the leadership of Xenophon and a few others, they were able eventually to make their way to the southern shores of the Black Sea. The survival of these mercenaries pointed out not only the superiority of the Greek soldier compared to his Persian counterpart, but it also revealed the relative weakness of the Persian Empire, especially in its interior sections.¹² The "March of the Ten Thousand" had a tremendous impact on the Greek world, and Greeks of the fourth century (including Isocrates) could point to it in support of their efforts to promote a campaign of vengeance against Persia as a means of consolidating the energies and arousing the patriotism of all Greeks.

¹²G. W. Botsford and C. A. Robinson, Hellenic History, revised by Donald Kagan (5th ed.; New York: McMillan and Company, 1971), pp. 278-279.

In addition to the works of the Greek historians, a notion of Panhellenism is also evident in the extant plays of the fifth-century Athenian tragic and comic playwrights. The first major figure in this area is the great dramatist, Aeschylus. Aeschylus, in the Persians, acclaims the Greek victories over the Persians in the years 480-479 in Panhellenic terms, despite his patriotic emphasis on the crucial naval role of the Athenians. There is inherent in this play a great sense of pride in the "Greek achievement." An illustrative passage occurs in the Persians when the Greek sailors raise a battle cry before fighting at Salamis:

Now, sons of Hellas, now! Set Hellas free, set free
your wives, your homes, your gods' high altars and
your fathers' tombs. Now all is at stake. (402-405)

It is clear, however, that such an exhortation touches only upon the first type of Panhellenism referred to above, particularly since the theme of the Persians allows Aeschylus to draw the contrast of free Greeks and servile Persians.

Some of the plays of Euripides also have a bearing on the issue of Panhellenism. One such play is the Trojan Women, written in 415 while the Peloponnesian War was still raging. This play is a vehement attack on the horrors of war; and by its implied plea for peace, the Trojan Women perhaps sounds a Panhellenic note.¹³ In a still later play, however, there is no mistaking Euripides' advocacy of a Panhellenic ideal of Greek brotherhood. In Iphigeneia in Aulis

¹³

Dunkel, Panhellenism in Greek Tragedy, pp. 42, 49.

(406), Euripides tells the brutal tale of Agamemnon sacrificing his daughter Iphigeneia to the gods in order to gain fair winds for the Greeks in their expedition against Troy. Here Euripides apparently saw the potential for a play exalting the glory of Greece in a rather unlikely setting. He depicts Iphigeneia as a Brunnhilde-like character who sacrifices herself for the good of Hellas. One passage in particular is noteworthy in this regard:

The power of all Hellas now looks to me; all lies in my hand. . . . All this great deliverance I shall win by dying, and my name will be blessed and celebrated as one who set Hellas free. (1377-1383)

Iphigeneia goes on to say that her life was always for Hellas, and that "Greeks were born to rule barbarians, not barbarians to rule Greeks. They are slaves by nature; we have freedom in our blood" (1400-1401). These are sentiments certainly to some degree associated with Panhellenism. It may be going too far to say that Euripides favored Greek unity; but in the proud figure of Iphigeneia who willingly sacrifices herself for the sake of a common Greek cause (a war against Asiatics at that), he can perhaps be said to suggest a personal inclination towards cooperation and good-will among Greeks.

The comic poet Aristophanes is also a proponent of Panhellenic sentiments. Perhaps Aristophanes is best described as a pacifist rather than a promoter of Greek unity; yet certain of his plays (e.g., Acharnians, Peace, and Lysistrata) reveal a definite support of Panhellenism. In the Acharnians (425 B.C.), for example, Dicaeopolis, whose name means a "good citizen," makes his own peace with the Spartans and says that the Athenians as well as the Spartans are to

blame for the present war.¹⁴

The Peace (produced after the Peace of Nicias in 421) is more overt in promoting peace among all Greeks. Trygaeus, the hero of the play, is the embodiment of Hellenic cooperation. He flies to heaven to obtain peace on behalf of all Greeks, not just for the Athenians. Most revealing is the famous scene in which all types of Athenian citizens, as well as men from Sparta, Argos, Megara, and Boeotia, make a joint effort to pull the figure of "Peace" onto the stage; as they do so, the Chorus cries the following:

This way, everybody! Onward, to security and peace!
Panhellenic forces, rally--now, if ever--for release
from the grilling grind of warfare and from military
fuss. (301-304)

Consequently, it appears that Aristophanes favored some sort of cooperation among the Greeks in order to do away with internal strife. This does not necessarily imply, however, that he favored the formation of a Greek national state. But plainly, Aristophanes advocated the more active form of Panhellenism in which the Greeks voluntarily agree to place the peace of Hellas above selfish local interests.

Turning now from the poets and the historians to the level of pragmatic events themselves, some of the policies of Pericles are most conspicuous in their apparent Panhellenic thrust. In particular, the so-called Congress Decree (probably issued shortly after the Peace of Callias in 450) and the arrangements for the founding of the

¹⁴Aristophanes Acharnians 496-556.

colony of Thurii have been seen by some as forming a Panhellenic program. A careful consideration of these proposals and the rationale behind them, however, gives some doubts on this score.

Looking first at the Congress Decree, it was promulgated by Pericles for virtually all the non-Ionian Greeks, and was a call for them to send representatives to Athens. This congress would then consider rebuilding temples destroyed in the Persian Wars, making sea-travel safe from piracy, and resolving the manner in which previous pledges made to the gods were to be fulfilled.¹⁵ Superficially, at least, all this would seem to indicate a large step towards a genuine Panhellenism; after all, it appears that active cooperation among the Greek states is trying to be implemented here. Nonetheless, a consideration of Pericles' motives for the Congress Decree casts more than a little doubt on their contribution to Panhellenic sentiments. It has recently been pointed out that the Congress Decree served Athens' imperialistic purposes as seen by her leader Pericles. Putting the matter briefly, the Delian League, which had arisen to combat the Persians, had increasingly come under the sway of Athens in the period immediately preceding the decree. One main factor, however, prevented further expansion--a cooperative policy toward Sparta which Pericles had inherited from an aristocratic rival. This obstacle was deftly eliminated when Sparta, as one might expect, refused to sanction the Athenian's "Panhellenic" decree. No longer

¹⁵Plutarch Pericles 17.

needing to consider Spartan reactions, Pericles proceeded to strengthen Athenian control of the Delian League, eventually turning it into the Athenian Empire. This can be seen further in the religious aspects of the Congress Decree which were also turned to Athens' advantage by Pericles. He thus used the Panhellenic mask of the Congress Decree as an opportunity to put Athens forward not only as political and economic leader, but as the religious one as well.¹⁶

This subterfuge of using apparent Panhellenism as a mask for imperialism was continued in 443 by the establishment of the colony of Thurii in southern Italy.¹⁷ Founding Thurii represented a new departure for Athens as a result of the colony's being thrown open by Pericles to all individual Greeks who wished to settle there. By thus opening up the settlement of Thurii to even those Greeks from the Peloponnesus, Pericles was hoping to allay Spartan fears of Athenian expansion in Italy through the means of a Panhellenic ploy. Nonetheless, the founding of this colony can truthfully be called the first significant westward expansionist move by Athens. There can be little doubt that such a move was, in essence, of a piece with Pericles' expansionist moves elsewhere.¹⁸ Athenian influence guided the

¹⁶S. Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," Historia, XXV, (1976), 7 and 12.

¹⁷Diodorus XII 10-11; an instructive commentary on this subject is N. K. Ritter, "Diodorus and the Foundation of Thurii," Historia, XXII, (1973), 155-176.

¹⁸H. Strasburger, "Herodot und das perikleische Athen," Historia, IV, (1955), 23.

settlement, and Pericles' supporters were its leaders. By covering his imperialist policies in the cloak of Panhellenism, Pericles not only defused some of the objections to his actions made in foreign countries, but just as importantly he thwarted internal opposition as well. These Athenian opponents posed a formidable threat to Pericles; by helping to blunt their criticisms through his "Panhellenic" gestures, Pericles so completely thwarted them that their leader was ostracized.¹⁹

The interesting thing to notice here in regard to Pericles' maneuverings is the use he made of Panhellenism. Although some of his policies seemed to further the cause of Panhellenism, below the surface there is little or no loyalty to any Panhellenic ideal. Rather, Pericles tried to wrap his moves in a mantle of Panhellenism in order to repel the attacks of his opposition. In fact, far from favoring Greek unity, Pericles' policies were blatantly imperialistic. They tended toward the furthering of Athens' immediate interests at the expense of others. The use of Panhellenism in this manner was done so often (other instances of it are pointed out below) that one can speak of a "tradition" existing that used Panhellenism to disguise imperialism.²⁰ It remains to be seen whether Isocrates might in some way adhere to this position.

¹⁹For a full discussion of this matter, see H. D. Meyer, *Thukydides Melesiou und die oligarchische Opposition gegen Perikles*, "Historia, XVI, (1967), 141-154.

²⁰Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," 5.

Two other literary figures have yet to be considered as fore-runners of Isocrates in their Panhellenic pronouncements--the orators Georgias and Lysias. Gorgias (ca. 483-ca. 375) was a native of Leontini in Sicily who later traveled about the Greek world as a famous sophist and teacher of rhetoric. Despite the fragmentary remains of his works, it is plain that at least two of his orations were directly concerned with Panhellenism. In the Epitaphios, written and delivered soon after 421, Gorgias expressed Panhellenic sentiments: "Victories over the barbarians call for hymns of praise, those over the Greeks for laments of mourning." (B 5b)²¹ He later echoes the same tones in his famous oration at the Olympic games of 408. From Philostratus, a biographer of many sophists, one learns that Gorgias counselled the Greeks to make peace with one another and attack the lands of the barbarians.²² It is difficult to tell how serious Gorgias was about all this, as his orations were usually more noted for their style than their content. Nevertheless, the proclamations of Gorgias do represent an interesting theoretical development with regard to Panhellenism, even though they probably had little practical effect.²³ It is also important to keep in mind the influence, both direct and indirect, which Gorgias had on Isocrates.

²¹Quoted in Ehrenberg, From Solon to Socrates, p. 336.

²²Philostratus, The Lives of the Sophists I. 11.

²³Ehrenberg, From Solon to Socrates, p. 336.

Hellenic unity was doubtless a frequent topic at the Olympic festival since its very nature was Panhellenic. In 388 the orator Lysias, an Athenian metic (a foreign-born resident of Athens), exhorted the Greeks to unite against their common enemies. The primary catalyst of the speech was an elaborate embassy which came to the games on behalf of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse. Lysias used the occasion to remind the Greeks that Dionysius, being a tyrant, was just as much their enemy as the Great King, and urged the Greeks to unite and attack both Syracuse and Persia. He made a special appeal to the Spartans to take the lead in this struggle before it would be too late.²⁴

As with Pericles, however, it can be seen that Lysias is here cloaking Athenian interest in the guise of Panhellenism. Dionysius and Sparta were firm allies at this time, an alliance much regretted by the Athenians. In fact, Athens herself had tried to entice Dionysius away from Sparta but had been rebuffed. In this light Lysias' tirade against the tyrant of Syracuse, as well as his call for Sparta to assume a leadership role, become a method to drive a wedge between these two important powers. The "Panhellenism" of Lysias' speech is thus a clever way to divide allies who pose a problem for Athenian expansion.²⁵ Indeed, as will be seen later, Isocrates reverses Lysias' (and his own) view and appeals to Dionysius

²⁴Jebb, Attic Orators, I, 204-205.

²⁵Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," 19-21.

to become a Panhellenic leader in his own right--when, that is, conditions change so that Athens would derive benefit from such a move.

Lysias' Olympic address, like that of Gorgias', is also interesting in light of what Isocrates would advocate in his Panegyricus, reputedly written for another Olympic festival. Yet both Lysias and Gorgias were perhaps indulging more in rhetorical idealism than in practical realism. Isocrates, on the other hand, would later claim to combine both oratorical style and practical effectiveness.

Chapter III

Isocrates and Panhellenism

Following in the tradition of Gorgias and Lysias, Isocrates prepared an oration on the subject of Panhellenism for the occasion of the Olympic games of 380 B.C.¹ This treatise, the Panegyricus, constituted Isocrates' first known commentary on the topic of Greek unity; and its content, together with the carefully crafted beauty of its style, established Isocrates as one of the foremost orators of antiquity.² Isocrates touched on Panhellenic sentiments at some length in this work, and suggested a plan whereby a degree of Greek cooperation might be achieved. Due to the specific nature of his proposals, a review of the historical setting of the Panegyricus would be helpful.

The outcome of the Peloponnesian War was a bitter blow to Athens. By the war's end in 404, Athens' countryside had been ravaged, her population was starving, and her once great empire was reduced to a single loyal state, Samos. According to the terms of a peace treaty with Sparta, Athens surrendered her navy and demolished her fortifications. The treaty was realistic and under the circumstances quite moderate, especially since it allowed Athens to retain some form of

¹Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 150; see, however, H. L. Hudson-Williams, "Isocrates and Recitations," Classical Quarterly (January-April, 1949), 65-69, in which Hudson-Williams ably argues that the work was presented in Athens. He also makes the point that whereas Isocrates probably did not recite his speeches, it is likely that someone else did it for him.

²Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 164.

democratic government. Soon, however, the true nature of Spartan justice revealed itself. With the support of the Spartan admiral Lysander, a clique known as the Thirty Tyrants assumed absolute control of the Athenian government. As their rule grew more and more harsh, the moderate figures in the group became increasingly restive. Among these moderates was Theramenes who was executed for his opposition to the extremists in the Thirty. This was only one incident in a reign of terror whose effects reached as far as Isocrates himself.* When at last the tyranny of the Thirty became too extreme, a counter-movement was launched by exiled Athenian democrats. This insurgency proved successful and resulted in the restoration of democracy in Athens in the year 403.³ Although Sparta did let Athens' restored democracy stand, the oligarchies which were set up elsewhere throughout the Greek world (especially in former member states of the Athenian Empire) incurred a universal wrath. Opposition gradually arose against Sparta in certain states of the Greek mainland. In particular, the Boeotian League led by Thebes gained allies in an attempt to bring Spartan domination to an end. And by the late 390's Athens was beginning to revive, thanks largely to the rebuilding of her fortifications with the financial and military assistance of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. These fortifications assured Athens of some sense of security. She then also began to reconstruct her navy

*See above, p. 4.

³Botsford and Robinson, Hellenic History, pp. 239-242.

and was able to regain control of such former possessions as the islands of Skyros, Imbros, and Lemnos. But a sudden Spartan volte-face brought an abrupt end to further Athenian expansion.⁴

Until the outbreak of hostilities between Sparta and the cities of Boeotia during the 390's, Sparta, through the instigation of one of her kings (Agesilaus), had been preoccupied with liberating the Ionian Greeks from Persian control. Persia, in addition to the Spartan presence in Asia Minor, was also beset with rebellious factions in Egypt and Cyprus. As this seemed an opportune moment, Sparta and Persia suddenly formed an alliance and agreed on the terms of a treaty which affected the entire Greek world. As a result of this Peace of Antalcidas in 387, the liberty of the Asiatic Greeks was once more surrendered to Persia; and the states of the European Greeks were henceforth to exist as independent units. In effect all prevailing leagues and confederations were dissolved, although Athens was allowed to retain Imbros, Skyros, and Lemnos. This humiliating treaty, often referred to as the "King's Peace," was dictated by the Persian monarch Artaxerxes II, with Sparta acting as self-appointed guarantor of its contents.

