

Lexicon of the Charmides

Revised Entries, Block One: Abaris the Hyperborean to
Art and craft

Diotimos Editions

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About these entries

These are the revised entries of the Lexicon of Plato's *Charmides* that accompanies the Diotimos Editions facing-page edition of the dialogue. Each entry gathers what a key word, person or theme means in the dialogue: what the word meant, how the *Charmides* uses it, the passages to read, and, where the material allows, its echoes elsewhere in Plato and in later readers. Quotations of the dialogue are from the edition's English; references are to the Stephanus pages and sections printed in its margins. The entries are grouped by the category under which each is filed, and within each category in alphabetical order. This block holds ten entries: Abaris the Hyperborean; Acceptance and taking over; Action; Adequacy and deficiency; Advice and greeting; Age and maturity; Agreement and concession; Anacreon; Anger; Art and craft.

Action production and work

Action

Doing and action · Charmides

πράττειν, pratein, "do", "act"; πράξις, praxis, "doing", "action"; δρᾶν, dran, "do"

At a Glance

The word. Πράττειν is the ordinary Greek verb for doing, acting and carrying a thing through, and πράξις a doing or an action; δρᾶν, another verb for doing, serves in the *Charmides* only to take up an activity already named.

In the *Charmides*. Temperance is first a manner of doing (159b), then "doing one's own business" (161b), and Socrates answers that every craft is doing something (161d–162a). Critias saves the formula by setting making apart from working and doing, names he keeps, after Hesiod, for makings done "finely and beneficially" (163b–c); temperance is "the doing of good things" (163e). In the second half doing is joined to knowledge, and doing well proves to need the knowledge of good and bad (171d–174d).

In this edition. "Do" renders πράττειν (sometimes "act") and δρᾶν; πράξις is "doing" or "action"; εὖ πράττειν is always "do well". In Critias' argument "make", "work" and "do" keep ποιεῖν, ἐργάζεσθαι and πράττειν apart.

A place to read. 162e–163c, where Critias, citing Hesiod, sets making apart from working and doing.

Meaning

Πράττειν (*prattein*, the Attic form of πράσσειν) is to do, to act, to carry a thing through; with “well” it means both to act well and to fare well, and with “one’s own” it makes the everyday phrase for minding one’s own affairs. Πράξις (*praxis*) is a doing, an action. Δρᾶν (*dran*) is another verb for doing; in the *Charmides* it comes four times, always with “this” (τοῦτο), and takes up an activity just named.

In everyday Greek πράττειν overlapped with ποιεῖν (*poiein*), to make, and ἐργάζεσθαι (*ergazesthai*), to work, and ποιεῖν too could mean simply “do”. None of them implies that what is done is good: the dialogue itself speaks of doing bad things (163e) and of acting harmfully (164b).

Use in the book

Doing enters the dialogue as a manner. Charmides’ first answer, as Socrates reports it, was that temperance “was doing everything in an orderly way and quietly” (159b). Socrates finds the quick finer than the quiet in a boy’s lessons and in deliberation, where praise goes to “the one who does it most easily and most quickly” (159c–160b); even if as many quiet actions as quick ones proved the finer, “temperance would not be acting quietly any more than acting vigorously and quickly” (160c).

Charmides’ third answer, after one about modesty, turns to what is done: temperance is “doing one’s own business” (161b). Socrates takes “doing” in its widest sense. The writing-master does something when he writes or reads (161d), and so does whoever heals, builds or weaves, or produces “by any craft whatever, any of the works of craft” (161e). A city in which each man made all his own things would not be well managed, though a temperately managed city would be; so doing one’s own business in that way is not temperance, and its author must have spoken in riddles (161e–162b; see Doing one’s own business).

Critias takes the argument over. Having granted that craftsmen who make other people’s things may be temperate, he scoffs at the suggestion that he has thereby granted “that those who do other people’s business are temperate” (163a). Asked whether he calls making and doing the same, he answers, “No indeed,” and adds, “nor working and making either. I learned that from Hesiod, who said that work is no disgrace.” Hesiod, the poet of the farmer’s *Works and Days*, about 700 BC, would not, he argues, have called it no disgrace to cobble shoes, sell salt fish or sit in a brothel, had he called such things works, working and doing. On Critias’ reading a thing made may be a disgrace when it does not come about with what is fine, but work never: “For things made finely and beneficially he called works, and makings of that kind he called workings and doings” (163b–c). We must say, Critias goes on, that Hesiod regarded only such things as “appropriate to one”, and “everything harmful as belonging to others”; so, he concludes, Hesiod, “and anyone else of sense”, calls the man who does his own

business temperate (163c). The division has two sides, not three. Making is the wide word, covering the shameful and the fine alike; working and doing are two names for its fine and beneficial part.

Socrates restates it: “it is what is appropriate to one, and one’s own, that you call good, and the makings of good things that you call doings” (163d). “Good” is Socrates’ word, not Critias’, and Critias accepts it (163e). Socrates has heard Prodicus of Ceos, the sophist famous for distinguishing words of like meaning, “draw countless distinctions between words”, and he tells Critias, “I allow you to assign each word as you please; only make clear what you are applying whatever word you use to” (163d). When Socrates asks whether “the man who does bad things” is not temperate, Critias answers in his own terms, in which bad things can be made but not done, and speaks of “the man who makes not good things but bad ones”; then he defines: “temperance is the doing of good things” (163e; see *Doing good things*). On his usage, where a doing is already a fine and beneficial making, the definition can be read as saying the same thing twice.

Critias grants that a doctor, “in making someone healthy”, makes something beneficial and so does what he ought and is temperate, and allows that he perhaps need not know when his treatment benefits; Socrates concludes that “sometimes ... the doctor, having acted beneficially or harmfully, does not know himself — how he has acted” (164a–c). The verb is back in its ordinary use, of harmful acting as of beneficial, and Critias lets it pass; what he will not accept is a temperate man who does not know himself, and he turns to knowing oneself (164c–d).

In the second half doing is joined to knowledge. Had temperance been knowledge of what one knows and does not know, Socrates recalls, “neither would we ourselves try to do what we did not know”, and “with error removed and rightness leading, those so disposed must necessarily do finely and well in every action” (171d–172a; see *Happiness and doing well*). In what he calls his dream he grants that “the human race would act and live knowledgeably”, but adds, “that by acting knowledgeably we would do well and be happy, this, my dear Critias, we cannot yet learn” (173a–d). The knowledge that makes us do well proves to be that of good and bad; without it, Socrates says, “each of these things being done well and beneficially: that will be gone from us” (174b–d). This can be read as the answer to Critias’ appeal to Hesiod: he built benefit into a word, and the argument ends by placing it in the knowledge of good and bad, which temperance, as knowledge of knowledge, does not supply.

On the last page the verbs return to everyday use, and doing becomes a matter of force. Charmides would be “doing something terrible” if he did not obey his guardian, and here, as in “Then I’ll do it”, “do” renders ποιέιν, the verb Critias had kept for making (176b–c). Socrates gives way: “When you set about doing anything, and use force, no man alive will be able to oppose you” (176d).