Meanwhile, the other Greek states blamed the Spartans for this treaty and chafed more than ever under the Spartan hegemony. Among the new atrocities committed by Sparta in this period were the besieging of the important city of Olynthus in 382, and the treacherous

⁴Burn, Pelican History of Greece, pp. 316-317.

installation of a Spartan garrison in the citadel of Thebes in 380.⁵

Given such a situation of political instability, it is not surprising that the economies of many poleis (including Athens) were in desperate straits. Further, pirates roaming the Aegean Sea made trade difficult on the vital sea lanes; and bands of mercenaries made commerce and even life itself hazardous on land. It is to this precarious state of affairs that Isocrates addresses himself in the Panegyricus with a tone of understandable urgency.⁶

The Panegyricus is divided into two main parts. The first section seems to urge the Greeks to unite in a war against Persia under the joint leadership of Athens and Sparta (1-132). The second part focuses on Persia and states why Persia was particularly vulnerable at that time. The following is an examination of these sections in some detail.

After first explaining why he is writing the Panegyricus (1-14), Isocrates describes the current impasse which prevents the Greeks from enjoying the double blessing of achieving internal concord and undertaking a campaign against Persia. He views the cause of the impasse as being due primarily to the difference in governmental forms which Sparta and Athens promoted (oligarchy and democracy respectively). In effecting a reconciliation between Sparta and Athens, Isocrates

⁵J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock, The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. VI: Macedon, 401-301 B.C. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 34.

⁶Isocrates, trans. with an Introduction by George Norlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), I, 117.

believes that his main task will be to persuade Sparta to follow his policy, since he is confident that Athens would readily cooperate (15-17).

To Isocrates' mind, the main bone of contention was Sparta's claim to leadership by ancestral right, a right which he proceeds to show really belongs to Athens. After briefly mentioning Athens' past hegemony, he begins in earnest to enumerate Athens' qualifications for leading the Greeks by referring back to very ancient times (18-25). From the beginning, he says, we have lived in Athens and kept our lineage noble and pure--"we alone of all the Hellenes have the right to call our city at once nurse and fatherland and mother" (25). He next provides a lengthy account of the services that Athens had rendered to the Greeks. Very early Demeter taught the inhabitants of Attica the cultivation of grain and gave them the rite of the Mysteries; and the Athenians, in turn, generously shared these treasures with all Greeks. Athens soon became the mother of colonization, thus enlarging the lands of the Greeks and pushing back the frontiers of the barbarians. Athens was also the bringer of civilization to the Greeks. She had the first laws and the first constitution. Her harbor, Piraeus, continues to be the center of Greek commerce; and her constant parade of festivals serves to remind the Greeks that they share a common culture. Furthermore, nowhere else are philosophy and eloquence more esteemed than in Athens (26-37). In summary, Isocrates proudly exclaims:

So far has our city distanced the rest of mankind in thought and in speech that her pupils have become the teachers of the rest of the world; and she has brought it about that the name "Hellenes" suggests no longer a race but an intelligence (διανοίας) and that the title "Hellenes" applies rather to those who share our culture (παιδείσεως) than to those who share a common blood. (50)

Isocrates next discusses the military prowess of the Athenians. For example, Athens has always come to the aid of the oppressed--even the Spartans owe their greatness to the Heraclid invaders of the Peloponnese who were aided by the Athenians. Athens has also continually distinguished herself in waging war against barbarians. The Thracians, Scythians, and Amazons are just a few of the invaders who were defeated by the Athenians. During the Persian Wars, to be sure, both Athens and Sparta saved the Greek mainland by their unselfish public spirit and mutual loyalty to the cause of freedom; but it was Athens which gained particular distinction at Marathon and Salamis. Isocrates concludes that just as Athens took the lead against the barbarians in the past, she should proceed to do so now. (51-99)

In discussing the period immediately after the Persian Wars, Isocrates reluctantly admits that Athens treated the rebellious allies of her empire with severity; such rigour ought to be expected in time of war, however. Yet, to the great credit of Athens, she gave her loyal allies freedom, harmony, and peace. Sparta, by contrast, has been many times more severe; and to her complete discredit, discord and tyranny are rife throughout the Greek world. (100-114)

But worst of all, in Isocrates' opinion, is the fact that while the Greeks suffer, Persia prospers because of Spartan connivance with

the Great King via the mechanism of the King's Peace. Think how much better it would be, says Isocrates, if, instead of crushing the islanders of the Aegean by taxation, the Spartans would participate in a great campaign against the barbarians and so obtain great riches for all Greeks. (115-132)

At this point in the Panegyricus, Isocrates begins to list the reasons why an immediate war against Persia is desirable. His main contention here is the weak and vulnerable condition of the Persian Empire. To substantiate this observation he mentions the numerous and recent troubles experienced by the Persians. In addition, Isocrates recounts Greek military successes in Asia, including the campaign of the Spartan leader Agesilaus and the famous retreat of the Ten Thousand (138-144). Isocrates continues by roundly criticizing the character of the Persians, charging that the subject masses are unruly and slavish while the nobles are depraved and corrupt. For these reasons as well as their gross impiety, Isocrates pronounces the Persians to be the irreconcilable enemies of the Greeks. He credits the Athenians with a perceptive awareness of this fact, and remarks that they have long invoked public curses upon any citizen who contemplated making friendly overtures to Persia (146-160).

Isocrates again emphasizes the need for quick action by cautioning that delay might cause some Greek states to lean towards the enemy. A quick decision to engage the Persians in battle, however, would almost certainly win these waverers over to the Greek cause. Haste would also prove advantageous in alleviating the current suffer-

ings of the Hellenes. Given the general indifference of Greek men of politics to this grievous situation, Isocrates feels compelled to offer his counsel (163-171), and goes on to say: "It is not possible for us to cement an enduring peace unless we join together in a war against the barbarians, nor for the Hellenes to attain to concord until we wrest our material advantages from one and the same source and wage our wars against one and the same enemy." When this is done peace will prevail (173-174).

Isocrates concludes the Panegyricus with the assertion that justice and expedience dictate a renunciation of the Peace of Antalcidas and the undertaking of a military campaign against the barbarians--a campaign which will redound to the fame and glory of Greece even beyond the heroic exploits of the Trojan War. More importantly, the states of the Greek world will surely be enriched and will grow prosperous by annexing the wealth of Asia. (175, 187)

As stated above, the Panegyricus seems at first glance to commend an Athenian-Spartan alliance. This, indeed, is the view of one of the leading authorities on the subject, Edmund Buchner. Buchner feels that Isocrates favored a partnership between Sparta and Athens for the purpose of defeating the Persians.⁷ In fact, he notes that the actual organization formed in this period--the Second Athenian League--was ostensibly anti-Spartan, but was primarily occupied with the Persian Empire. To make much headway against the

⁷Edmund Buchner, Der Panegyrikos des Isokrates (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1959), p. 138.

Persians, however, Athens needed Sparta's help. Consequently, the Athenians should have heeded Isocrates and persuaded the Lacedaemonians to accept a position of equality with Athens. Then, together, they could successfully attack the forces of the Great King.⁸ Now all this does have a certain plausibility to it. To be sure, Isocrates is seeking a diminution of status for Sparta, but one must seriously inquire whether he only wishes for Athens to be equal with Sparta. Perhaps, in fact, it is Athenian superiority that he truly desires.

The Panegyricus is Isocrates' earliest and most thorough statement on Panhellenism; it is said that he spent ten years writing it.⁹ In analyzing its content, one is struck by the extent of Isocrates' defense of Athens and by the vociferousness of his attack on Sparta. This seems to suggest that he did not really favor dual leadership as he originally asserted, but instead desired that Athens alone should attain hegemony over the Greeks.¹⁰ In fact, Isocrates directly implies this at least three times in the Panegyricus.¹¹ At one point, for example, he states the following: "It is without question our right to recover the hegemony which we formerly possessed" (21). In a subsequent passage he asks "Who, then, should have the

⁸Ibid., pp. 67-68.

⁹(Plutarch) Lives of Orators IV. 837.

¹⁰This view is seconded by Klaus Bringmann in Studien zu den politischen Ideen des Isokrates (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1965), p. 46, which holds the Panegyricus to be largely a slap at the corrupt leadership of the Spartans.

¹¹Josef Kessler, Isokrates und die panhellenische Idee (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1965), p. 10.

hegemony?" His answer to this query is definitive--Athens (99). A similar sentiment resounds again towards the end of the work: "We may well be indignant at the present state of affairs, and yearn for our lost supremacy" (122).

To help understand why Isocrates might cause such confusion on this matter, one should remember here that at the time of the publication of the Panegyricus, Sparta was unquestionably the dominant state of the Greek world. In this regard, Isocrates must have realized that if Athens actually attempted to usurp Sparta's position, Sparta would have countered with vigorous opposition, unless, that is, the Athenians could adroitly conceal their true intentions under the pretext of dual leadership. Such ambiguity would perhaps diminish Spartan anxiety and so preclude any belligerent acts of reprisal.

The realization of Isocrates' true intentions on this matter has certain other consequences as well. Although Isocrates initially says that he only wishes to prove Athens' ancient right to leadership, he actually goes beyond this and takes up the matter of the justice of Athens' claim. This, in turn, affords him the opportunity to discuss, superficially at least, what he regards as prerequisite criteria for justifying a state's claim to a hegemonic position.

In listing Athens' qualifications, Isocrates first mentions prowess at sea.¹² This was a very important factor in ancient Greece, and one that Thucydides had already underscored in the preface of his

¹²Panegyricus 21-27.

History.¹³ Isocrates then goes on to summarize certain aspects of the old and venerable history of the Athenian state, and in so doing places special emphasis on Athens' contributions to the Hellenes. He cites, for example, numerous Athenian contributions to the civil life of Greece, and the impact of the dispersion of Athenian culture.¹⁴ The benefits derived from Athens' military forces are also commented upon as Isocrates paints a very rose picture of Athenian military history. Not only does he commend Athens' unselfish championing of the underdog, but he is also careful to focus on the many Athenian campaigns against the barbarians, particularly the campaigns of the Persian Wars.¹⁵ In idealizing the Persian Wars period, Isocrates describes the self-sacrifice and honorable patriotism of Athenians in general; and despite his acknowledgment that Sparta cooperated with Athens in this enterprise, he still attributes the Greek victory to the leadership and valour of the Athenians.¹⁶

From these and other accolades for Athens, it is possible to adduce the criteria which Isocrates seems to deem necessary for the rule of hegemon (leader) of a Panhellenic league--a concern for the well-being of all Greeks, a respect for the claims of justice and excellence, a hatred of the barbarian, a capacity to display military

¹³Thucydides Peloponnesian War I. 14-16.

¹⁴Panegyricus 38-50.

¹⁵Ibid., 51-73.

¹⁶Ibid., 76-94.

strength and martial courage, and a genuine appreciation of Greek culture. Such are indeed the qualifications that he implies are most valuable in this matter. It remains to be seen, however, how rigorous Isocrates really is when he applies these standards in various situations over the course of his long career.

Yet more confusion arises when one considers what the precise role of the leader was to be. Isocrates' vagueness on this point is perhaps the result of his not intending that the hegemon have precisely defined powers. In fact, it seems rather clear that Isocrates' hegemon would not impinge in any significant way upon the traditional autonomy of the several Greek poleis. Instead, he evidently espoused a confederacy of free states which would voluntarily align themselves under the leadership of Athens in order to fight a great war against the Persians.¹⁷ In other words, Isocrates appears to be promoting a system much like the Delian League of 478 before it evolved into the Athenian Empire.¹⁸ This is implied early in the Panegyricus when Isocrates says: "All may be made to see that even as in times past Athens justly held the sovereignty of the sea, so now she not unjustly lays claim to the hegemony" (20). Here Isocrates expressly uses the word "hegemony" (ἡγεμονίας) to mean the acknowledged leadership of a confederacy.¹⁹

¹⁷Buchner, Der Panegyrikos des Isokrates, pp. 128-129.

¹⁸Isocrates, trans. by George Norlin, I, xxxiv.

¹⁹Ibid., note a, p. 131.

In a subsequent passage, Isocrates expresses his predilection for polis autonomy by soundly condemning his own epoch because the Greek "states are far removed from freedom and autonomy" (117). Furthermore, he underscores the matter of the desirability of voluntary participation in the war against Persia by stating that such a war will be so popular that it will attract sufficient volunteers and preclude forcible conscription.²⁰ Thus, the hegemon will serve as leader over almost wholly autonomous states, will be primarily concerned with military affairs, and will not interfere in the internal politics of the confederated Greek states.

The over-all nature of Isocrates' scheme now begins to take shape and lacks only a few details in order to be complete. By not calling for some type of centralized government, and thereby preserving the autonomy of the poleis, Isocrates is of necessity forced to posit some factor which would inspire the Greeks to unite. As mentioned above, this factor was, in essence, a rallying call for a war against Persia. But it is clear that Isocrates believed that a successful war would result in important gains for the Greeks over and above effecting a temporary military union. He evidently believed that a Greek victory would channel the wealth of Persia to the Greek world. The acquisition of such great wealth would result in the reduction of poverty and other factors which were causing internal

²⁰Panegyricus 172-173.

strife in Greek-inhabited lands.²¹ He expresses these sentiments in explicit terms:

When we have been freed from the poverty which afflicts our lives--a thing that breaks up friendships, perverts the affections of kindred into enmity, and plunges the whole world into war and strife--then surely we shall enjoy a spirit of concord and the good will which we shall feel towards each other will be genuine. (174)

The implications of this are debatable; but it would seem that Isocrates apparently thought that Persian wealth would remove the main motivations for war which, in Isocrates' eyes, were the attempts by various groups for material aggrandizement.²² Thus, after such a war, internal harmony would again prevail, and the Greek states would lose nothing of their autonomy. Taken in this light, it becomes apparent that Isocrates' primary interest as revealed in the Panegyricus was a stabilization of the Greek political and social situation, and not the achievement of national unity. It is true that for the purpose of the war against Persia he suggests that a loose union of confederate Greek states under the leadership of Athens should prevail. But once Persia has been conquered, there is nothing in Isocrates' plan to imply that this arrangement ought necessarily to continue. Rather, once the affliction of poverty is removed, the Greek states would then proceed to function as independent units, avoiding internal warfare while voluntarily promoting the general

²¹Donald Kagan, The Great Dialogue: History of Greek Political Thought from Homer to Polybius (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 139.

²²Panegyricus 172-173.

interests of all Greeks.²³

It is important here to grasp Isocrates' priorities in the program he recommends to his fellow Hellenes. It has been observed by one authority that Isocrates logically and convincingly opposed the Great King on nationalistic grounds since he was a true Greek nationalist.²⁴ Strictly speaking such a view is not completely false, but it is misleading. Isocrates did oppose the King and he did advance some Panhellenic-sounding arguments. But it would be incorrect to conclude that Isocrates was so strongly anti-Persian because of ardent Panhellenic sentiments on his part. Rather, Isocrates used such sentiments for purposes which in his view were not in reality closely related to Panhellenism, purposes which have been indicated above. It is that plan relating to a Persian conquest and the enrichment of Greece, and Athens in particular, which is of central importance to him; the rationalizing arguments based on Panhellenism represent merely peripheral concerns at best. It will be recalled that others such as Pericles and Lysias had used Panhellenism to advance Athenian interests. It should become increasingly clear that Isocrates similarly operates in this tradition.²⁵

Another work by Isocrates that has a direct bearing on the message of the Panegyricus is the Encomium of Helen, written approximately at

²³See Bringmann, Studien, p. 22; Bringmann also sees Isocrates' Persian plan as one conducive to continuing the tradition of polis autonomy.

²⁴Buchner, Der Panegyrikos des Isokrates, p. 139.

²⁵Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," 26.

the same time. It has been pointed out that this oration is an imaginative counterpart to the Panegyricus, and in large part another sketching of Isocrates' Panhellenic program.²⁶

In the Helen, Isocrates first discusses Theseus, an ancient king of Athens, who is said to have abducted Helen. He goes on to contrast Theseus with Heracles (a figure intimately associated with the Peloponnesus), and concludes that the deeds of Theseus were of greater benefit and importance for Greece than those of Heracles.²⁷ He also lauds Theseus for being instrumental in laying the basis for the government of Athens (cf. Panegyricus 26ff.). When Isocrates turns to praise Helen, it becomes plain that she is a symbol for his plan of the Greek campaign against Persia.²⁸ Isocrates associates Helen's beauty with virtue,²⁹ thus giving her husband the right to expect universal assistance from the Greeks.³⁰ And, of course, such assistance was eventually needed in the war against the Trojans, an Asiatic people. The symbolism connected with Helen is made explicit in the concluding passage of this oration:

²⁶George Kennedy, "Isocrates' Encomium of Helen, a Panhellenic Document," Transactions of the American Philological Association (1958), XXXIX, 77-83.

²⁷Helen 23-24.

²⁸Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, trans. by Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), III, 67.

²⁹Helen 54-55.

³⁰Ibid., 40.

We should be justified in considering that it is owing to Helen that we are not the slaves of the barbarians. For we shall find that it was because of her that the Greeks became united in harmonious accord and organized a common expedition against the barbarians. (67)

It is perhaps worth noting that this expedition, like the one advanced in the Panegyricus, was made up of autonomous states who voluntarily chose to fight the barbarians.

As mention has been made several times of the Second Athenian League and since the League does have its Panhellenic aspects, it would perhaps be useful to take a brief look at this organization. As discussed above, the Spartans were masters of the Greek world after the collapse of Athens in 404. Their heavy-handed methods soon generated widespread dissatisfaction, however. With Athens partially recovered, the Athenians increasingly gained allies as a counterpoise to the Spartans. The King's Peace of 387 was a blow for Athens since not only did it end most of her alliances, but it also dried up certain revenue sources which only exacerbated an already difficult economic situation. The Peace was not an insurmountable obstacle, however, as Spartan insolence continued to produce allies for Athens. The crowning grievance for the Athenians came when a Spartan raiding party attacked Piraeus, Athens' life line on the coast.³¹ Shortly thereafter Athens issued a call to the states of Greece, and so the Second Athenian League was born in 377.

³¹J. B. Bury and Russell Meiggs, A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great (4th ed.; London: The Macmillan Company, 1975), pp. 345, 350.

The League's charter provided that a congress (synedrion) of the allies and the Athenian Assembly together should be the legislative mechanism. The harsh impositions of Athens' former empire such as the tribute and the forced acceptance of Athenian colonies (cleruchies) were prescribed. The exact financial system for the League is not clear, but it appears a common treasury existed from which money was drawn as the occasion arose. Also vague is how the amounts of individual assessments were decided, but it is clear that they did not generally represent an onerous burden on the allies.³²

There is certainly a Panhellenic aspect to this League. It represented an honest attempt to draw together many Greek states by learning from past mistakes and respecting the rights of the members. None the less, the League in this respect is similar to other such organizations of the period. The raison d'etre of the League was opposition to Sparta, and as that threat declined so did the League. There was no urge to continue it for its own sake; money was tendered fitfully, involving it in constant financial woes as Athens was none too strong herself monetarily. And as League members increasingly balked at making a significant contributions, Athens once again resorted to imperialistic maneuverings that only served to further alienate the allies.³³

In reciting this history, one can see the rock on which other

³²F. H. Marshall, The Second Athenian Confederacy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 27-44, passim.

³³Ibid., pp. 102-106.

such organizations in ancient Greece were shattered. In the usual manner, the poleis united against something, and not so much for anything. Consequently, when the external motivating object is removed, the union falls apart. Each member operates in an atmosphere of autonomous self-interest with little or no sense of a common good. As noted above (p. 30), even Isocrates was insensitive to Athenian abuses of her allies--an indication of the force of this view of things for the Greeks of that time.

Admitting the scope of Isocrates' idea of Panhellenism as embodied in the Panegyricus, it remains to be seen how these views changed over the course of his long career. One factor which brought about a modification of his outlook was his growing flirtation with monarchy. In the Nicocles (otherwise known as The Cyprians), written ca. 370, Isocrates puts into the mouth of Nicocles, king of Cyprian Salamis and possibly one of Isocrates' own pupils,³⁴ a concerted defense of kingship, which he compares favorably to all other forms of government.³⁵ Even though it is doubtful that Isocrates agreed with everything he had Nicocles say, the evolution of Isocrates' thought ten years after the publication of the Panegyricus seems to indicate that even as early as 370 he had some sympathy with the monarchical viewpoint.³⁶

³⁴Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 88.

³⁵Nicocles 12.

³⁶Isocrates, trans. by George Norlin, I, 74.

In the Evagoras, written ca. 365, one sees a continuation of this theme. The work is for the most part in the form of an epitaphios (funeral oration) to Evagoras, father of Nicocles and ruler of Salamis until his assassination in 374.³⁷ It is significant not only because Isocrates is once again commending monarchy by eulogizing a king, but also because some of the achievements of Evagoras accord nicely with his own Panhellenic program. Evagoras, for example, had helped to defeat Sparta, formerly Athens' greatest rival, at Cnidus in 394; Evagoras' victory, in turn, led to the resurgence of Athens.³⁸ But more noteworthy is the poignant contrast which Isocrates makes between Evagoras and the barbarians. He does this by praising Evagoras for restoring Greek civilization after a period of stagnation caused by the Phoenecians.³⁹ He then points to Evagoras' successful war against the Persians as another instance of how a Greek with limited resources can beat back the vastly more powerful forces of the Persians.⁴⁰ In fact, Isocrates portrays Evagoras as an example of the noble Greek who stands against the barbarians as a champion of Greek arete (virtue). This clearly coincides with certain Panhellenic sentiments expressed years before in the Panegyricus (see Panegyricus 50, in particular).⁴¹

³⁷Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 107.

³⁸Isocrates, trans. by George Norlin, I, 38.

³⁹Evagoras 47-50.

⁴⁰Ibid., 63-64.

⁴¹Jaeger, Paideia, III, 86.

Another work worth noting here is the fragment of a letter which Isocrates wrote to Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, probably in 368. Only the proem is extant; but from a later reference to the substance of this epistle in the Philippus (81), Isocrates apparently asked Dionysius to assume the leadership of the Greeks in a war against Persia. Syracuse was at this time winning a war against Carthage,⁴² and Isocrates explains that he is asking Dionysius to undertake the additional responsibility of an expedition against Persia because he is the foremost figure of the Greek world as well as "the possessor of the greatest power" (7). No doubt another factor to be considered here is the alliance Dionysius and Athens made at about this same time. Granting Isocrates' strong allegiance to Athens, one can probably say that this alliance and Dionysius' military strength are the primary considerations which led Isocrates to approach Dionysius.

In the Areopagiticus, written prior to 357,⁴³ Isocrates considers the internal affairs of Athens. The main purpose of this work was to advise the Athenians that they should reform their government by turning back the clock and restoring the ancient powers of the Areopagus. Before the year 462, the Areopagus was one of the most prestigious institutions of the Athenian state, functioning as Athens'

⁴²Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 239-240.

⁴³So Jaeger uses this date (Paideia, III, 109-110), while other authorities would put the composition of this speech a few years later than 357 (see, for example, Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 105-106). Since precision in the dating of this speech is not crucial to the argument here, the date given above is used since it seems to be the one accepted by most authorities.

highest court and exercising a wide range of undefined powers.⁴⁴ Of special interest to Isocrates was the conservative nature of this body and its former powers of censorship in the area of public morality. Perhaps the reestablishment of the institution along the lines of its former standing would serve to restore the moral fabric of the Athenian state and the code of ethics which once regulated the conduct of public servants during the days of the Persian Wars and the Delian League. This conviction is clearly illustrated in two passages from the Areopagiticus:

For if we effect a change of polity, it is evident. . . that such conditions of life as our ancestors enjoyed will come about also; for from the same political institutions there must always spring like or similar ways of life. (78)

If we will only imitate our ancestors we shall both deliver ourselves from our present ills and become the saviors, not of Athens alone, but of all the Hellenes. (84)

In many ways the Areopagiticus is an elaboration of the idealistic picture of the earlier history of Athens which Isocrates had already outlined in the Panegyricus (74-84, 103-105). As Jebb has pointed out, the one work (Panegyricus) describes the external relations of Athens during her greatest period, while the other (Areopagiticus) concentrates on her internal affairs which made such a situation possible.⁴⁵ The latter oration was Isocrates' way of saying that internal reform

⁴⁴J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock, The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. V: Athens 478-401 B.C. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 98-100.

⁴⁵Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 210.

was a prerequisite if Athens were again to aspire to hegemony in the Greek world, and if she wished to assume the leadership of a Panhellenic campaign against Persia. To Isocrates' mind, there could be no more effective reform than the reinstatement of the former prerogatives of the Areopagus.

In a letter entitled To Archidamus, written in 356 when Athens and Sparta were allies, Isocrates again urges his Panhellenic scheme, this time to a Spartan king. He reminds Archidamus that his illustrious father, Agesilaus, was a man who provided strong leadership in his campaigns against Persia, but failed because the Greeks were not united.⁴⁶ This fragment is significant because of the length to which Isocrates goes in describing the wretched conditions of Greece, conditions which Isocrates says Archidamus will have to alleviate before he attacks Persia.⁴⁷ In the letter, as in the Areopagiticus, Isocrates places as much, if not more, emphasis on the amelioration of internal Greek affairs as he does on the defeat of the barbarians. This fact is brought out in the following passage:

I for my part say that, disregarding everything else, you (Archidamus) should give your attention to these two tasks--to rid the Hellenes from their wars and from all the other miseries with which they are now afflicted, and to put a stop to the insolence of the barbarians and to their possession of wealth beyond their due. (19)

Isocrates again considers foreign affairs in his speech On the Peace. The work was probably written in 355 while negotiations were

⁴⁶To Archidamus, 11-14.

⁴⁷Ibid., 14 and 17.

going on to end the Social War of 357. The war was fought between Athens and her more important allies--Chios, Cos, Rhodes, and Byzantium--which had revolted when they sensed that the Athenians were transforming the Second Athenian League into another imperial system. But Athens, at this time in the fourth century, lacked the internal stability and military strength which she possessed during the fifth century when she transformed the Delian Confederacy into the first Athenian Empire, and eventually had little choice but to come to terms with her allies.⁴⁸

Isocrates' speech on this matter represents an attempt to retrieve what he could from a difficult situation. In some ways this meant contradicting his earlier pronouncements, since he now advised the Athenians to grant total freedom to the allies; and further, he based his argument in large part on the provisions of the Peace of Antalcidas (King's Peace) which he had damned earlier in ringing tones in the Panegyricus. With reference to Isocrates' Panhellenic program, especially as it is formulated in the Panegyricus, On the Peace indicates that his desire for Athens to reestablish herself as an imperial hegemon has been given a severe blow. He did not altogether rule out an Athenian resurgence, but more than ever he counselled the Athenians to eschew completely the claims of empire and to deal justly with their fellow Greeks. If Athens would do these things, he foresaw the possibility of the Greek states voluntarily

⁴⁸Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 183.

allowing Athens to assume a leadership role.⁴⁹ In this way the same type of arrangement which he had described in the Panegyricus would come about--an Athenian-led Greece which would respect the freedom of the poleis.

The main theme of On the Peace is the moral reform of Athens and a return to the ways of the old days of the Delian League. In this respect it much resembles the message given in the Areopagiticus. It quite definitely reflects Isocrates' very great interest in the social situation of Athens. On the Peace describes in vivid terms the terrible conditions of the poor;⁵⁰ and the vehemence with which Isocrates attacks demagogues and sycophants who enrich themselves at the expense of other men is not surpassed in any of his other works. The question of the disposition of the Athenian poor is to such a degree paramount in his mind that even the Panhellenic war against Persia becomes a moot issue. (On the Peace contains no mention of it.) Instead, Isocrates seeks a specific method to remedy the misfortune of indigent Athenians. In this regard, he commends an area in Thrace as a possible site for settling colonies of these poor.⁵¹ In fact, this is one of the things that he had earlier said a war against

⁴⁹On the Peace 144.

⁵⁰See, for example, the following--"those of the Hellenes who are in need, and because of their poverty are now wandering from place to place" (24); and, "Our people are in such straits that not one of our citizens is able to live with pleasure or at ease; on the contrary, Athens is rife with lamentations (127).

⁵¹On the Peace 24.

Persia would accomplish--the providing of new homes and better means of survival for the poor of the Greek city-states.

In the literary works coinciding with Isocrates' late years, one finds him once again fervently preaching a crusade against Persia. Now, however, he dismisses Athens as a potential leader and turns instead to Philip II of Macedon. In a letter to Philip, written ca. 342, Isocrates asks him to undertake an expedition against the Great King,⁵² and to commit his kingship "into the keeping of the goodwill of the Hellenic race" (24).

In the same year, Isocrates addressed a major work to Philip, the Philippus, which called on him to reconcile the Greeks and lead them against Persia. The situation on the Greek mainland was in some significant ways propitious for such an occurrence. Philip had already proven his genius as a monarch, a diplomat, and master of the military art, and in 347 he had concluded a ten-year war with Athens by the signing of the so-called Peace of Philoctates. But of even greater import to Isocrates was the fact that Philip had also expressed a desire to command a war against the Persians.⁵³

In the Philippus, Isocrates' Panhellenic policy remains basically unchanged. He first advises Philip to reconcile the principal cities of the Greek mainland (Argos, Sparta, Thebes, and Athens), and notes that conditions are favorable for effecting such a reconciliation.