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

- 159b** Charmides' first answer, reported by Socrates: temperance is doing everything in an orderly way and quietly.
- 159c–160d** In body and soul alike the quick proves no less fine than the quiet, so temperance is no more acting quietly than acting vigorously and quickly.
- 161b–162b** “Doing one’s own business”: writing, reading, healing, building and weaving are all doing something, and the formula must be a riddle.
- 162e–163c** Craftsmen make other people’s things; Critias, citing Hesiod, sets making apart from working and doing, the names of makings done finely and beneficially.
- 163d–e** Socrates restates the usage, recalls Prodicus and lets Critias assign the words; Critias defines temperance as the doing of good things.
- 164a–d** The doctor who does what he ought may act beneficially without knowing it; Critias will not grant that a man who does not know himself is temperate.
- 171d–172a** If the temperate man knew what he knew and what he did not, neither he nor those he ruled would do what they did not know, and those so disposed would do finely and well in every action.
- 173a–d** In Socrates’ dream, if temperance ruled, everything would be done according to the kinds of knowledge, and men would act and live knowledgeably; but that by acting knowledgeably they would do well and be happy, he cannot yet learn.
- 174b–d** Only the knowledge of good and bad makes us do well; without it, things would no longer be done well and beneficially.
- 176b–d** Charmides promises to do what his guardian orders; Socrates yields to one who sets about doing anything with force.

Elsewhere in Plato

Prodicus appears in the *Protagoras*, lodged with Protagoras in the house of Callias son of Hipponicus (311a, 315d), and Critias is there too (316a). When Critias pleads that the gathering not be broken up, Prodicus answers him with a string of fine distinctions, between disputing and quarrelling, esteem and praise, gladness and pleasure (336d–337c). Later Socrates waives “Prodicus’ division of names”: whether one says pleasant, delightful or enjoyable, Prodicus is to answer to what Socrates means (358a–b), as in the *Charmides* Socrates lets Critias assign the words as he pleases (163d). In the next breath he asks whether the actions aimed at living without pain and

pleasantly are not fine, and the fine work “good and beneficial” (358b), close to the words by which, on Critias’ reading, Hesiod named works and doings.

The *Republic* makes the formula Critias defended the definition of justice. Socrates says that “doing one’s own and not being a busybody is justice” is something “we have heard from many others and often said ourselves” (433a–b), and the having and doing of “what is appropriate to one and one’s own”, the pair in Socrates’ restatement of Critias (*Charmides* 163d), is justice (433e–434a). These pages draw no line between making and doing: a carpenter who tries to work a cobbler’s works and a man who tries to do both trades are spoken of in one breath (434a), and the image of justice is that “the man who is by nature a shoemaker should rightly cobble and do nothing else” (443c), though cobbling heads the trades that Hesiod, as Critias reads him, would not have called work or doing (*Charmides* 163b; see Doing one’s own business).

Other ancient sources

Critias’ authority is Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, which urges the poet’s brother Perses to work so that hunger may hate him: gods and men are angry with the idle man, who lives like a stingless drone on the bees’ labour; “work is no disgrace; idleness is the disgrace” (311); and Perses is to turn his foolish heart from other men’s possessions to work (315–316).¹ Hesiod sets work against idleness, and the passage has no word for making or doing: the distinction is Critias’ gloss, and his “everything harmful as belonging to others” can be read as taking its cue from Hesiod’s “other men’s possessions”. The line also figured in the charges against Socrates that Xenophon, who had been one of his companions, answers in his *Memorabilia*, the *Recollections of Socrates*. “The accuser”, he reports, charged that Socrates used the worst passages of the most famous poets to teach his companions to be wrongdoers and tyrants, among them this line, which, the accuser said, Socrates explained as bidding one shrink from no work, unjust or shameful, but do even that for gain. Socrates, Xenophon answers, agreed that to be a worker is beneficial and good for a man and to be idle harmful and bad; he counted as working, and as good workers, those who do something good, and gave the name of idle to the dice-player and to anyone doing something wicked and harmful (1.2.56–57).² Xenophon’s Socrates reads the line as Plato’s Critias does, keeping the name of work for the good and beneficial, though he marks the difference by what is done and not by the verb: good and wicked alike are things one “does” (ποιεῖν).

¹ Hesiod, *Works and Days* 298–316.

² Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.56–57.

Later readings

Aristotle gave the division between making and doing its classic form, and drew it differently from Critias. Among things that can be otherwise there is what is made and what is done, and the one does not contain the other, “for doing is not a making, nor making a doing”. Craft is a reasoned state concerned with making, practical wisdom a reasoned state concerned with doing, about what is good and bad for a human being; and the end of a making is something else, while the end of a doing is not, for “acting well is itself the end”.³ For Critias doing was a kind of making, the kind done finely and beneficially; for Aristotle neither falls under the other, and what separates them is whether the end lies outside the activity. His word for that end, *εὐπραξία* (*eupraxia*), “acting well”, is the noun of the *Charmides*’ “doing well”, and his “end” (τέλος) is the word Critias uses at 173d when he says that Socrates will not easily find “anything else that crowns doing well”. His practical wisdom can be read as taking up the knowledge of good and bad in which the *Charmides*’ search ends (174b–c).

Translation in this edition

The edition keeps “do” for πράττειν, so that Charmides’ formula, Socrates’ widening of it to every craft (161d–e) and Critias’ “doings” (163c–e) can be followed as one word. It uses “act” at 160c (“acting quietly”), 164b–c (“having acted beneficially or harmfully”) and 173d (“act and live knowledgeably”). Πράξις is “actions” at 160c and “action” at 172a, and “doing” and “doings” in Critias’ argument (163b–e). Εὖ πράττειν is “do well” every time (172a twice, 173d twice, 174b), so that the slide from acting well to faring well at 172a and 173d stays visible, and καλῶς πράττειν is “do finely” (172a). Δρᾶν is always “do”. “Do” is not kept for πράττειν alone: it also renders ποιεῖν in everyday phrases, as in “doing everything else, in the same manner” (159b) and “do what you order” (176c). In Critias’ argument (163a–164c), though, every “make” that names making renders ποιεῖν (the idiom “make clear” at 163d is δηλοῦν), every “work” ἐργάζεσθαι, ἔργον or ἐργασία, and “do”, wherever it is more than an auxiliary, πράττειν, so that the distinction can be followed in English; at 162a Socrates’ “working at and doing his own” already gives the pair Critias will set against making. “Business” in “doing one’s own business” renders no Greek noun, πρᾶγμα or other, but the plural “one’s own (things)”, τὰ ἑαυτοῦ or τὰ αὐτοῦ; πρᾶγμα itself comes only at 175e, “a thing worth nothing”.