• ⁵²To Philip Epist II, 11.

⁵³Isocrates, trans. by George Norlin, I, 41.

He then impresses upon Philip what would take place after such a general rapprochement.⁵⁴ This passage is particularly important because it shows what sort of role Isocrates envisioned for Philip. Surprisingly, it does not picture Philip as acquiring a great deal more power than he already had. On the contrary, Philip's court at Pella was to serve as a forum for ambassadors from the more prominent of the Greek states, and these ambassadors would seek out Philip's advice on their particular problems. Since it would be understood that Philip had the general welfare of the Greeks at heart, his decisions would naturally be followed.⁵⁵ There is almost no element of compulsion in the arrangement. In fact, it would be overstating the situation to identify it as any type of formal confederation; rather, it presents a picture of free Greek states voluntarily deciding to let Philip arbitrate the more serious problems of intra- and inter-state conflict.

When Isocrates turned his attention to the subject of the Persian expedition, he again underscored his concern about achieving a viable solution to the problems besetting the Greek social order. He not only called upon Philip to be the champion of Greek liberty, but also emphasized the potential menace of vagrant hordes of Greek mercenary soldiers. Fortunately, however, this threat could be thwarted if

⁵⁴Philippus 47-56.

⁵⁵Philippus 69-71; and Charles Adams, "Recent Views of the Political Influence of Isocrates," Classical Philology, VII (July 1912), 343-347.

permanent settlements were established for these wanderers.⁵⁶ He realistically expected Philip to capture Asia "from Cilicia to Sinope" (120), and to found cities which could be used to locate these homeless Greeks, thereby insuring both the satisfaction of the latter and the safety of all Greeks.⁵⁷ The Philippus is Isocrates' last explicit statement concerning a solution to the Greek social problems of his time. It shows Philip II leading a confederacy of autonomous states to victory over the Persians. With the victory, permanent Greek colonies would be established in the area and thereby improve the social conditions of the Greeks. This, in turn, would remove the main stimulus of war, poverty.

The last work of Isocrates was another letter written to Philip after the battle of Chaeronea in 338, wherein he congratulated the Macedonian on his victory.⁵⁸ Isocrates now saw the reconciliation of the Greeks as a reality, and he exhorted Philip to carry this war to Persia.⁵⁹ In his closing statements, Isocrates expressed his gratitude for living long enough to have seen the partial realization of his Panhellenic ideas, and hoped that their complete fulfillment would

⁵⁶Philippus 104, 120-121.

⁵⁷Alexander Fuks, "Isocrates and the Social-Economic Situation in Greece," Ancient Society, III (1972), note 73, 41.

⁵⁸The authenticity of this letter has been doubted, but on insufficient grounds; see L. F. Smith, The Genuineness of the Ninth and Third Letters of Isocrates (Lancaster, Pa.), 1940.

⁵⁹To Philip Epist. III, 2-3.

materialize in the future.⁶⁰

In light of the above exposition of Isocrates' ideas, it is now possible to compare Isocrates with his predecessors. In the previous chapter, two main types of pre-Isocratic Panhellenism were distinguished that can be dated to the period of the fifth century: the first was mostly passive and concentrated on the distinction between Greek and non-Greek without specifically desiring the lessening of the poleis' autonomy; the second was somewhat more developed in that it desired active cooperation among Greeks even to the extent of deemphasizing the importance of the individual poleis if peace could thereby be insured. Neither form, however, set forth any type of specific federal system for the Greeks. The Panhellenism of Isocrates might at first glance seem to overshadow these fifth century types, especially owing to the frequency and serious import of his efforts. A closer examination reveals, however, that Isocrates' ideas fall essentially within preexisting boundaries. Furthermore, it does not appear that his thoughts concerning Panhellenism are very advanced even within these limits.

It has been stated above that Isocrates, in promoting a Greek war against Persia, placed more emphasis on the solving of social and economic problems within Greece than on Panhellenic unity. This, in part, is substantiated by the fact that Isocrates never suggested a plan which would have significantly encroached on the autonomy of the Greek states. He apparently hoped that the prospect of confiscating

⁶⁰Ibid., 6.

Persian wealth would provide sufficient inducement to inspire the Greeks to voluntarily undertake a Persian war. If they were victorious, the acquisition of such wealth would, from Isocrates' viewpoint, probably render further Panhellenic efforts unnecessary.

When these views are compared with those of Isocrates' predecessors, it becomes clear that Isocrates did not add substantially to the concept of Panhellenism. If, for example, one reexamines the Pan-Sicilianism found in Book IV of Thucydides' History, or considers again the Panhellenic sentiments in certain of the plays of Euripides and Aristophanes, it can be seen that Isocrates' originality was minimal. In their reflections on Panhellenism, all of these fifth-century authors introduce the idea of self-sacrifice for the common good. If the preceding analysis is correct, however, Isocrates did not look upon Panhellenism as an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end, namely, improved social conditions for the Greeks. Never does Isocrates call upon Athens to sacrifice her present interests for the good of Greece. On the contrary, Isocrates' most insistent appeal focuses on the individual self-interest of each Greek state, and on Athens in particular. As a result, his schemes seem to support the preservation of autonomy of the city-state to an even greater degree than the implied ideas of many of his predecessors. One concludes, therefore, that by calling for active, yet voluntary, cooperation among the Greek states, Isocrates should not be regarded as an advanced exponent of Panhellenic thought in the fourth century. Indeed, he does not even reach the limits already established by

fifth century writers.

There are certainly at least two basic objections to this interpretation. One, which is presented by Warner Jaeger in his Paideia, argues that Isocrates supported above all an "intellectual nationalism."⁶¹ By this Jaeger means that Isocrates emphasized the ultimate value of Greek culture (paideia) to such an extent that he even based his appeal for the war against Persia primarily on the grounds of Greek intellectual superiority. By maintaining that the idea of a common paideia gave the greatest impetus to Isocrates' plans concerning Persia, Jaeger presupposes that a form of Panhellenism is central to Isocrates' political thinking. This in itself is significant, but Jaeger goes on to say that Isocrates elevated this standard to an absolute status. The upshot is a "Panhellenic morality" which takes the place of the morality based on autonomous city-states.⁶² This conception, if true, would indeed indicate that Isocrates formulated a very advanced type of Panhellenism.

The main basis for Jaeger's theory rests on a famous passage in the Panegyricus:

So far has our city distanced the rest of mankind in thought and in speech that her pupils have become the teachers of the rest of the world; and she has brought it about that the name "Hellenes" suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title "Hellenes" applies rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood. (50)

⁶¹Jaeger, Paideia, III, 79.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Jaeger interprets these words to mean that Isocrates was advancing an intellectual nationalism. To be sure, this passage has "intellectual" overtones, but the primary question concerns its nationalistic bent. When considered in its proper context, therefore, it is the contention here that Isocrates' intent was to support the Athenian claim for hegemony and not to promote a scheme of nationalism based on a common culture.⁶³

It has been demonstrated above that one of the main purposes of the Panegyricus was to advance the Athenian claim to hegemony over Sparta's rival claim. Thus, when Isocrates says that "the title 'Hellenes' is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood," can this not be interpreted as a slap at the relatively uncultured (by Athenian standards) Spartans rather than the advocacy of a Panhellenic nationalism? After all, it is clear from the context that "our culture" refers not to "our Greek culture," but rather to "our Athenian culture."

The real meaning of the passage becomes even more transparent when one considers that almost half of the Panegyricus is devoted to a description of the great benefits resulting from Athenian culture as opposed to the great calamities caused by the Spartans. In effect, Isocrates is openly challenging Sparta's right to consider herself as a truly Hellenic state--a challenge which he reechoes in more explicit terms many years later in the Panathenaicus. The Panathenaicus bears

⁶³Norman H. Baynes, "Isocrates," Byzantine Studies and Other Essays (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 144-167.

a striking resemblance to the Panegyricus, especially in its comparison of Athens and Sparta to the complete detriment of the latter. Isocrates, in the Panathenaicus, rebukes the Spartans for having "so far departed from our common laws" that they "are in no respect of the same way of thinking as either the Hellenes or the barbarians" (213).

When the above evidence is taken into account, it seems quite clear that Panegyricus (50) cannot be used to support the theory that Isocrates was advancing some type of claim for Panhellenism; it is merely illustrative of another Isocratic assault on Spartan prestige and power which would redound to the credit of Athens. Jaeger's contention that paideia was Isocrates' ultimate objective in promoting a Greek campaign against Persia is, therefore, not persuasive, nor is it consistent with the real message of the Panegyricus. To Isocrates, Greek unity was merely a necessary prerequisite to insure a successful military effort; but in the long run, these Panhellenic sentiments were to serve only as a means to a more important end, namely, the acquisition of new wealth and land.⁶⁴ Once the Persians had been defeated, Isocrates apparently hoped that the Greeks would enter into a situation of peaceful co-existence within the bounds of their autonomous and sovereign city-states.⁶⁵

Another possible objection to the analysis given here can be

⁶⁴See, for example, Panegyricus 132, 134, 173, 182, 187.

⁶⁵See Panegyricus 173-174, in particular.

raised in light of the contents of Isocrates' oration On the Peace. As indicated above, Isocrates advised the Athenians in this speech to give up their empire (i.e., the Second Athenian League) in order to court the favor of the Hellenes and perhaps so inspire them that they would voluntarily acclaim Athens as the hegemon of the Greeks. In addition, there is no mention in this oration of any projected campaign against Persia. When these two items are considered together, a case could be made that Isocrates was promoting Panhellenism at the expense of purely Athenian interests. But, however one might try to see Isocrates advocating a Panhellenic arrangement for the good of Greece and divorced from a military expedition against the Persians, it would be a mistake to believe that, in writing On the Peace, Isocrates had abandoned or in any way altered the outlook given previously in the Panegyricus.

Isocrates wrote On the Peace in 355, at a time when Athens found herself hard-pressed to check the revolt of many allied states in the Second Athenian League. The oration focuses on the theme of expediency and reflects interests which are singularly Athenian. Isocrates does not ask, nor does he want Athens to sacrifice her empire for the good of the Hellenes, but rather for the good of the Athenians.⁶⁶ Indeed, it should constantly be kept in mind that the preservation of the Athenian polis was "in Isocrates' eyes of higher importance than Pan-

⁶⁶On the Peace 136-141.

hellenism and the war against Persia."⁶⁷ Furthermore, he avoids any mention of Persia, not because he had ceased to contemplate a Persian war (this theme recurs in his later works), but because he saw the futility and self-defeating purpose of Athens continuing to fight her former allies, as well as the antagonism from Persia which any resurgence of Athenian imperialism would undoubtedly provoke. It should also be recalled that Isocrates desired the hegemony for Athens largely to lead an attack on Persia; if, therefore, circumstances made the proposed Persian war impractical, there was thus much less to gain by seizing a leadership role in Greece.⁶⁸

By espousing the cessation of inter-Hellenic warfare (especially between Athens and the members of her League) and the restoration of a prevailing atmosphere of universal polis autonomy, Isocrates was trying to promote a situation which would be more conducive to carrying out his ultimate plan. Clearly he did not view the state of affairs existing at the time of On the Peace as one which would motivate "the Hellenes" to rally behind Athens and follow her lead in undertaking a Panhellenic crusade against Persia. Unless there existed a general feeling of harmony among Greeks, and unless Athens could reaffirm its commitment to promote the sovereignty of all poleis (a promise implicit in the Second Athenian League's charter), Isocrates' vision of a voluntary Panhellenic campaign against Persia under the

⁶⁷Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," 27.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 27.

leadership of Athens was an impossibility. When viewed in this way, On the Peace presents no obstacle to the interpretation given above of Isocrates' ideas on Panhellenism.

One other work which has a bearing on the matter of Isocrates' Panhellenism is the Philippus. A surface look at the work might lead one to question the analysis given here since in it Isocrates speaks of the "greatest states of Hellas" putting "an end to their mutual quarrels" (9). And one can see the Philip presented in this work as Isocrates' Panhellenic hero who forges Greece into a nation. In truth, however, the Panhellenism in the Philippus goes no further than what has already been stated above if one reads carefully enough.

As in Isocrates' other speeches, the Philippus takes the Greek world of the autonomous polis as a given and wishes to preserve this state of affairs indefinitely--at least as far as Athens is concerned.⁶⁹ Isocrates seeks to guarantee Athenian autonomy by persuading Philip that it is in his best interest to pursue a non-imperialist policy in Greece. If Philip wishes to attack the barbarians, Isocrates notes, then he would do well to insure that harmony reigns in the Greek world. To support his counsel, Isocrates reminds Philip that the Trojan expedition met success when Greek harmony prevailed, whereas Agesilaus' invasion met with failure when revolts against Spartan hegemony divided Agesilaus' attention.⁷⁰ Isocrates then invites Philip

⁶⁹S. Perlman, "Isocrates' Philippus and Panhellenism," Historia, XVIII (1969), 372.

⁷⁰Perlman, "Isocrates' Philippus and Panhellenism," 374.

to draw the proper conclusion and insure peace among the major Greek powers by guaranteeing their individual autonomy. Thus, Isocrates' call for Greek cooperation can be seen for what it is--an attempt to maintain polis autonomy.⁷¹ The old orator shrewdly observed Philip's position as the dominant force in the Greek world and knew that any conflict among the poleis would almost certainly bring the Macedonian into the struggle, perhaps as a dictator of terms to the rest of the Greeks. Isocrates, then, sought to forestall any possible loss of Athens' autonomy while concurrently making the possibility of a Persian campaign more likely by calling for cooperation. Once again it is clear that Isocrates did not look beyond the already existing polis framework of his time.

One additional item remains to be considered--a comparison of Isocratean Panhellenism with the Panhellenism of Gorgias and Lysias. This comparison must, of necessity, be speculative owing to the scant remains of those works of Gorgias and Lysias which deal with this theme. In fact, the relevant passages of Gorgias are so fragmentary as to defy any meaningful reconstruction. It is probably true that Isocrates treated the topic at greater length than either Gorgias or Lysias, but whether his treatment had greater effect is difficult to say.

As intimated above, Isocrates did not develop the concept of a Panhellenic union beyond the outlines already established by Lysias.

⁷¹Philippus 87, 112-114.

Both men called for the Greeks to unite voluntarily under the leadership of a single state (in the case of Lysias, that state was Sparta). Isocrates, however, did claim to be more practical than his predecessors (Panegyricus 15-17). The possible effects of Isocrates' thought on his contemporaries will be considered in the next chapter, but on the matter of the hegemony the promotion of Athens or Sparta seems equally defensible and logical. Possibly Isocrates' expectations of the great gains which could be realized by defeating Persia were more persuasive than the arguments of Lysias. Since, however, the bulk of Lysias' thought on this subject is apparently irrevocably lost, there is clearly no way to tell with any certainty.⁷²

⁷²Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 166.