δράω

Attested: δρῶν (*drōn*; 160b), δρῶντες (*drōntes*; 161e), δράσουσιν (*drasousin*; 172b), δρᾷς (*drais*; 176b). To do. Each time, with “this”, it takes up an activity just named: deliberating and finding things out, in which praise goes to “the one who does it most easily and most quickly” (160b);

³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.4–5, 1140a1–b7.

the boys' writing of their enemies' names: "Well, were you being busybodies, and not temperate, when you did that?" (161d–e); examining others, where those who examine without the knowledge of knowledge "will do so more feebly and poorly" (172b); and letting Socrates charm him every day, of which Critias says, "But Charmides, if you do this, it will be proof to me that you are temperate" (176b). Lemma: *δρᾶω*.

πράξις

Attested: *πράξεις* (*praxeis*; 160c, 163c, 163d), *πράξεων* (*praxeōn*; 160c), *πράξεως* (*praxeōs*; 163b), *πράξιν* (*praxin*; 163e twice), *πράξει* (*praxei*; 172a). A doing, an action. Socrates compares quiet actions with quick ones (160c). In Critias' argument it is the doing that Hesiod held to be other than making (163b), his name for makings done finely and beneficially (163c), in Socrates' restatement the making of good things (163d), and in Critias' definition "the doing of good things" (163e). In Socrates' account of the benefit once hoped for, those without error would "do finely and well in every action" (172a). Lemma: *πράξις*.

πράττω

Attested: *πράττειν* (*prattein*; 159b, 160c, 161b, 161d twice, 161e twice, 162a three times, 162b twice, 162d, 163a, 163b twice, 171e twice, 172a, 173d, 174b, 176d), *ἐπράττετε* (*epratete*; 161e), *πράττοντας* (*prattontas*; 163a, 172a), *πράττοντες* (*prattontes*; 163a, 171e, 173d), *πράττοντα* (*prattonta*; 163c), *πράττων* (*pratton*; 163e, 164b twice), *πράττει* (*prattei*; 164b, 164c), *πράττη* (*prattei*; 164b), *πράξας* (*praxas*; 164b, 164c twice), *ἐπράξεν* (*epraxen*; 164c twice), *πραττομένοις* (*prattonenois*; 171b), *πραττόμενα* (*prattonena*; 171b), *πράττεται* (*pratтетai*; 171b), *πράξειν* (*praxein*; 171e), *πράττοιεν* (*prattoiēn*; 172d), *πράττοίτο* (*prattoiito*; 173b), *πράττοι* (*prattoi*; 173d), *πράττοιμεν* (*prattoiēn*; 173d). To do, act, carry through. It is the verb of Charmides' first and third answers (159b, 161b), which Socrates stretches to cover writing, reading and every craft (161d–e) and Critias sets apart from making (163a–c). It is used of the doctor who does what he ought and acts beneficially or harmfully without knowing it (164b–c), of the deeds that only one with the relevant knowledge can examine (171b), of doing only what one knows (171e, 172d, 173b, 173d), of doing well (172a, 173d, 174b), and, in Socrates' yielding, of Charmides setting about anything by force (176d). Lemma: *πράττω*.

See also

Correctness and error; Doing good things; Doing one's own business; Happiness and doing well; Making and production; Work and working.

Argument and inquiry

Acceptance and taking over

ἀποδέχεσθαι, *apodechesthai*, “accept”; *παραδέχεσθαι*, *paradechesthai*, “take over”

At a Glance

The word. Ἀποδέχεσθαι is to take something from another with approval, to accept a statement or an argument; παραδέχεσθαι is to take over what another hands on.

In the *Charmides*. Charmides accepts the good doctors’ principle that the part must be treated with the whole (156c), and his approval restores Socrates’ nerve. Critias takes over from Charmides a definition that Socrates believes was Critias’ own (162e), and accepts that medicine produces health, but not that temperance must likewise produce a work (165d–166a). Socrates will not accept knowledge of knowledge as temperance until he has looked into whether it would benefit us (169b), and benefit is the test the definition fails.

In this edition. Ἀποδέχεσθαι is “accept”, except in Critias’ one-word answer at 165d, “I do”; παραδέχεσθαι is “take over”.

A place to read. 162b–e, where Charmides wants Critias to answer for the definition, and Critias takes the argument over.

Meaning

Δέχεσθαι (*dechesthai*) is to take what is held out. Its compound ἀποδέχεσθαι (*apodechesthai*) is to take a thing from someone and receive it with approval, to accept a statement or an argument; παραδέχεσθαι (*paradechesthai*) is to receive what another passes along, and so to take it over. Both verbs receive something from another, where agreeing, ὁμολογεῖν (*homologeîn*), says the same as another, and conceding, συγχωρεῖν (*synchōrein*), gives way to him (see Agreement and concession).

Use in the book

Acceptance first lets Socrates go on with the charm. He had lost his nerve when Charmides sat down beside him (155c–d), and now he explains the charm by what good doctors say, “that to imagine one could ever treat the head on its own, apart from the whole body, is sheer folly” (156c). “And you think it well said, and you accept the principle?” he asks; “Absolutely,” Charmides answers (156c), and his approval gives Socrates back his nerve (156d). The Thracian doctor who taught Socrates the charm carried the principle further, in the name of Zalmoxis, king and god of the Thracians: one must not try to cure the body without the soul either, and “it is the soul

that must be treated first and foremost” (156d–157a). In accepting the doctors’ principle, Charmides has accepted the ground of the charm.

The other compound marks the change of answerer. When Charmides offered his third definition, doing one’s own business, Socrates said at once that he had heard it from Critias, his cousin and guardian, or from one of the other wise men, and Critias denied it: “Certainly not from me” (161b–c). Now Charmides cannot say what it means and looks slyly across at Critias (162b), and, wanting Critias to answer for it, he “kept prodding him, and made out that he had been refuted” (162c–d). Socrates, who now thinks his first suspicion entirely right (162c), turns to Critias: “So if you agree that temperance is what this young man says, and take the argument over, I would much rather look into it with you, to see whether what was said is true or not.” “I agree entirely,” Critias answers, “and I take it over” (162e). To agree to the definition is to assent to a claim (see Agreement and concession); to take the argument over is to become the one who answers for it, as Critias does until the end of the inquiry.

Critias’ own acceptance prepares a demand that he refuses. If Critias were to ask what medicine produces, Socrates says, he would answer, “No small benefit: it produces health, a fine work for us,” and he adds, “if you accept that.” “I do,” says Critias (165d). House-building, Socrates goes on, produces houses; so Critias, who says that temperance is knowledge of oneself, ought to be able to say what fine work it produces (165d–e). Critias accepts what was said of medicine but refuses the likeness: “you are not inquiring correctly. This knowledge is not by nature like the other kinds of knowledge” (165e). Calculation and geometry, he points out, have no such work either, and Socrates grants it (165e–166a). To accept a premise is not to accept every likeness drawn from it.

Only once does Socrates speak of his own acceptance, and then he withholds it: “I can neither say with confidence whether it is possible for this to come about, for there to be knowledge of knowledge, nor, even if it most certainly exists, accept that it is temperance, until I have looked into whether a thing of that kind would benefit us or not” (169a–b). He has “a prophetic hunch that temperance is something beneficial and good” (169b), and asks Critias to show first that such a knowledge is possible and then that it is beneficial (169b–c), the two questions he first put at 167b. Critias cannot show the first, and Socrates grants it for the argument’s sake (169d; see Agreement and concession). The second is the test the definition fails: temperance, as knowledge only of knowledge, proves to be “the craftsman of no benefit” (175a).

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

- 156b–157a** Charmides accepts the good doctors’ principle of treating the part with the whole, and the Thracian doctor carries it on to the soul.
- 162b–e** Charmides wants Critias to answer for the definition, and Critias agrees to it and takes the argument over.
- 165c–166a** Critias accepts that medicine produces health, and refuses the likeness for temperance.
- 169a–c** Socrates will not accept knowledge of knowledge as temperance before he has looked into whether it would benefit us.

Elsewhere in Plato

Twice elsewhere Plato stages a change of answerer as a handing over of the argument and a taking of it. In the *Republic* Cephalus, Polemarchus’ aged father, called away to his sacrifices, says that he hands the argument over to the others, and his son Polemarchus asks whether he is not, then, his father’s heir; Cephalus laughs, agrees and goes off, and Socrates addresses Polemarchus as “the heir of the argument” (331d–e). In the *Philebus*, where Philebus holds that pleasure is the good, Socrates asks the young Protarchus whether he accepts the argument now being given him, using the simple verb *δέχεσθαι*, and Protarchus answers that he must, since Philebus has given up (11c); and when Philebus still insists that pleasure will win, Protarchus tells him that, having handed the argument over, he no longer has any say over the agreement with Socrates, or over its opposite (12a). In both, the argument passes to a new answerer, who answers for it from then on. In the *Charmides* it goes the other way, back to the man Socrates takes to be its author (162c–e).

Later readings

Aristotle, Plato’s pupil, setting out the answerer’s part in dialectical exercises, takes the case of a man defending someone else’s opinion: he must grant or refuse each point by looking to that person’s mind. Thus those who put forward the view of Heraclitus of Ephesus, the philosopher of about 500 BC, that good and bad are the same, will not grant that contraries are never present in one thing at once. They hold that principle themselves; it is Heraclitus’ position that obliges them to deny it. Those who receive theses from one another (*δεχόμενοι*, the simple verb), Aristotle adds, behave in the same way, aiming at what the thesis’s author would say.⁴ Charmides, defending a definition he had from someone else, can be read as the case this rule provides for: he cannot say what doing one’s own business means, and suggests that perhaps even the man who said it did not know what he meant (162b).

⁴ Aristotle, *Topics* 8.5, 159b27–35.

Translation in this edition

Ἀποδέχεσθαι is “accept” at 156c, in Socrates’ “if you accept that” at 165d, and at 169b; Critias’ reply, the one word Ἀποδέχομαι (*apodechomai*), “I accept”, is “I do” (165d). Παραδέχεσθαι is “take over”, in Socrates’ “take the argument over” and Critias’ “I take it over” (162e). The “agree” of the same exchange renders another verb, συγχωρεῖν, and the “approval” of Charmides in Socrates’ narration at 156d renders ἐπαινεῖν (*epainein*), “to praise”. The λόγος (*logos*) that Charmides accepts at 156c is “the principle”, and the λόγος that Critias takes over at 162e “the argument”. The simple verb δέχεσθαι, which the *Philebus* uses for the same act, does not occur in the *Charmides*.

ἀποδέχομαι

Attested: ἀποδέχη (*apodechēi*; 156c, 165d), ἀποδέχομαι (*apodechomai*; 165d, 169b). To accept, to receive with approval. Charmides accepts the good doctors’ principle that the part must be treated with the whole (156c); Critias accepts that medicine produces health, answering with the verb itself, which the edition renders “I do” (165d); Socrates will not accept that knowledge of knowledge is temperance until he has looked into whether it would benefit us (169b). Lemma: ἀποδέχομαι.

παραδέχομαι

Attested: παραδέχη (*paradechēi*; 162e), παραδέχομαι (*paradechomai*; 162e). To take over what another hands on. Socrates asks Critias to take the argument over from Charmides, and Critias answers, “I take it over” (162e). Lemma: παραδέχομαι.

See also

Agreement and concession; Beneficial and harmful; Critias; Hypothesis.

Agreement and concession

ὁμολογεῖν, *homologeîn*, “agree”, “admit”; ὁμολογία, *homologia*, “agreement”; συνὸμολογεῖν, *synomologeîn*, “agreed on”; συγχωρεῖν, *synchōreîn*, “concede”, “grant”, “agree”, “squeezed up”; συμπλάττειν, *symplattein*, “made up between us”

At a Glance

The word. Ὅμολογεῖν is to say the same thing as another, to agree or to admit, and ὁμολογία is the agreement made; συγχωρεῖν is to move together and make room, and so to give way, to concede or grant.

In the *Charmides*. Agreement is asked for and held back. Charmides cannot easily agree or deny that he is temperate (158c–d); Critias would sooner take back some of what he agreed, if Socrates thinks it necessarily leads there, than concede that a man who does not know himself is

temperate (164c–d); Socrates will say whether he agrees only once he has looked into it (165b–c). In the second half the argument goes forward on concessions, most of them Socrates' own (169d, 172c–d). At the end he counts what “we have conceded” though the argument did not allow it, calls it “our agreement”, and finds the definition of no benefit all the same (175b–d).

In this edition. “Agree” for *ὁμολογεῖν*, except “admit” once (173e); *συγχωρεῖν* is “grant” where Socrates proposes a step and “concede” elsewhere, “agree” at 162e and 166b, and “squeezed up” in its literal sense (155c).

A place to read. 175a–d, Socrates' reckoning of the concessions.

Meaning

ὁμολογεῖν (*homologeîn*) is made of *ὁμός*, “same”, and *λόγος*, “word”: to say the same thing as another, and so to agree, to admit; a *ὁμολογία* (*homologia*) is an agreement. *Συγχωρεῖν* (*synchōrein*) is to move together, to make room, and so to give way. Its literal sense comes once, in the comedy of the opening, as Socrates tells it: “Every one of us who were sitting there squeezed up and shoved his neighbor hard to make room for Charmides to sit beside him, until, of those sitting at the end, we made one stand up and tipped the other off sideways” (155c). Each man squeezes up to get the boy beside himself, not to oblige his neighbour. In argument, to agree is to say the same as the other; to concede is to let a claim stand, often for the argument's sake and without conviction. The inquiry opens with a request for agreement and ends with a count of concessions.

Use in the book

The first request for agreement is put to Charmides, the young son of Glaucon, and he cannot meet it. Asked whether he agrees with Critias, his cousin and guardian, that he already has enough temperance, he blushes and says “that it was not easy, in the circumstances, either to agree or to deny what he had been asked” (158c–d), and Socrates turns the request into an inquiry they will make together (158d–e). Charmides grants at once that temperance is fine (159c), and when he next calls it modesty, Socrates asks, “Weren't you agreeing just now that temperance is fine?” (160e). Critias, once he has taken the argument over (162e; see Acceptance and taking over), protests with heavy irony that Socrates has stretched his agreement: “I suppose I agreed that those who do other people's business are temperate, just because I agreed that those who make other people's things are!” (163a).