Chapter IV

Isocrates and Political, Social, and Economic Issues

In examining Isocrates' program as outlined above, there appear to be two main avenues to explore--the moral viewpoint of his works and the practicality of his proposals. A consideration of these two aspects should provide the information necessary to decide how accurate are the two claims that Isocrates makes for his proposals, namely, that he believes them to be both just and practical.¹

If one is to determine whether or not Isocrates can validly claim that his proposals are just, a logical starting point is to decide what Isocrates means by justice. It has been argued in the previous chapter that economic considerations were the greatest motivating factor for Isocrates' Panhellenic program. One would expect, therefore, that these same concerns would appear when Isocrates turns to Athenian affairs in another major speech, the Areopagiticus. One chooses this speech for two reasons: first, because it discusses the requisite virtues and responsibilities of the rulers of the state; and secondly, because it deals with the internal affairs of Athens and thus affords a means to compare Isocrates' thoughts on domestic and foreign policy.

It will be recalled that the main argument of the Areopagiticus calls for the reinvigoration of the Council of the Areopagus. This quasi-aristocratic council had been powerful in an earlier period when

¹See, for example, Panegyricus 17, 83.

Athens was entering her golden age. Isocrates lamented its feeble state in his own day and called for a restoration of its powers on the grounds that "from the same political institution there must always spring like or similar ways of life" (78). In Isocrates' scheme, then, the members of the Council of the Areopagus ought to be the main ruling figures of the state. In elaborating on these men who are the most qualified to rule the state, Isocrates believes that they should "govern nobly and wisely" (14) in order to make the citizens "better and wiser" (20); it is the rulers who produce "propriety and justice" (28) in the state. In addition, the rulers ought also to be virtuous, and Isocrates so ascribes virtue and sobriety to the members of the Areopagus.²

Thus far, Isocrates' argument is quite conventional in its use of the "roster device" for establishing who are the qualified rulers. That is to say, a given society is stratified according to certain criteria, and at the top of this "roster" are those most capable of ruling the state wisely.³ Obviously the important issue here is the criteria used to establish the dividing line between the qualified rulers and the rest of society. It would seem that for Isocrates there are several standards, some of which have already been mentioned above: virtue, sobriety, justice. But certainly these words can mean different

²Areopagiticus 38.

³Willmoore Kendall, "The 'Roster Device': J. S. Mill and Contemporary Elitism," in Willmoore Kendall Contra Mundum, ed. by Nellie D. Kendall (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1971), p. 507.

things to different people. One authority, for example, takes these expressions at face value and sees in Isocrates a proponent of democracy. Isocrates is described as merely trying to restrain democratic excesses and enforce the true will of the people. It must be granted that the Areopagiticus shows his ruling body is to be composed of only the wealthy, but one should realize that they are supposed to rule for the common good.⁴ In sum, Isocrates was indeed a conservative, but he was not unfavorable to democratic elements; he actually wanted a mixture of oligarchic and democratic principles.⁵ Now there can be little doubt that there is considerable evidence to support such a view; nonetheless, before accepting such an evaluation, it is necessary to confront the entire work to determine what his real intentions might have been.

To better understand these intentions, it is necessary to discover the real motivations behind his method of choosing the ideal rulers of Athens. In this regard, it can be seen that Isocrates looks back to the idyllic (in his view) days of Solon's rule when the Athenians chose as their leaders those "who could afford the time and possessed sufficient means" (26). He leaves little doubt that the Athenians of his day should return to this practice. In other words, Isocrates' prime consideration in deciding who should be a member of the ruling elite was wealth. To be sure, the members of the ruling elite were to be punished

⁴Paul Cloché, Isocrate et Son Temps (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963), pp. 84-87.

⁵Ibid., pp. 89, 92.

if they governed badly, but the basic qualifications for membership in this body remained fixed. While Isocrates does not wholly advocate the supplanting of the democracy by the reestablishment of archaic institutions based on a wholly timocratic order, the evidence does indicate that his thoughts on an ideal polity, especially as it is expressed in the Areopagiticus, do in fact move a great deal in that direction.

To some degree such an interpretation of the Areopagiticus may be unorthodox, but there is still more evidence to show Isocrates' pronounced economic emphasis. For example, in one passage of this work Isocrates mentions that the Athenians under Solon favored their well-ordered society because "they had been schooled to be industrious and frugal, and not to . . . conspire against the possessions of others, and not to repair their own fortunes out of the public funds" (24). Again, when he describes the virtuous life which the Athenians led in the good old days, Isocrates discourses at length on the economic structure of the state as well as on the felicity which existed between Athenian social classes. He concludes by saying, "The result of their (the Athenians) dealing honorably with each other was that the ownership of property was secured to those to whom it rightfully belonged, while the enjoyment of property was shared by all the citizens who needed it" (35). It can be noted further that this passage implies that Isocrates did not think it necessary that property ownership be a universal privilege. At least one scholar, however, has seen in Isocrates' support of justice and virtue (such as Areopagiticus (21),

where the principle of "to each his due" is commended) a further commitment to the right of all to own property.⁶ But even so staunch a defender of Isocrates as Paul Cloche regards it as highly unlikely that Isocrates ever favored such a "right."⁷ As one looks more closely, Isocrates' rather static concept of society makes this right appear even less likely to have received his support.

Viewing Isocrates' concept of society in more detail, there are several passages in the Areopagiticus that are quite revealing. One such passage considers the proper mode of education for boys and points out the way in which the Areopagus was once in charge of allotting jobs: "They assigned to each one a vocation which was in keeping with his means, . . . knowing that poverty comes about through idleness, and evil-doing through poverty" (44).⁸ The first part of this statement certainly lends support to the contention that Isocrates' ideal state is quasi-timocratic in nature, since it presupposes a type of system based on wealth as the predominating factor in determining the individual's position in society.⁹ In fact, Isocrates even goes so far as to suggest that the decision of who should study phil-

⁶Georges Mathieu, Les Idées Politiques d'Isocrate (Paris: Boivin, 1925), p. 151.

⁷Cloche, Isocrate et Son Temps, p. 100.

⁸Comments in the same vein are made by Isocrates in the Busiris where he defends the static society of the Egyptians (17-20).

⁹Much of this analysis agrees with Baynes' essay, "Isocrates," p. 158, which does see Isocrates' state as one wholly based on wealth as the "roster" criterion. This view finds support in Bringmann, Studien, p. 94; Bringmann sees Isocrates' program as one completely biased toward the economic interests of the vested class.

osophy ought to be based purely on the individual's economic status.¹⁰ The second part of the passage complements the arguments made in Chapter III that Isocrates' advocacy of a war against Persia was primarily motivated by economic considerations. It was Isocrates' belief that if the Greek poleis could acquire general prosperity and stable economies, the major causes of external wars and internal friction would be eliminated.

In still another passage in the Areopagiticus, Isocrates lists the beneficial conditions that reigned in Athens during the high point of the Areopagus' power:

And so, because of these things, our forefathers lived in such a degree of security that the houses and establishments in the country were finer and more costly than those within the city-walls, and many of the people never visited Athens even for the festivals, preferring to remain at home rather than share in the pleasures dispensed by the state. (53)

It seems clear enough that Isocrates is here referring to the security that the Athenian well-to-do classes once enjoyed, with the tacit implication present that they no longer possessed this blessing in his own period. And since for Isocrates security for the upper classes means overall stability for the state, he implies that all Athenians would benefit if only such security were properly respected.

One is now in a better position, perhaps, to grasp more fully the kind of "roster" (see above) which Isocrates presents in the Areopagiticus. Isocrates gives as qualifications for his ruling elite the

¹⁰Areopagiticus 45.

obvious traits of virtue and justice, but also slips in the requirement that the rulers must have attained a high level of financial achievement. One sees presented here, then, a multi-value roster which ineluctably raises the issue whether one should consider some of these values more important than others, and if so, which ones. Now it should be kept in mind that in the Areopagiticus Isocrates is limning his view of the just state, and as has been shown above this state is largely seen in socio-economic terms: security for the property of the upper-classes, submission by the lower classes, and a generally static class structure overall is the main picture presented. Thus it would seem that for Isocrates the concepts of justice and virtue reduce themselves significantly into matters relating to economics. These economic matters therefore must be considered of prime importance in the selection of rulers for Isocrates' ideal state. It seems clear, then, that in at least one speech, the Areopagiticus, Isocrates is primarily concerned with socio-economic problems, even when he professes to be advancing the cause of virtue and justice. The Areopagiticus thus seems to continue the line of thought on domestic affairs that was found above in the foreign concerns of the Panegyricus. The Areopagiticus does provide circumstantial evidence that Panhellenism might have been of only secondary concern to Isocrates at best.

At this point it is perhaps convenient to deal with a matter which only indirectly concerns Panhellenism, but which is unavoidable in any study of Isocrates' works: the surprisingly numerous and

glaring contradictions that occur throughout his works.¹¹ Certainly one might expect that anyone who lived to be ninety-eight years old and wrote steadily throughout his adult life might be somewhat inconsistent now and then. The problems which the works of Isocrates present, however, involve something more than minor inconsistencies. In fact, they involve blatant contradictions on major issues, sometimes within the same work. Naturally, this makes it difficult to get at Isocrates' main intention since there is a contradicting assertion somewhere in his opus to almost any statement one makes about his ideas. For example, after reading a passage in On the Peace, in which he says it is always advantageous to act justly,¹² one might almost call him an idealist. Yet, when one turns to the Panegyricus and the Panathenaicus, there is a totally different impression. In the Panegyricus, Isocrates dismisses almost casually the Athenian atrocities at Melos in 416.¹³ In the Panathenaicus, he says that when the Athenians had a choice between two imperfect policies, they decided it was "better to do injury to others rather than to suffer injury themselves, and to rule without justice over others than. . . to be subject to the Lacedaemonians--a course which all sensible men would prefer for themselves" (117).

¹¹For a long list of discrepancies (and only a partial list at that), see C. Bradford Welles, "Isocrates' View of History," The Classical Tradition, ed. by Luitpold Wallach (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 23.

¹²On the Peace 33-34.

¹³Panegyricus 101-102.

There are other examples of this sort of thing too numerous to mention here. There is, however, one instance that is worth examining because of its relevance to the previous analysis of the Areopagiticus. In On the Peace Isocrates says approvingly, "We recognized the principle that it is not just for the stronger to rule over the weaker" (69). Along these same lines, he had earlier stated in the Panegyricus that in former times the Athenians were correct to consider "it an outrage that the many should be subject to the few, that those who were poorer in fortune but not inferior in other respects should be banished from the offices, that, furthermore, in a fatherland which belongs to all in common some should hold the place of masters" (105). This sounds all well and good, but in fact these outrageous things were just what Isocrates proposed to do if the interpretation of the Areopagiticus offered above is correct. That is to say, the few ought to be given control over the many, and these few should be primarily chosen on the basis of their wealth.

It is undeniable that these obvious contradictions raise a thorny problem in any attempt to decide what Isocrates really believed. How is one to decide which is the real Isocrates speaking? A solution can perhaps be arrived at if certain things are kept in mind. One thing in particular to pay attention to is the way in which Isocrates uses rhetoric and history. In the Panegyricus, Isocrates notes that it is in the nature of oratory "to represent the great as lowly or invest the little with grandeur, to recount the things of old in a new manner or set forth events of recent date in an old fashion" (8).

Oratory, therefore, is conceived by Isocrates to be sophistic.¹⁴ Again, in the same passage, he gives his general view of history by saying that it is the peculiar gift of the wise man in dealing with past deeds "to make proper use of them at the appropriate time, to conceive the right sentiments about them in each instance, and to set them forth in finished phrase" (10). In other words, history to Isocrates was to be used primarily to point out morals, and occasionally history would have to be improved upon if it was to point out the right moral. As one commentator has observed, for Isocrates, "history is what you make of it,"¹⁵ and, indeed, Isocrates made of it pretty much what he wanted to.¹⁶ In fact, Isocrates almost openly confesses this in the Panathenaicus when he says that his earlier speech was "packed with history and philosophy, and filled with all manner of devices and fictions" (246). When reading Isocrates, therefore, it is always necessary to be selective.¹⁷ But this inevitably raises the problem of deciding which of the passages one can take at face value and which require a judicious reading between the lines. This difficulty can be resolved only if Isocrates' main themes are kept in mind. Thus, in determining which passage to accept and which to reject, it

¹⁴Baynes, "Isocrates," p. 147.

¹⁵Welles, "Isocrates' View of History," p. 18.

¹⁶For an extreme exposition of this view, see C. H. Wilson, "Thucydides, Isocrates, and the Athenian Empire," Greece and Rome, XIII (April, 1966), pp. 54-63.

¹⁷Baynes, "Isocrates," p. 148.

is best to first discover what is the main argument of the individual work, and what is the relationship of the individual passage to that argument. As has been demonstrated above, the main concerns of Isocrates center on advancing the interests of Athens and solving the economic and social problems of Greece as he sees them. Consequently, any argument directly related to either or both of these ideas will almost always take precedence over other arguments.

One can demonstrate this theory by examining the apparent inconsistency noted earlier (pp. 86-87) between the Panegyricus and the Areopagiticus. Using the method of discrimination outlined above, one can be quite justified in being highly skeptical of the passage quoted from the Panegyricus because it is not one of the work's main themes, but is instead introduced merely for support of Isocrates' advancement of Athens' claim to the hegemony of the Greek states. And Isocrates is never very scrupulous about the exactitude of his supporting arguments. On the other hand, the discussion of "the few" versus "the many" in the Areopagiticus does not involve an ancillary issue, but pertains rather to a primary theme of this work, a theme directly related to the economic and social concerns that were so important for Isocrates. This is, then, evidence to establish a considerable case for maintaining that the Areopagiticus expresses his real intentions whereas the passage quoted above from the Panegyricus does not.

Returning now to the main consideration with which this discussion began, i.e., the justness of Isocrates' proposals, it would seem that he can lay no special claim to that virtue. For the most part, his

proposals seem to be motivated by economic concerns and not by the demands of an abstract justice. This does not mean that his ideas are necessarily unjust. It simply indicates that in proposing a course of action, Isocrates usually did not pose as an initial question, "Is this act just?" Instead, he seems to have been preoccupied with other questions, such as, "Does this act make the Greek poleis more prosperous?," or, "Is this act in Athens' material self-interest?" Nevertheless, Isocrates could and did consistently proceed to defend or suggest unjust acts, such as the massacre at Melos or, for that matter, even his desired Persian war. It is perhaps not going too far to suggest that a certain moral obtuseness is characteristic of the works of Isocrates.