Agreements bind, and the dialogue shows what a partner does when an agreement binds too tightly. Asked whether a doctor must know when his treatment benefits, Critias answers, “Perhaps not” (164b), and that guarded concession lets Socrates draw the consequence that a man may sometimes act temperately, and be temperate, without knowing himself (164b–c).

Critias would sooner take back some of what he agreed earlier, if Socrates thinks the conclusion necessarily follows from it, than ever concede “that a man who does not know himself is temperate” (164c–d; see Retraction). Offering knowing oneself as temperance (164d), he gives up everything said before, and will give an account of it if Socrates does not agree (165b). Socrates will not be treated as one who claims to know the answers and agrees on demand: “I inquire with you, each time, into whatever is proposed, because I myself do not know. So once I have looked into it I am willing to say whether I agree or not” (165b–c). Agreement, on this rule, comes at the end of an inquiry, not before it.

In the second half the argument goes forward on concessions, and most are Socrates’ own. Critias, ashamed before the company, will not concede that he cannot make the distinctions Socrates asks for (169c–d); so, to keep the argument moving, Socrates proposes, “let us grant for now that it is possible for there to be knowledge of knowledge; we shall look into it again another time, whether it is so or not” (169d). Here the man who would agree only once he had looked grants first and leaves the looking for later; the other time never comes. When the argument has shown that such a knowledge would know only that one knows, not what one knows (170a–d), Socrates grants again that it is possible to know knowledge, and restores to temperance what was laid down at the start (167a), knowing what one knows and what one does not know: “let us not take that away from it, but grant it”, so as to see whether it would benefit us at all (172c–d). In the same breath he withdraws an agreement made a page before (171d–172a): they “too easily agreed” that it would be a great good if each did what he knew and handed over the rest to those who knew it (172d–e). In his dream he grants that prophecy is knowledge of the future and that men would live knowledgeably, but not that this would make them do well and be happy: “this, my dear Critias, we cannot yet learn” (173c–d). When Critias tries to set temperance over the knowledge of good, an earlier declaration binds him: “didn’t we solemnly declare long ago that it is knowledge only of knowledge and of the lack of knowledge, and of nothing else?” (174e).

At the end Socrates reckons up: “we have conceded many things that did not follow in the argument. For we conceded that there is knowledge of knowledge, though the argument did not allow it or say that there was; and we conceded, again, that by this knowledge one knows the works of the other kinds of knowledge too, though the argument did not allow this either” (175b–c). The first is the grant of 169d, renewed at 172c, and remembered as stronger than it was: what was granted as possible is now “that there is knowledge of knowledge”. The second is the grant of 172c–d, made so that the temperate man “might turn out to know, of what he knows, that he knows it, and of what he does not know, that he does not know it”. This “we conceded with the utmost magnificence, without even considering that it is impossible to know, in some way or other, what one

does not know at all” (175c). The concessions are now “our agreement” (175c), and the definition “what we long ago agreed on, and made up between us, and laid down as temperance” (175d). Every concession favoured the definition, and still the inquiry, though it “found us so simple-minded and so easy to deal with”, “is no more able to find the truth”, and has shown the definition to be of no benefit (175c–d). The failure holds in spite of the concessions, not because of them. The agreements of the dialogue, then, are not its doctrine. Socrates lays the blame on himself, “a poor inquirer” (175e).

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

155c The men on the bench squeeze up to make room for Charmides, the literal sense of the verb of conceding.

158c–e Charmides finds it not easy either to agree or to deny that he is temperate, and Socrates proposes that they look into it together.

160e Socrates recalls Charmides’ agreement that temperance is fine.

163a Critias: to have agreed about making other people’s things was not to have agreed about doing other people’s business.

164b–165b Critias’ “Perhaps not” leads to the conclusion that a man may be temperate without knowing himself; if Socrates thinks it necessarily follows, Critias would sooner take back some of what he agreed than concede it, and he gives up everything said before.

165b–c Socrates will not agree on demand, but only once he has looked into the matter.

169c–d Ashamed, Critias will not concede that he cannot make the distinctions asked of him; Socrates grants for now that knowledge of knowledge is possible.

172c–e Socrates grants the definition in order to test its benefit, and withdraws the agreement that each doing what he knew would be a great good.

173c–d In the dream Socrates grants that prophecy is knowledge of the future and that men would live knowledgeably, but not that they would be happy.

174e Socrates recalls the solemn declaration that temperance is knowledge only of knowledge and of the lack of knowledge, and it binds Critias.

175a–d The reckoning: what was conceded though the argument did not allow it, and the agreed definition shown to be of no benefit.

Elsewhere in Plato

The *Gorgias* makes agreement a test of truth and names its conditions. Socrates counts as a witness only the man he is talking to: unless he can produce Polus himself, the young teacher of rhetoric he is arguing with, as a single witness agreeing with what he says, he thinks he has achieved nothing worth mention (472b–c). Callicles, the young Athenian politician who argues that by nature the stronger should have more, is to be his touchstone, the stone on which gold is tested: whoever is to test a soul adequately needs knowledge, goodwill and frankness, and Callicles has all three (486d–487a). Gorgias of Leontini, the famous teacher of rhetoric, and Polus are wise, and his friends, but short of frankness and more bashful than they should be, so that out of shame each has brought himself to contradict himself in front of many people (487a–b). The dialogue has shown it happening: Polus says that Gorgias was ashamed not to agree that the orator knows what is just, fine and good, and that some contradiction followed, perhaps, from that agreement (461b–c), and Callicles says that Polus in turn conceded that doing injustice is more shameful than suffering it, and was tied up by that agreement, ashamed to say what he thought (482c–e). Callicles would never concede a thing from want of wisdom or from excess of shame, and so whatever the two of them agree on will in fact have reached the goal of truth (487e). In the *Charmides* shame works the other way: it keeps Critias from conceding what is true (169c). In the *Republic* Socrates offers Glaucon, Plato's brother, a choice of method against the claim of Thrasymachus the sophist that perfect injustice pays better than perfect justice: to set speech against speech and count up the goods on each side, which would need judges to decide, or to examine it as before, "agreeing with one another", and so be judges and advocates at once. Glaucon chooses the second (348a–b).

Later readings

Aristotle, Plato's pupil, sets out in his rules for dialectic, argument by question and answer, what the answerer should grant in discussions held for testing and inquiry rather than for victory, a matter on which, he says, he had nothing from earlier writers to go on. A point that seems true and is beside the argument is to be granted, with the remark that it seems so; one that does not seem true and is beside the argument is also to be granted, but marked as not seeming so, to avoid looking naive; and of a premise that bears on the argument and is highly implausible, the answerer should say that the conclusion follows if it is granted, but that the premise is far too naive.⁵ Socrates' grant at 169d can be read as a step marked in this way, made "for now", with the question "whether it is so or not" left for another time. In the reckoning the mark is gone: what was granted as possible is counted as granted outright, and the inquiry "found us so simple-minded"

⁵ Aristotle, *Topics* 8.5–6, 159a25–160a16.