In examining the old orator's proposals even more closely, a not altogether unconvincing case can be made for the proposition that private considerations were the real motivation behind them. This is largely based on the fact that Isocrates was himself a member of the propertied class which he so often supported.¹⁸ Thus his complaints about the dangers that existed for those who were wealthy,¹⁹ and his great concern for the security of property can be seen in a new light. In truth, it may not be too much to say that his preoccupation with the rootless poor and the predatory mercenaries was motivated purely by an anxiety over his own financial position. In the Panegyricus, for example, he notes the following: "And it (his proposed Persian

¹⁸Antidosis 146.

¹⁹For example, Ibid., 159-160.

campaign) will profit those who crave the quiet life (i.e., Isocrates) . . . for it will enable them to reap the fruits of their own possessions in security" (182). Perhaps more to the point is the concluding statement from On the Peace:

But I urge and exhort those who are younger and more vigorous than I to speak and write the kind of discourses by which they will turn the greatest states. . . into the paths of virtue and justice, since when the affairs of Hellas are in a happy and prosperous condition it follows that the state of learning and letters also is greatly improved. (145)

Considered out of context, this passage seems unremarkable enough, but when one realizes that it is the peroration of a speech fairly dripping with "high" moral sentiment and concerning itself with a major problem facing the entire Greek world, this rather leaden closing jars a bit. The matter becomes even more intriguing when one realizes that the original Greek in the last sentence would be rendered more accurately if it read as follows: "the prosperity of philosophers (φιλοσόφων) also is greatly improved."²⁰ Now since Isocrates considered himself a member of that particular fraternity,²¹ here is noteworthy evidence that Isocrates' programs were in part motivated by a desire for personal gain. Admittedly, these passages seem to run counter to any idea that Isocrates formed his plans with an eye to their virtuous nature. But Isocrates' concern for the security of the propertied class in general and himself in particular does not necessarily mullify his overall argument. And as one can only speculate on the matter of his personal

²⁰Baynes, "Isocrates," pp. 154-156.

²¹See, for example, Antidosis 270.

involvement in a material sense with the programs he espoused, this point is really not worth pursuing in great detail.

The practicality of Isocrates' counsels and the degree to which they influenced his contemporaries is a difficult matter to discuss with any certainty. Almost every scholar who examines Isocrates' works attempts to proffer some sort of evaluation, with the result being that there exists a very wide divergence of opinion. Werner Jaeger, for example, holds that the propagation of Isocrates' ideas were very instrumental in spreading the culture of Hellenism.²²

The Cambridge Ancient History, on the other hand, denies that Isocrates had any important influence whatsoever.²³ Not surprisingly, these discussions usually involve a large amount of conjecture and educated guesswork, even on the part of the most eminent of scholars.²⁴ There are, however, some points on which one can speak with some certainty.

One case that seems rather clear pertains to an often made claim that in writing the Panegyricus, Isocrates foreshadowed the creation of the Second Athenian League. M. L. W. Laistner, for example, thinks that Isocrates' brilliant condemnation of Sparta and his praise of

²²Jaeger, Paideia, III, 81.

²³Bury, Cook, and Adcock, The Cambridge Ancient History, VI, p. 568.

²⁴See, for example, Karl Julius Beloch, Griechische Geschichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Company, 1922), III, 353-356; Beloch maintains that not only did Isocrates' writings have a significant influence throughout Greece, but also his position as Greece's foremost teacher of rhetoric transmitted much of Isocrates' message to Greece through his more influential pupils.

Athens must have had some effect on Athens' allies in persuading them to agree to a new league. Laistner also notes that Timotheus, a close friend and pupil of Isocrates, helped to organize and expand the new league.²⁵ It is extremely difficult, however, to square this interpretation with certain pertinent facts. For example, there is nothing in the Panegyricus to greatly reassure any prospective allies of Athens. On the contrary, there is a great deal to scare them away. Isocrates' rather cynical defense of Athens' massacre of the Melians has already been mentioned. And this, if anything, would make the Greek states think twice before entering into a "voluntary" alliance with the Athenians. A further difficulty with Laistner's thesis involves the actual goal of the Second Athenian League, the effort to establish a type of joint rule between Athens and her allies. In the Panegyricus, however, Isocrates says that the allied states fared best and grew most prosperous when they "yielded obedience" to Athens (103). Moreover, there is nothing in this work to suggest the organizational form that was actually used in setting up Athens' new naval confederacy.²⁶ In sum, then, there is little evidence to show that the Panegyricus significantly foreshadowed the formation of the Second Athenian League.

Another effect which Laistner claims to see resulting from the proposals of Isocrates is the reform program of Eubulus, Athens' chief

²⁵M. L. W. Laistner, "The Influence of Isocrates' Political Doctrine on Some Fourth Century Men of Affairs," Classical Weekly, XXIII (March 10, 1930), 29.

²⁶Baynes, "Isocrates," p. 145; Bringmann, Studien, p. 45.

financial administrator. Laistner says the works On the Peace and the Areopagiticus show Isocrates calling for Athens to undertake a peace and retrenchment policy in order to produce prosperous conditions, which is precisely what Eubulus did beginning in 354.²⁷ Yet there is no way to determine the degree of Isocratic influence on Eubulus with any conclusiveness. That Eubulus should favor peace is certainly no great surprise considering the tremendous toll that the recent Social War had taken on the Athenians. In addition, it is very unclear how Eubulus can be said to have implemented the plans set forth in the Areopagiticus. In fact, it is doubtful that anyone could have implemented such plans given their marked anti-democratic bias. It is true that Eubulus was not an avid supporter of radical democracy; but his chief distinction comes from his able handling of Athenian finances while pleasing the populace by giving them shows.²⁸ As far as any similarity between the goals of Isocrates and Eubulus may be concerned, this can probably be accounted for not because Isocrates influenced Eubulus but by the fact that they both to some degree acted as spokesmen for the wealthy class in Athens.²⁹ And presumably this class did not especially need Isocrates to instruct them in how to further their own immediate self-interests.

The matter of Isocrates' recommendations to Philip and his

²⁷Laistner, "Influence of Isocrates' Political Doctrine," pp. 129-130.

²⁸Jebb, Attic Orators, II, 27.

²⁹Botsford and Robinson, Hellenic History, p. 298.

opinions concerning Philip's course of action is a more serious issue, and needs to be examined in some detail. It should first be made clear that Isocrates' appeal to Philip was similar to those he had made previously to other strong men, such as Dionysius of Syracuse. That is to say, Isocrates desired the creation of a voluntary league of autonomous Greek states who would place themselves under the leadership of a capable military figure.³⁰

From some observers, Isocrates has received praise for realistically sizing up the situation with Philip and trying to persuade him to pursue a course that would benefit both himself and the rest of Greece.³¹ There is, however, evidence that contradicts such a view. To begin with, one may note that this vision of a voluntary Greek league under a benign strong man never came to pass. Indeed, it is hard to see how such a development could have happened under the circumstances of that period. The continuing commitment to autonomy by the Greek poleis was always sufficient to thwart such schemes. There does not seem to be anything in Isocrates' program which would realistically neutralize this important factor. The program of Isocrates was, in fact, doomed from the beginning. It was a delusion to imagine that the major Greek states could be harmoniously reconciled to each other, let alone to Philip, by the means which Isocrates envisioned. If Philip wanted to unite the Greek states behind him, the

³⁰See, for example, Bury, Cook, and Adcock, Cambridge Ancient History, VI, p. 546.

³¹Claude Mossé, La Fin de la Démocratie Athenienne (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), p. 447.

best and most practical means of achieving this would be to conquer them.³² But this ran counter to Isocrates' professed plan. Hence arises a paradox in Isocrates' program: how is it possible to obtain a lasting peace among the Greek poleis as an end result without using force as a means?

The basis which Isocrates gives for the possibility of the Greek states being reconciled seems very shaky. This basis, he tells Philip, results from the fact that "our states care nothing about their former enmities or about their oaths or about anything else save what they conceive to be expedient for themselves," and at present "selfish interests urge and present ills constrain them to this course."³³ But this surely implies that, if circumstances should change, these same states would not be so desirous of Philip's guidance and would without hesitation proceed to break away from him.³⁴ At such a point Philip would most likely have to use force to keep them in line, which results in the same sort of difficulty mentioned above--compulsion is to be avoided in achieving concord, yet, in a practical sense, it cannot be avoided.

As with most of Isocrates' works, however, the Philippus can be interpreted in a variety of ways. One rather recent and thorough study has indeed advanced ideas directly opposed to the ones expressed above

³²C. Adams, "Recent Views," p. 349.

³³Philippus 45.

³⁴Baynes, "Isocrates," pp. 159-160.

(see also, pp. 76 ff. above). Its author, Gerhard Dobesch, maintains that this speech influenced the course of events significantly in its call for the establishment of a Greek nation with Philip at its head. Also, he maintains that Isocrates did not envisage Athens playing any special role in the new order beyond her exerting influence as one of the larger Greek cities.³⁵

Up to a certain point Dobesch argues his case persuasively, but ultimately the available evidence does not sustain his views. Although a great many facts are presented in his scholarly work, the author seems to focus his argument on a few main points. One passage of particular importance here is Isocrates' description of Philip's future position:

Men of the highest renown will come as ambassadors to your court; you will advise with them about the general welfare (κοινῆς σωτηρίας), for which no other man will be found to have shown a like concern. (69-70)

The passage continues in the Philippus in this vein, but never gets more specific than this. Dobesch purports that this is a vision of a Panhellenic union, especially as regards the reference to "the general welfare."³⁶ But, in fact, Isocrates does not specify whether

³⁵Gerhard Dobesch, Der Panhellenische Gedanke im 4. Jh. v. Chr. und der "Philippos" des Isokrates (Wien: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1968). For a brief and judicious review of this work, see A. Brelfaart in Mnemosyne, XXV (1972), 326-327; Brelfaart's analysis is rather more sympathetic than is the one presented here, but it does question Dobesch's assessment of Isocrates' influence and of Athens' relative unimportance to the orator as presented in the Philippus.

³⁶Dobesch, Panhellen. Gedanke, pp. 151, 162-163.

Philip will have any more power in this plan than he already had. Hellas was already "on tiptoe with interest" in his proposals, and already not "indifferent to his measures." Moreover, Isocrates suggests that all this will come to pass only if Philip acts wisely and eschews naked force.³⁷ In other words, Philip will attain to what is substantially his present position only if he refrains from brute force! In this light, one must wonder if Panhellenism is the main concern being expressed here.

It is true that Isocrates does ask Philip to induce harmony among the Greek states, and also true that this is a departure from former pronouncements which pictured concord (ὁμόνοια) prevailing after the war against the barbarians.³⁸ But does this show a more radical Panhellenic feeling by Isocrates as Dobesch claims,³⁹ or might some other interest be involved? The answer has been given already that the latter is the case, that Isocrates wanted to forestall a move by Philip that would substantially reduce Athens' autonomy.⁴⁰ Such a situation could be avoided by establishing a stable condition among the poleis, thus providing no reason for Philip to intervene militarily.

It can also be noted that Isocrates does not explicitly say how

³⁷Philippus 68.

³⁸Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," 28.

³⁹Dobesch, Panhellen. Gedanke, pp. 151, 182.

⁴⁰See p. 72 above.

long this vague arrangement with Philip is to continue - does not say whether in fact it should continue after a successful conclusion to the barbarian campaign. He does say, however, that expediency alone rules among the governments of men, and that naked force ought not to be used to coerce recalcitrant states.⁴¹ Thus, when expediency dictates the breaking of this "Panhellenic union," what should Philip's course be? Presumably, he should simply acquiesce. In sum, it is exceedingly difficult to show that the Philippus foresees the beginning of a Greek national state.

Dobesch also points to passages which ask Philip to consider "all Hellas as his fatherland (πατρίδα)" (127), and one which seems to indicate that Athens is to receive no special treatment at his hands as points supporting his argument.⁴² Placed in context, however, they are susceptible to differing interpretations. For example, one can question Isocrates' true motive for telling Philip to consider Greece as his "fatherland." Isocrates goes on to tell the King "to be as ready to brave perils for her (Greece's) sake" as for his more personal concerns. In other words, Philip ought to be ready to bear the brunt of the campaign against the Great King while agreeing to share the wealth gained thereby in order to help all the Greeks. The full context, then, does not present a meaning that is much at variance with the general conclusions about Isocrates that have been given above.

⁴¹Philippus 68.

⁴²Dobesch, Panhellen. Gedanke, pp. 154-155.

The matter of Athens' role as envisioned by Isocrates is another moot point. It might seem at first glance, however, to be cut and dried since Isocrates advises Philip at one point in the Philippus to show himself "equally friendly to all" (80). Nonetheless, there is opposing evidence, to be dealt with below, that indicates some might be more equal than others.

More complications ensue when Isocrates' last letter to Philip is considered. The letter was written in 338 immediately after the battle of Chaeronea in which Philip defeated the combined forces of Athens and Thebes. There can be little doubt that Chaeronea was an act of compulsion on Philip's part. Yet, Isocrates' letter does not seem to regret this event, and even congratulates Philip on his victory. Philip is then urged to employ the services of the now subordinate Greeks for an attack on Persia.⁴³ But these sentiments seem difficult to reconcile with Isocrates' predilection for independence and autonomy, since the outcome of Chaeronea dictated that these characteristics would no longer apply to the states of Greece. This letter would seem to contradict much of what has been said above concerning Isocrates' beliefs. The contradiction is, however, only superficial.

It has been stated elsewhere that Isocrates operated within the tradition of polis autonomy. This is true enough as long as one notes the tradition's peculiar application in the real world. For Greeks, the concern for autonomy mainly involved one's own state. The abridgement

⁴³Epist. III, 1-3.

of autonomy, ordinarily unacceptable, was quite acceptable as long as you or one of your allies was doing the abridging. Isocrates, then, was not very concerned with the autonomy of the poleis, but rather with the freedom and interests of Athens. Indeed, it was shown above that he was capable of vacillating on the subject of the autonomy of Greek states when he implied in the Panegyricus that it was not necessarily wrong for Athens to have used force against her allies in order to make them obedient.⁴⁴ In regard to Athens and her interests, it is significant that Philip treated Athens quite leniently under the circumstances; among other things, the Athenian navy was carefully preserved by Philip.

It has already been pointed out that the self-interest of Athens was a matter of primary concern to Isocrates, and S. Perlman has argued quite persuasively that this concern is again reflected in the Philippus.⁴⁵ For example, Isocrates clearly implies at one point that Athens deserves Philip's special favor for past services by Athens:

Yes, Athens single-handed. . . freed Heracles' sons from the fears by which they were continually beset. Because of these services we deserve the gratitude. . . of those who are now living, for to us it is due both that they are alive and that they enjoy the blessings which are now theirs. (34) (*Italics mine.*)

Now if Philip's very existence is due to Athens, it is difficult to accept the idea that Isocrates expects Philip to treat her just like

⁴⁴Panegyricus 102.