(175c). Socrates' word there, εὐηθικός (*euēthikos*), is kin to Aristotle's εὐήθεια (*euētheia*), naivety or simple-mindedness.

Translation in this edition

The edition keeps “agree” for ὁμολογεῖν and “agreement” for ὁμολογία throughout, except “admit” at 173e, where Critias does not admit that the men who live knowledgeable at cutting leather or working bronze are happy; συνομολογεῖν is “agreed on” (175d). Συγχωρεῖν is “grant” where Socrates proposes a step (169d, 172c, 173c), “concede” at 164d, 169c and 175b–c, “agree” at 162e and 166b, in Socrates' requests for Critias' assent and in Critias' “I agree entirely”, and “squeezed up” in its literal sense at 155c. The steps Socrates “grants” at 169d and 172c are the ones he counts as “conceded” at 175b–c. “Grant” also renders δίδωμι (*didōmi*) at 172d and ἔπομαι (*hepomai*), “I follow”, at 173d; “agree” renders συμφέρομαι (*symppheromai*) at 164d; “allow” renders ἐάω (*eaō*) at 173d and 175b–c, and δίδωμι at 163d. “Made up between us” gives συμπλάττοντες (*sympplattontes*; 175d) its sense of moulding together, as a figure is shaped from wax or clay.

ἀποστερέω

Attested: ἀποστερήσωμεν (*aposterēsōmen*; 172d). To take away, to deprive. Socrates proposes not to take away from temperance what was laid down at the start (167a), knowing what one knows and what one does not know: “let us not take that away from it, but grant it” (172c–d). Lemma: ἀποστερέω.

ἀφίημι

Attested: ἀφίημι (*aphiēmi*; 165b). To let go, to give up. Critias gives up to Socrates everything said before: perhaps what Socrates said about it was more correct, perhaps what he himself said, but nothing they said was really clear. “Everything before this I give up to you” (165b), he says, and starts again from knowing oneself. Lemma: ἀφίημι.

διαμαρτύρομαι

Attested: διεμαρτυρόμεθα (*diemartyrometha*; 174e). To declare solemnly, as though before witnesses. When Critias would put temperance in charge of the knowledge of good, Socrates asks, “Or didn't we solemnly declare long ago that it is knowledge only of knowledge and of the lack of knowledge, and of nothing else?”, and Critias answers, “It seems so” (174e). The declaration binds him: temperance cannot then be the craftsman of health, or of benefit (174e–175a). Lemma: διαμαρτύρομαι.

δίδωμι

Attested: δοτέον (*doteon*; 158b), δίδωμι (*didōmi*; 163d), διδόναι (*didonai*; 165b), δῶμεν (*dōmen*; 172d), δόντες (*dontes*; 172d), δώσεις (*dōseis*; 176c). To give, to grant, to allow. If Charmides is temperate enough, the remedy for

the head “should be given” him without the charm (158b); Socrates allows Critias to assign each word as he pleases (163d); Critias is willing to give an account of temperance as knowing oneself (165b); Socrates proposes that they grant the definition and, “having granted all this”, look into its benefit (172d); at the end he asks whether Charmides will not even give him a preliminary hearing (176c). The same family gives the noun δόσις (158c) and the compounds παραδίδωμι (157e, 171e, 172d) and ἀποδίδωμι (170e, 175a). Lemma: δίδωμι.

ἐάω

Attested: ἐάν (*ean*; 158e), ἔα (*ea*; 163e, 166d), ἐάσας (*eiasas*; 166c), ἐώη (*eōiē*; 173d), ἐώντος (*eōntos*; 175b, 175c). To let, to allow, to let be. Socrates offers to look into Charmides’ temperance with him, or, “if not, let’s leave it” (158e); he waves aside Critias’ question, “Never mind that” (163e); Critias charges him with “letting go of what the argument is about” (166c), and Socrates tells him to “say goodbye to whether it is Critias or Socrates who is being refuted”, in Greek “let it rejoice” (166d–e); temperance, standing guard, “would not allow” the lack of knowledge to slip in (173d). In the reckoning the participle twice names what the concessions lacked: they were made “though the argument did not allow it” (175b), and “though the argument did not allow this either” (175c). Lemma: ἐάω.

κινδυνεύω

Attested: κινδυνεύει (*kindyneuei*; 160b, 170d), κινδυνεύω (*kindyneuō*; 170a), κινδυνεύοντας (*kindyneuontas*; 173b). To run a risk, to be in danger; with an infinitive, to be likely to, and so, as a one-word answer, “it looks that way”. Charmides answers so at 160b, when Socrates asks whether quickness and sharpness appear finer in everything than slowness and quietness, and Critias at 170d; the edition renders both “It looks that way”. Socrates uses the verb of himself, “I’m afraid I’m my same old self” (170a), and the literal danger comes in the dream, where under temperance men would “come through safe when in danger at sea and in war” (173b). Lemma: κινδυνεύω.

μεγαλοπρεπῶς

Attested: μεγαλοπρεπῶς (*megaloprepōs*; 175c). Magnificently, on a grand scale. Of the concession that the temperate man might know, of what he does not know, that he does not know it, Socrates says that “we conceded with the utmost magnificence” (175c): they gave away lavishly what the argument did not allow. Lemma: μεγαλοπρεπῶς.

ὁμολογέω

Attested: ὁμολογεῖς (*homologeis*; 158c, 165b), ὁμολογεῖν (*homologeîn*; 158c), ὁμολόγεις (*hōmologeis*; 160e), ὁμολόγηκα (*hōmologēka*; 163a), ὁμολόγησα (*hōmologēsa*; 163a), ὁμολογημένων (*hōmologēmenōn*; 164c), ὁμολογήσοντος (*homologēsontos*; 165b), ὁμολογῶ (*homologō*; 165c),

ὁμολογηκέναι (*hōmologēkenai*; 172d), ὁμολογήσαμεν (*hōmologēsamen*; 172d, 172e), ὁμολογοῦνται (*homologountai*; 173e), ὁμολογεῖται (*homologeitai*; 175b). To agree, to admit. Charmides finds it not easy either to agree or to deny that he is temperate (158c), and Socrates reminds him that he was agreeing just now that temperance is fine (160e); Critias protests that to have agreed about making other people's things was not to have agreed about doing other people's business (163a), and would take back some of what he agreed if Socrates thought the conclusion necessarily followed from it (164c); he offers an account if Socrates does not agree, and Socrates will say whether he agrees only when he has looked (165b–c); Socrates doubts that they were right to agree so readily that each doing what he knew would be a great good (172d–e); Critias does not admit that those who live knowledgeably at the crafts are happy (173e); and temperance “is agreed to be the finest of all things” (175a–b). Lemma: ὁμολογέω.

ὁμολογία

Attested: ὁμολογία (*homologia*; 175c). Agreement, the thing agreed. In the reckoning, “our agreement says” that the temperate man knows, of what he does not know, that he does not know it, than which nothing could appear more absurd (175c). Lemma: ὁμολογία.

συγχωρέω

Attested: συγχωρῶν (*synchōrōn*; 155c), συγχωρεῖς (*synchōreis*; 162e twice, 166b), συγχωρῶ (*synchōrō*; 162e), συγχωρήσαιμ' (*synchōrēsaim'*; 164d), συγχωρήσαι (*synchōrēsai*; 169c), συγχωρήσωμεν (*synchōrēsōmen*; 169d, 173c), συγχωρήσαντες (*synchōrēsantes*; 172c), συγκεχωρήκαμεν (*synkechōrēkamen*; 175b), συνεχωρήσαμεν (*synechōrēsamen*; 175b, 175c twice). To move together and make room, and so to give way, to concede, to grant. The men on the bench squeeze up for Charmides (155c); Critias agrees that temperance is what Charmides said, and that all craftsmen make something (162e), and that the heavy and the light, which weighing weighs, are other than weighing itself (166b); he would never concede that a man who does not know himself is temperate (164d), and will not concede that he cannot make the distinctions asked of him (169c); Socrates grants for now that knowledge of knowledge is possible (169d), grants it again together with the definition (172c), and grants that prophecy is knowledge of what is going to be (173c); at the end he counts up what they conceded (175b–c). Lemma: συγχωρέω.

συμπλάττω

Attested: συμπλάττοντες (*symplattontes*; 175d). To mould together, to fabricate. The definition of temperance is what “we long ago agreed on, and made up between us” (175d). Lemma: συμπλάττω.

συμφέρω

Attested: συμφέρομαι (*symppheromai*; 164d). In the middle, to agree with someone. Critias, saying that temperance is knowing oneself, agrees “with the one who dedicated the inscription to that effect at Delphi” (164d). The active, “to be of use”, does not occur in the dialogue. Lemma: συμφέρω.

συνομολογέω

Attested: συνομολογούντες (*synomologountes*; 175d). To agree together. Socrates’ word for the partners’ joint work on the definition, “what we long ago agreed on, and made up between us, and laid down as temperance” (175d). Lemma: συνομολογέω.

See also

Acceptance and taking over; Argument and account; Hypothesis; Knowledge of knowledge; Necessity and consequence; Retraction.

Anger

Anger and indignation · Charmides

ὀργίζεσθαι, *orgizesthai*, “angry”; ἀγανακτεῖν, *aganaktein*, “aggrieved”

At a Glance

The word. ὀργίζεσθαι is to become or be angry; ἀγανακτεῖν is to be vexed or aggrieved at something one thinks wrong, and can be felt on behalf of another person or thing.

In the *Charmides*. Each word comes in one passage. Teased by his ward, Critias seemed to Socrates “as angry with Charmides as a poet is with an actor who makes a mess of the poet’s own verses” (162d), a simile that ties the anger to what is one’s own. When the inquiry has shown their definition of temperance to be of no benefit, Socrates is “less aggrieved” for himself, “very aggrieved” for Charmides and “still more aggrieved” for the Thracian charm meant to bring temperance, and then blames himself as “a poor inquirer” (175d–e). The two scenes can be read as two answers to a slight.

In this edition. The edition has “angry” for ὀργίζεσθαι, “aggrieved” for ἀγανακτεῖν at each of its three places, and “would not put up with it” for οὐκ ἠνέσχετο.

A place to read. 162b–d, where Charmides’ sly jibe makes Critias angry.

Meaning

ὀργίζεσθαι (*orgizesthai*), the verb formed from ὀργή (*orgē*), “anger”, is to be angry; its aorist, ὀργισθῆναι (*orgisthēnai*, 162d), is to become angry. Ἀγανακτεῖν (*aganaktein*) is to be vexed or indignant at what one thinks

wrong; with *ὑπέρ* (*hyper*), “on behalf of”, it is felt for another person or thing, as Socrates feels it on Charmides’ account and “on account of the charm” (*ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐπωδῆς*, 175d–e). At their one place each, the two words have different objects: Critias is angry with a person; Socrates is aggrieved at an outcome, and least on his own account.

Use in the book

Charmides offers as his third definition something he once heard, “doing one’s own business”; Socrates guesses he had it from Critias, who answers, “Certainly not from me” (161b–c). Later, unable to say what the phrase means, Charmides adds, “But perhaps there is nothing to stop even the man who said it from not knowing what he meant”, and with that, Socrates narrates, “he laughed slyly and looked across at Critias” (162b). Critias had plainly been “on edge for some time, and eager to shine before Charmides and the company” (162c). The boy “kept prodding him, and made out that he had been refuted” (the Greek does not say which of the two), and then, as Socrates tells it, “Critias would not put up with it: he seemed to me as angry with Charmides as a poet is with an actor who makes a mess of the poet’s own verses” (162d). The simile can be read as naming the cause. The poet’s anger is over “the poet’s own verses” (*τὰ ἑαυτοῦ ποιήματα*, *ta heautou poiēmata*), and the definition being mishandled is “doing one’s own business” (*τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν*, *to ta heautou prattein*): Critias, who had disowned the definition, is angered like a poet by the mishandling of his own. Socrates excuses the boy and hands Critias the argument (162d–e; see Age and maturity). Critias’ concern for his standing returns at 169c–d, where, “used to being admired on every occasion”, he is “ashamed in front of the company” and keeps his perplexity covered (see Reputation and ambition).

Socrates’ grievance at the end also answers an affront: the inquiry, he says, “has made such a mockery of the truth” that it has shown their definition, “with the utmost insolence, to be of no benefit” (175d). “For my own part I am less aggrieved,” he says; on Charmides’ account he is “very aggrieved”, if the boy is “to get no profit from this temperance” (175d–e); and, he goes on, “I am still more aggrieved on account of the charm I learned from the Thracian, if I took great pains to learn a charm for a thing worth nothing” (175e). The charm, learned on campaign from a doctor of the Thracian god Zalmoxis, was to bring temperance into the soul (156d–157a). Then he denies the condition and blames himself: “Well, I don’t at all think it is so; rather, I am a poor inquirer. For I do think that temperance is a great good” (175e).

The two scenes can be read as a pair, each a response to a slight. Critias turns on the boy because what is, in Socrates’ eyes, his own has been mishandled; Socrates is least aggrieved on his own account and most on the

charm's, and keeps his belief in temperance by blaming not the argument but himself.

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

- 161b–c** Charmides offers “doing one’s own business” as something he once heard; Critias denies that it is his.
- 162b–d** Charmides laughs slyly and looks across at Critias; Critias, eager to shine, can hold back no longer and seems to Socrates as angry as a poet with an actor who mangles the poet’s verses.
- 162d–e** Socrates excuses the boy and invites Critias to take the argument over.
- 169c–d** Critias, used to being admired, is ashamed before the company and keeps covering up his perplexity.
- 175d–e** Less aggrieved for himself, very aggrieved for Charmides and still more for the charm, Socrates denies that temperance is worth nothing and calls himself a poor inquirer.