⁴⁵S. Perlman, "Isocrates' Philippus, a Reinterpretation," Historia, VI (1957), 306-317; and, "Isocrates' Advice on Philip's Attitude toward Barbarians," Historia, XVI (1967), 338-343.

any other state.

Further on in the Philippus, Isocrates gives some examples of great enterprises undertaken by various people, and recalls the case of Alcibiades who persuaded the Spartans to vie against Athens for naval supremacy in the Aegean during the closing years of the Peloponnesian War. Despite the fact that Sparta won this war, her naval ambitions were eventually shattered and all her former glory soon fled as well. Isocrates twice here points out the moral that Sparta overreached herself by coveting sea supremacy instead of being satisfied with her superiority on land.⁴⁶ Perlman notes that this particular anecdote was included by Isocrates in order to influence Philip to make Athens a partner with him because of the large Athenian navy (which had been somewhat rejuvenated soon after 394).⁴⁷ It is possible, therefore, that Isocrates was satisfied with Philip's victory because he believed that Philip was following his advice after that victory. There is some support for such a view in the fact that Isocrates mentions a discussion which he had had with Antipater, one of Philip's most influential ministers, about "the course which is expedient for our city and for you."⁴⁸ Parenthetically, this seems to be the only direct evidence extant that Isocrates might have had some direct influence on Philip, even though Philip could easily have determined his lenient policy towards Athens independently of Isocrates.

⁴⁶Philippus 59-60.

⁴⁷Perlman, "Isocrates' Advice," p. 312.

⁴⁸Epist. III, 1.

Another factor needing to be kept in mind here, when trying to see how Isocrates could be satisfied with Philip's victory, is Isocrates' interest in a Persian campaign. It has been shown above that he attached a very great significance to this proposed military expedition. And now that the Greeks had some semblance of unity under Philip, Isocrates' dream could at last be carried out: Philip, with Athens as his chief ally, could attack--and defeat--the Great King on the Asian continent itself. Given the great hopes which Isocrates pinned on a Persian war, one might expect that Isocrates could overlook some unclear details (such as the real relationship between Philip and Athens) if the war and its great benefits (according to Isocrates) were about to become reality. Also, one can see why Isocrates could openly favor equal treatment while hoping for the opposite. As a propagandist in favor of the Persian campaign, Isocrates would naturally desire to minimize obstacles to it; and certainly Greek fractiousness was just such an obstacle. Therefore, since Isocrates truly did want concord for Greece (under certain conditions), he would be expected to publicly favor the equal-treatment policy, to avoid potentially dangerous bickerings with the other Greek states. But, in view of his concern for Athens, he could hope that secretly Philip would grant Athens a special position as co-leader in the Persian venture. As this is the simplest explanation that is entirely consonant with the Isocrates described in this study, it is accepted here as the one truly representative of Isocrates' real intentions. When the above considerations are taken into account,

then, it may be hope that Isocrates' letter to Philip becomes less puzzling and more understandable.

Chapter V

Evaluating the Isocratic Program

So far, it has been argued here that the characterization of Isocrates as a Panhellenic orator is wrong in its emphasis on this limited aspect of his overall program. Instead of being concerned with establishing a Greek state, Isocrates was primarily preoccupied with Athenian interests, interests perceived from a materialistic and class-conscious perspective. Further, Isocrates believed that the external and internal problems of Athens as he saw them could be largely solved by expropriating the wealth of the Persian Empire. Therefore, he advocated a war against the Great King throughout his long and eventful career. In light of this analysis, one can at this point take a more in-depth look at the Isocratic program by observing its real application to the Greek world, and by trying to place Isocrates in the larger context of the Greek intellectual world of his day.

To help see this larger context, it would perhaps be instructive to consider briefly the attitude of one of Isocrates' contemporaries to the encroachment of Philip II on Greek liberties. The Athenian orator Demosthenes had been an outspoken opponent of Philip as early as the 350's, when Philip began his aggressive campaigning. Demosthenes quickly discerned that Philip was maneuvering for a position that would in effect give him hegemony over all of Hellas. Demosthenes also realized that if Athens were to retain the freedom that she then possessed, she would have to form some sort of defensive

alliance with other Greek states against further aggrandizement by Philip.¹

This points up a major difference between Demosthenes and Isocrates. Demosthenes thought that it was a useless endeavor to try to peacefully unite the Greeks for an attack on a state that posed no great threat to them.² But when such a threat was imminent, as was the case with Macedonia under Philip, he planned to set up a type of Panhellenic union to defend the security of the Greeks.³ However, it would be misleading to term Demosthenes a Panhellenist. As with other figures previously cited, Demosthenes also was motivated by his perception of how to advance Athenian self-interest. In his fulminations against Persia and Philip, the great orator stressed that Athens ought to become the hegemon of the states of Greece for their own protection⁴--the same argument Athenian imperialism had been using for many decades. One authority observes that if Demosthenes appealed for a united Greece on the basis of some type of Panhellenic sentiment, "he did so only because he felt that thereby he could save Athens. Demosthenes was an Athenian, not a Panhellenist."⁵

¹Charles Darwin Adams, Demosthenes and His Influence (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963), p. 21.

²Demosthenes On the Navy-boards 38.

³Demosthenes Philippic IV. 33-34.

⁴Demosthenes On the Navy-boards 5, 10-11; On the Chersonese 15-16.

⁵H. B. Dunkel, "Was Demosthenes a Panhellenist?" Classical Philology, XXXIII (1938), 305.

At the same time, Demosthenes was correct in seeing that Isocrates' plan was either impractical or disingenuous. There could exist either a situation of Greek states forcibly allied to Philip, who would then lead them in a war against Persia, or a situation in which the poleis largely retained their traditional autonomy--but not both. In truth, Isocrates never did meet this problem squarely. The whole difficulty of the problems and contradictions between a hegemony on one hand and autonomy on the other is one that gets short shrift in his works. Demosthenes, by way of contrast, did at least face this issue by declaring himself in favor of Athenian independence against the machinations of Philip. The wisdom of this decision is something that can be debated, but it is at least a consistent and to some degree practical position to take. Indeed, perhaps with the presence of more responsible leadership at Chaeronea, he just might have achieved his objective.⁶ From the argument given above, then, it would seem that Demosthenes' program was in fact more practical than Isocrates' because it contained no such paradox as occurs in the works of Isocrates on this matter.

One last aspect of Demosthenes' program that is worth emphasis here is its Panhellenism. It was mentioned above that there are indeed some Panhellenic aspects to Demosthenes' plans; Demosthenes, however, cannot really be considered a Panhellenist. Rather, he favored Athenian imperialism and used Panhellenic-sounding arguments when the

⁶Bury, A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander, p. 440.

situation in Greece permitted him to do so.⁷ Thus, for example, even though he calls for a united Greek effort against Philip, Demosthenes is sure to point out that the war is primarily in the best interests of Athens.⁸ It can be recalled that earlier figures had used Panhellenism to advance Athenian interests (Pericles in particular), and that one could even speak of a "tradition" existing which consistently utilized Panhellenism for just this purpose. Clearly, Demosthenes would seem to belong firmly to this quite common way of looking at Greek affairs.

Granting the analysis already presented, one might conclude that the practicality of Isocrates' program and his influence on certain of the events of the fourth century were not as great as is sometimes supposed. It was shown that his ideas were either impossible to implement (e.g., the Panegyricus and the formation of the Second Athenian League), or that they entailed a course of action which was plain without his literary intervention (e.g., On the Peace and the financial reforms of Eubulus). But what can one make of his grand scheme to solve the major problems of the Athenians and, indeed, of other Greeks by expropriating Persian wealth--was this practical? Obviously the war itself was a practical suggestion, even though the prerequisite conditions could not have materialized as Isocrates had wanted. Certainly his view of that event as a panacea was quite

⁷Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," pp. 23-24.

⁸Demosthenes On the Chersonese 16.

exaggerated. One can, for example, point to the influx of wealth that stemmed from Pompey's campaigns in the East and show that it did not solve all of Rome's major problems. One can also consider here the much more limited goal that Isocrates sought, i.e., making the Greek upper classes more secure in their wealth. Even this was by no means an inevitable consequence of new-found riches. If one looks at the Greek world after the death of Alexander the Great, especially at the economic aftermath of his conquests, one will note that new wealth did indeed flow into the Greek states; however, it brought with it inflationary price rises without boosting wages which continued to remain at low levels (perhaps, in part, because of an increasing slave-labor force). Nor did the number of mercenaries decline, while the general social inequality in Greece seems to have increased. The result was considerable social unrest, with small revolutions sporadically appearing in a number of the Greek cities and islands.⁹ Thus Isocrates seems to have again miscalculated on a scheme which he considered the most important for his fellow Greeks.

If the above shows some practical defects to the Isocratic program, it remains to be seen whether these are indicative of some fundamental theoretical flaws as well. As Isocrates was prescribing solutions for the grave disorder which was troubling the Greek world in general and Athens in particular during the fourth century, one can only fully gauge the merit of his solutions if one understands the nature of the problem he was trying to correct. For this purpose it

⁹Burn, Pelican History of Greece, p. 371.

may be enlightening to compare Isocrates with another thinker of the time who addressed himself to this same situation--the Athenian philosopher Plato. This comparison is an obvious one to make not only because the two men were prescribing for the same disordered situation,¹⁰ but also because they refer directly or indirectly to each other in their works.¹¹ To be sure, there are no in-depth criticisms by Plato directed explicitly at Isocrates; nonetheless, it is possible to infer what those criticisms would be by referring to writings by Plato that dealt with topics also covered by Isocrates. The effort to reconstruct Plato's critique of Isocratic "philosophy" is valuable because Plato can be used as a standard by which a lesser thinker such as Isocrates (this being taken for granted here) can be measured. Moreover, the comparison is quite justified since Isocrates was, in sensu stricto, a competitor with Plato, and claimed to have elaborated a "philosophy"--a true description of reality as far as men can know it.¹² Certainly there is not sufficient cause here to warrant a thorough examination of Platonic philosophy; yet it is worthwhile to mention those parts which have a bearing on the issue

¹⁰In particular, Robert von Pöhlmann in Isokrates und das Problem der Demokratie (Roma: "L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1970), pp. 80-82, 91-93, sees the pair as opposing the radical democracy of Athens on the basis of their common love of justice and hatred of egalitarian levelling.

¹¹References in Plato to Isocrates: Euthydemus 305c, Gorgias 463a, and the last sections of the Phaedrus; references in Isocrates to Plato: Busiris 4, Helen 9, and the Antidosis which echoes the Apology; cited in Gilbert Ryle, Plato's Progress (New York: Cambridge Press, 1966), p. 269.

¹²Antidosis 270.

at hand.

To begin with, it is interesting to note the passage from the Phaedrus which is generally laudatory of Isocrates, with perhaps a touch of condescension underlying it. A successful career for Isocrates as an orator is predicted (an ambivalent observation from Plato given his disaffection with the public orators of his day), and a possible vocation in philosophy is discerned should "some diviner impulse" prove irresistible to Isocrates.¹³ As it happened, however, the impulse apparently proved quite resistable according to another comment by Plato.¹⁴

In comparing the two men, one of the most apparent differences between them is Isocrates' use of doxa (opinion) rather than truth (episteme) as the measure of verity. Unblushingly, Isocrates openly admits his reliance on doxa as the determinant in deciding on the proper course of action at any immediate moment.¹⁵ And as has been shown above, Isocrates feels no compunction in contradicting himself without admitting he had been wrong previously. Indeed, from the Isocratic position there is no reason for such an admission since properly suiting one's rhetoric to the occasion is always a requirement, even though this might mean stretching the facts a bit--a typical sophistic device. Now these distortions in Isocrates' arguments do not just represent momentary lapses in judgement, but

¹³Phaedrus 278e5-279b3.

¹⁴Euthydemus 305c.

¹⁵Antidosis 184, 271.

are symptomatic of the rickety structures upon which Isocrates hangs his rhetorical works. The doxagraphic analysis of the problem, the Isocratic approach, is necessarily deficient because it refuses on principle to recognize the problem's epistemic dimensions. Such an analysis, then, cannot possibly contribute towards a resolution of the crisis of the fourth century polis since it operates on a superficial level--on the easily visible manifestations of the crisis and not on its less visible but more important essence.

To better grasp the issue at hand, one can proceed to an examination of Plato's analysis of those same problems which concerned Isocrates. In fact, Plato does not baldly state problem and prescription; but from the Phaedrus especially one can reach certain logical conclusions. Plato's view held that the Athens of his day was disintegrating due to the community's inherited spiritual substance insufficiently informing the state's various institutions. That is to say, Athens, as a society constituted for action in history, elaborated over a period of time a vision of civilizational order which its citizens grasped in varying degrees according to each individual's talents and circumstances. In a healthy society, the men most imbued with this vision of order are used and absorbed by the community. (For example, one thinks of the festivals for Athens' great playwrights.) For Plato, however, this situation no longer existed. Instead, the public order, the form of the polis, had grown so corrupt that it no longer truly represented the men of the spirit who embodied most completely the forces of civilizational order. The

truth, then, came to reside in men who were virtually unrepresented by the public order. Thus one can properly speak of the "disintegration" of Athenian society into "an unrepresentative public order and an unrepresented spiritual substance" as the crucial problem.¹⁶ And Plato saw no satisfactory solution which did not in some way end this dissociation and reintegrate Athenian society.

By this time the general lines of Plato's disagreement with Isocrates should be clear if the above analysis of Isocratic thought is correct. The acquisition of wealth and exportation of indigents abroad would not resolve the crisis. The crisis was not of a material nature; rather, the issue is how to make the spiritually regenerative forces in society socially effective. From Plato's viewpoint, then, Isocrates' whole argument was hopelessly flawed. This is reflected in more specific points of contention between the two thinkers.

One such area of disagreement involves the hopes for a federated Hellas expressed by Plato. Plato, to be sure, did not deal with this issue at the same length as did Isocrates, but he broached the issue sufficiently to allow one to gauge the two men's differing level of penetration in relation to such problems. Isocrates having been dealt with above, it is left to now relate Plato's view of the situation.

The events of the Peloponnesian War and the course of events in the fourth century drew the desirability of a Panhellenic union to the

¹⁶Eric Voegelin, Order and History, Vol. III: Plato and Aristotle (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), pp. 139-140.

attention of many thinkers, Plato included. This is brought out in his Seventh Letter, which outlines the plans that would allow a federated Greek world to come about. The process would start in Syracuse where the party of Plato's friend, Dion, would take control of the city. A just and equitable constitution would make Syracuse a model with which other Sicilian poleis would like to federate (336a). And the success of this federation would in turn draw the Greek poleis of the Aegean area into a fully Panhellenic federation (335d, 336b).

This reliance upon power politics and the ordering force of the spirit is similar to Isocrates' plan in On the Peace, and thus would involve similar difficulties as well. But in Isocrates' case, this plan was only one of several which he had tried to have implemented during his lifetime. As has been shown, Isocrates also turned to the Machiavellian expedient of inviting a strong man to come from outside and impose a common order on the Hellenic poleis with Athens as co-partner. Plato, on the other hand, explicitly rejected any such plan of action for several reasons. To begin with, he believed that citizens should be under the yoke not of human despots, however appealing their actions, but rather of the laws.¹⁷ Also, all leaders should first be tested to determine whether they possess a true philosophic temperament. If they fail the test, then they are unfit for office regardless of other factors.¹⁸ And finally, Plato held that one can

¹⁷Plato Epist. VII 334c.

¹⁸Ibid., 340a-b.

advise only those who would be willing to act on that advice. It would be a mistake to use violent means in the effort to correct a corrupt state.¹⁹

Plato thus was in fundamental disagreement with Isocrates' plans. From his perspective, they would only further the chief problem of the day--the divorce of power and spirit. Isocrates' insensitivity to this problem is demonstrated by his seeming willingness to let any Greek leader establish a Hellenic hegemony who had the appropriate credentials--the power to do so and an alliance with Athens. Isocrates apparently justified his position by viewing the union only as a temporary expedient for the war against Persia; afterwards, harmony and autonomy would prevail. To realize the flimsiness of his argument, one needs only to ask whether the Greek rulers which Isocrates named would give up their hegemonic position because more power and wealth suddenly accrued to them. In fact it can be seen that the basic fallacy of Isocrates' grand plan rests on this point--those qualifications which are necessary before a given individual can have more power granted to him. Isocrates never inquires very thoroughly into the character of the men he asks to unite the Greeks.

This same difficulty can be seen at work in his proposals for reform of the Athenian constitution. To begin with, despite all the carping Isocrates does concerning Athens' deplorable leadership,²⁰ one wonders how a "roster" based on wealth and not much else is going

¹⁹Ibid., 330-de, 331c-d.

²⁰See, for example, Panegyricus 13 and Areopagiticus 15.

to ameliorate the situation. And not only will the wealthy have nearly absolute power, but they will be virtually frozen in that position throughout their lives. It takes a childlike faith indeed to believe that the forced conjunction of wealth and state power will produce a wise and just leadership. Further, the whole process of improving the polis and its government by constitutional tinkering was completely dismissed by Plato. Plato again emphasized that the crisis the polis was undergoing was essentially spiritual in nature, and that a community's institutional order does not comprise its spirit; rather, the institutional order is the vessel in which the spirit dwells. In the Laws, Plato goes on to score those thinkers who are insensitive to this fact. He distinguishes those who support the one "true constitution" and those who put forward various untrue ones. The true constitution is characterized by taking care to see that the highest officeholders are the men most obedient to the laws of justice. On the other hand, the false polities slight such considerations and are merely compacts of expediency which enslave the state to one of its component parts such as the "people" or the wealthy.²¹ These Plato terms "no-constitutions" because they are not subservient to true laws; and he goes on to assert that the parties to such compacts should be called "partisans" rather than citizens.²² This is a rather apt assessment of Isocrates and a program that gives

²¹Laws 715a-d; Voegelin, Plato and Aristotle, p. 253.

²²Laws 715b.

such a preponderant weight to considerations based on wealth and property. Ultimately, Isocrates' reforms as presented in the Areopagiticus are not primarily concerned with those questions of justice and right which occupied Athens' best men at her height; and accordingly, such reforms cannot fulfill Isocrates' desire to return Athens to that way of life when such considerations were of public moment. In sum, the fissure separating the public order and the spiritual substance of the community cannot be bridged by Isocrates; rather, in his schemes it yawns as wide as ever.

It cannot be denied that the partial appraisal of Isocratic thought given above differs markedly from the analyses offered by many (but by no means all) of the competent scholars in this field. In particular, the low estimates of Isocrates' attachment to Panhellenism and of his high regard for social and economic matters are at variance with the views of numerous other commentators. Also controversial is the assessment that Isocrates' counsels were often impractical and sometimes contradictory. Assuming that the interpretation offered here is correct, it remains to be said why so many others are not.

One can speculate on the full explanation while arriving at no definite conclusion, but at least one likely reason involves the subsequent course of Greek history. More specifically, the spread of Hellenistic culture after Isocrates' death is to some degree responsible. The idea that Isocrates was a prophet foreseeing the Hellenistic Age seems to be a most alluring view. A typical expression of this view is voiced by the distinguished scholar, H. I. Marrou:

"Here again we get the feeling that we are on the edge of a new epoch and a new world; in this very explicit attitude the whole idea of Hellenistic times is already fully expressed--the idea of culture as the supreme good."²³ Marrou writes this in reference to Isocrates' writings, particularly that passage from the Panegyricus which has already been examined in some detail.²⁴ The use of culture, or paideia, in this passage simply cannot be squared with Marrou's gloss. As was shown, Isocrates used paideia to make debating points at the expense of the Spartans. There is little indication that it had a much greater significance for him. Relevant to this issue is another argument in the Panathenaicus which indicates that Athenian culture was not to be extended to the barbarians, but to be used to defeat them.²⁵ In this light it becomes difficult if not impossible to see Isocrates as a prophet who proclaims the universal spreading of Greek culture in the Hellenistic era.

Another factor that tends to support the over-estimation of the value of Isocrates' prescriptive advice touches upon the most controversial area of all. One refers here to the fact that many historians and scholars in general are frequently more likely to look at events from Isocrates' perspective than from Plato's. In other words, evaluations and solutions of civilizational problems tend to

²³H. I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by George Lamb (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 130

²⁴Panegyricus 50; see above, pp. 66ff.

²⁵Panathenaicus 219-220.

be done on the pragmatic level whereas the problems of order ("spiritual problems") are shunted aside as material for specialists who deal with that sort of thing.²⁶ Be that as it may, one must dutifully note that Plato made a thorough analysis of these issues and demonstrated quite forcefully why an Isocratic-type view deserves to be labelled sophistic and be ignored until more important matters are considered first. In the actual course of things, however, it is very frequently the Platonic position which is ignored or distorted quite summarily. A suspicion arises that many historians are sympathetic to the Isocratic stance toward politics, even when that stance is properly understood. Whether such sympathies are logically defensible, however, is very much open to question. At any rate, the relevant point here is the existence of an often too little examined bias on the part of many historians that could lead them to overemphasize the importance of some of Isocrates' views.

So far in this study, Isocrates has come in for some rather harsh criticism, implied or otherwise; on some of these points, however, the

²⁶To give just two examples of this widespread belief, see Dobesch, Panhellen. Gedanke, p. 234, which notes the following with approval: "Er (Isocrates) entdeckt nicht eine geistige Welt, sondern will ein konkretes und nicht allzu ferne liegendes Ziel erreichen"; also, see the brief work of Alexander Demandt, Geschichte als Argument: drei Formen politischen Zukunftsdenkens im Altertum (Konstanz, Ger.: Universitäts-Verlag, 1972), p. 25, which tries to justify Isocrates' great concerns for economic problems by noting his desire for democracy and the wishes (Gesinnung) of the people--these at any rate being preferable to Plato's airy disquisitions on the best state. The author overstates in general Isocrates' value as a thinker; but the book can be consulted for a provocative essay.

criticism can perhaps be blunted a bit by taking other circumstances into account. For example, it seems to have been a widespread practice in this period to take considerable liberties with history when writing a speech; so Isocrates' inconsistencies in this regard can to some degree be excused. One would also do well to recall Isocrates' sophistic teachers on this point. He was merely continuing their rhetorical tradition which held that what is true for a man is what he can be convinced of. Perhaps one can say that in this matter Isocrates was at least not the worst offender. Further, it has been shown in the discussion on Panhellenism before Isocrates that the use of Panhellenism as a pliable propaganda tool for other purposes than merely Hellenic unity did not originate with Isocrates, but was a common practice in this era.²⁷ Pericles, Lysias, and Demosthenes were all mentioned as followers of this "tradition" which used Panhellenic rhetoric as a tool for policies which were primarily imperialistic. Quite clearly the analysis given above would include Isocrates with these other Greek figures. (Indeed, the analysis becomes rather more probably in light of the existence of such a "tradition.") And one does not wish to imply that all these people were egregiously dishonest as a result of their using Panhellenism in this way. Rather, they merely sought to present their proposals in the best possible light in order to gain the greatest support possible for their execution.

²⁷Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," 5.

Without doubt, some of the above analysis has implied that Isocrates' great concern with social and economic matters tarnishes what image he has as a profound and important thinker. Such a view is to some degree misleading. His solutions to the problems he mentions are certainly questionable, but his preoccupation with such matters cannot necessarily be ascribed to a mean self-interest. That is to say, in many ways Isocrates had very good reason to be concerned with the security of property and the general social and economic situation in the Greece of his day. There seems to have been a growth in the landless class during his lifetime, especially in the fourth century, with the distance between rich and poor yawning ever wider. Mercenaries became a considerable problem because of their number, and because of the frequent interstate struggles within the Greek world which insured a demand for them.²⁸

The growth of mercenary armies had actually begun in a significant way back in the fifth century with the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath. This period saw several attempts by individual poleis to establish a hegemony in Greece. Such efforts, in turn, engendered bitter opposition, and so constant warfare provided a demand for the services which the mercenaries could offer.²⁹ This fact, coupled with a deteriorating economic situation that caused more and more men to turn to the mercenary profession, gave rise to whole hordes of such men

²⁸Fuks, "Isocrates and the Social-Economic Situation," 27.

²⁹The Persians were another factor in this regard; Xenophon's "Ten Thousand" was a mercenary army, and the Persian army they fought was itself partially composed of Greek mercenaries. (See p. 15 above.)

willing to fight if the price were right. Mercenary armies are by their nature independent bodies obeying no laws but their own. Such traits only add to the lawlessness that characterizes periods of general warfare, and made it difficult to maintain a stable urban existence in the face of so much disorder.³⁰

In defense of Isocrates, it should also be remembered that even though Athens was not in complete bankruptcy, it and other Greek states in the fourth century were experiencing something like a depression. Indeed, one authority on the subject has described Athens' dire economic straits, and attributed them in large part to class hatred.³¹ Part of the problem was a "soak the rich" tax policy, but of more importance was the democracy's attitude toward war. As a supplier of jobs and plunder, war was an appealing enterprise to a significant portion of the Athenian population. The reality, however, was much divergent from such illusory beliefs. The result of these factors meant Athens suffered particularly hard from the generally poor economic situation in fourth century Greece.³²

Another sore point from Athens' perspective was the amount of resources being drained from the city. Her population, particularly

³⁰Zimmern, The Greek Commonwealth, p. 269; Claude Mossé, Athens in Decline, trans. by Jean Stewart (Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1963), pp. 47-49.

³¹H. Michell, The Economics of Ancient Greece (2nd ed.; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1963), p. 18.

³²Michell, Economics of Ancient Greece, pp. 352-354; for a discussion of the general economic situation in Greece, see M. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1959), II, 124ff.

in Piraeus, was continually fluctuating from the comings and goings of aliens; and whatever profits these people made, a considerable sum at times, seldom benefitted Athens. Also, the special position of the metics, technically resident aliens, allowed them to maintain certain privileges while circumventing the residence requirements. Since Athens was no longer the great trading power she once was, and her other great source of wealth, the mines, were increasingly inactive, the drain on her wealth from the metics and other aliens presented a serious problem--a problem the Athenian economy of this period was not prepared to meet.³³

In light of the above, Isocrates did have some good reasons to suggest a program that would try to solve these economic and social problems; and in some ways his suggestions were quite ingenious. His proposed campaign against Persia, for example, would use most of the troublemaking mercenaries and so rid the polis of their presence. In addition, the Greek mainland would profit whether the great Persian campaign proved a victory or a defeat since the mercenaries would either perish or remain in Asia to found Greek colonies. To be sure, a victory was to be preferred not only because it would solve the problem of the mercenaries, but it would also make the folks back home richer. In short, it was a clever scheme even if it did not turn out in all respects as Isocrates had hoped.

Yet one must state plainly that the ability to contrive clever

³³Claude Mossé, Athens in Decline, pp. 47-49.

schemes does not a philosopher make, and that all attempts to depict Isocrates as such must fail.³⁴ Certainly an overriding concern for maintaining class divisions and achieving economic prosperity, though not necessarily misguided, does not help in elevating public discourse or contributing to the dispersion of an imminent golden era of Greek culture. One can state the issue quite unequivocally, Isocrates' claim that he was a philosopher prescribing workable cures for the ills of fourth century Hellas will not stand up under closer scrutiny. The problems of disorder which so disturbed Isocrates cannot be attacked and assuaged on the level at which he chose to focus his attention. And one can add further that, even on the pragmatic level, Isocrates' specific proposals were often impractical. In this regard one can cite his social program as being especially dubious. It was highly unlikely that he would ever persuade the democracy to abolish itself in favor of a quasi-timocratic form of government. But what is far worse, his argument is fundamentally flawed in its paradigmatic aspect. His ideal is not even a worthy course to inch toward; it is, in fact, simply the reverse side of the class war he so deplors. Isocrates merely argues that the "haves" be left alone while the "have-nots" be kept in their place. Such proposals are not likely to be a force for order in an already unstable social situation.

³⁴Such an attempt is made by Cloché in Isocrate et Son Temps, p. 130, which puts Isocrates much above the other orators of his day for his honesty and wisdom, and even equates him with Socrates in expressing noble and "belle idées."

In sum, one concludes that Isocrates' program was quite unremarkable in respect to breaking with the past or foreshadowing the future. It can also not be noted for a profound analysis of the crucial problems of the day and proposals which would effectively solve them. If the views expressed above are correct, Isocrates operated entirely within the traditional system of polis autonomy. His Panhellenism was thus derivative, and it was deemed by Isocrates to possess only a secondary importance. Rather than give his support to a permanent Panhellenic arrangement, Isocrates wished instead to further Athens' self-interest as far as possible; and in regard to Athens herself, he wished to protect the interests of his class. Thus his primary concerns come down to social and economic ones: By means of Persian wealth, the less well-to-do would be mollified, leaving the cares of state in the hands of the wealthy few.³⁵ The major difficulty with such a program is its insensitivity to the true causes of disorder. One does not necessarily help matters by seeking more power (which more wealth certainly is) in a given situation. On the

³⁵This viewpoint has largely been seconded by a recent article on this subject, Perlman, "Panhellenism, the Polis and Imperialism," p. 29, which says the following:

Isocrates looked for solutions of the social and economic problems of Greece and of the danger inherent in constant warfare, which jeopardized the existing regimes in the Greek cities. But the solutions which he proposed did not envisage a new political organization which would take the place of the Greek polis. Isocrates did not think that the Greek polis or the hegemonial leadership in the world of the Greek poleis had become obsolete political structures.

contrary, the introduction of greater power into an already disordered state will only create more difficulties. Whatever the excuses and mitigating circumstances one cites to deflect criticism of the Isocratic program, the fact still remains--Isocrates' solutions to the problems which Athens faced in fourth century Greece were themselves a part of those very same problems.

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