Elsewhere in Plato

Charmides’ jibe is close to the charge Socrates brings against the poets in the *Apology*. When he asked them what their most carefully wrought poems meant, almost anyone in the room could talk about the poems better than the men who had made them, and he concluded that poets compose not from wisdom but from a sort of natural gift and possession, like seers and oracle-singers, who utter much that is fine without understanding any of it (22b–c). In the *Ion* Socrates places the rhapsode, the professional reciter of Homer, and the actor in the middle of a chain that runs from the god through the poet to the audience, like iron rings held together by a magnet (535e–536a); Socrates’ simile for Critias can be read against that chain, with the middle ring spoiling the first one’s work, and the first one angry. Critias can also be read as showing the part of the soul that the *Republic* calls spirited. Socrates and Glaucon, Plato’s brother, agree that it is wholly bent on mastery, victory and good repute, and may fitly be called victory-loving and honour-loving (581a–b); both moments of Critias’ concern for standing use its words, since “honour-loving”, φιλότιμον (*philotimon*), is the adjective whose adverb, φιλοτίμως, lies behind “eager to shine” (162c), and the verb for good repute, εὐδοκίμεῖν (*eudokimein*), is the one behind “used to being admired” (169c).

Later readings

Aristotle’s account of anger in the *Rhetoric* can be read as a commentary on 162b–d. Anger, he says, is a desire, accompanied by pain, for an apparent revenge for an apparent slight to oneself or to something of one’s own, when the slight is undeserved, and it is always felt toward some

particular person; insolence is one of the three kinds of slight. Men grow angry, he goes on, with those who deride, scoff at and make fun of them; with those who speak ill of what they care about most, as men whose ambition lies in philosophy are angry when someone speaks ill of philosophy, and far more so if they suspect that they do not have the thing, or not securely, or are not thought to have it; and against friends more than against those who are not friends.⁶ Each mark can be read in the scene: Charmides laughs slyly; Critias is “eager to shine”, and Aristotle’s word for men ambitious in philosophy, φιλοτιμούμενοι (*philotimoumenoi*), is of the same family as that φιλοτίμως (162c); Critias is soon unable to make the distinctions asked of him (169c–d); and the one who mocks him is his cousin and ward. Socrates too speaks of insolence, since the inquiry, as he tells it, treated their agreement “with the utmost insolence” (175d); but where Aristotle’s angry man wants revenge on a particular person, Socrates, whose offender is an inquiry, wants none, and his grievance is least on his own account.

Translation in this edition

The edition renders ὀργισθῆναι “angry” at its one place (162d), and ἀγανακτῶ “aggrieved” at all three, graded as the Greek grades it, “less aggrieved”, “very aggrieved”, “still more aggrieved” (175d–e), for ἦττον (*hēttōn*), πᾶν (*pany*) and ἔτι μᾶλλον (*eti mallon*). Οὐκ ἠνέσχετο (*ouk ēnescheto*) is “would not put up with it” (162d). Before the anger is named, ἀγωνιών (*agōniōn*) is “on edge”, φιλοτίμως ἔχων (*philotimōs echōn*) “eager to shine”, and οὐχ οἷός τε ἐγένετο (*ouch hoios te egeneto*) “could contain himself no longer” (162c); πᾶν ὑβριστικῶς (*pany hybristikōs*) is “with the utmost insolence” (175d). Θυμός (*thymos*), “spirit”, the *Republic*’s word for the part of the soul with which we grow angry (439e), does not occur in the dialogue; its stem appears only in ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*), “desire” (167e).

ἀγανακτέω

Attested: ἀγανακτῶ (*aganaktō*; 175d twice, 175e). To be vexed, indignant, aggrieved, for oneself or, with ὑπέρ, on behalf of another person or thing. Socrates grades his grievance at the end of the dialogue: least for himself, more for Charmides, most for the charm (175d–e). Lemma: ἀγανακτέω.

ἀνέχομαι

Attested: ἠνέσχετο (*ēnescheto*; 162d). To hold out, endure, put up with. Negated, it marks the moment Critias’ restraint gives way: when Charmides kept prodding him, “Critias would not put up with it” (162d). Lemma: ἀνέχομαι.

⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.2, 1378a30–34 (the definition, and anger as felt toward a particular person), 1378b14–15 (the three kinds of slight), 1379a30–b4 (mockery, what one cares about most, friends).

ὀργίζομαι

Attested: ὀργισθῆναι (*orgisthēnai*; 162d). To become angry. Critias “seemed to me”, Socrates narrates, “as angry with Charmides as a poet is with an actor who makes a mess of the poet’s own verses” (162d). Lemma: ὀργίζομαι.

See also

Age and maturity; Beneficial and harmful; Praise and blame; Reputation and ambition; Temperance.

Crafts expertise and products

Art and craft

Craft and expertise · Charmides

τέχνη, *technē*, “craft”, “art”; δημιουργός, *dēmiourgos*, “craftsman”; δόμοτεχνος, *homotechnos*, “fellow craftsman”; τεχνικῶς, *technikōs*, “expertly”

At a Glance

The word. Τέχνη is a craft, a teachable skill with its own field and, mostly, its own product; a δημιουργός is a craftsman.

In the *Charmides*. The crafts are the dialogue’s model of knowledge. Because craftsmen make things for others, they tell against “doing one’s own business” (161d–163a). When Critias denies calculation and geometry any work like a house, Socrates asks what temperance is knowledge of instead of what it produces (165c–166b). Each craft has its own field, so only a fellow craftsman can judge an expert (170e–171c); and without the knowledge of good and bad the crafts would still do their work, but not “well and beneficially” (174b–d).

In this edition. Τέχνη is “craft” except in “the art of calculation” (165e); δημιουργός is always “craftsman”, and τεχνικῶς “expertly”.

A place to read. 174b–175a, where the crafts are stripped of the knowledge of good and bad and temperance proves “the craftsman of no benefit”.

Meaning

Τέχνη (*technē*) is related to τέκτων (*tektōn*), a builder or carpenter, and means a skill of making or doing that follows rules and can be taught: shoemaking, weaving and building, but also medicine, piloting and generalship, and the mathematical arts. A δημιουργός (*dēmiourgos*), from δῆμος (*dēmos*), “the people”, and the root of ἔργον (*ergon*), “work”, is one who works for the public. Τεχνικῶς (*technikōs*) is “expertly”, and an δόμοτεχνος (*homotechnos*) one who shares another’s craft.

The *Charmides* does not set craft against knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, *epistēmē*). Medicine is “knowledge of the healthy” (165c), house-building “knowledge of how to build” (165d), and at the end the knowledge of good and bad itself is called “another craft” (175a). The crafts are its plainest cases of knowledge, each defined by what it is of, most of them with a work to show; the question is whether temperance can be a knowledge of that kind.

Use in the book

The crafts enter as a refutation. When Charmides proposes that temperance is “doing one’s own business” (161b), Socrates takes “doing” in its widest sense: writing others’ names, healing, building, weaving and “producing, by any craft whatever, any of the works of craft” are all doing something (161d–e). Charmides agrees that a city whose law made each man make everything he used would not be well managed (161e–162a). Critias, taking the definition over, agrees that “all craftsmen make something”, and that they make other people’s things as well (162e–163a), and tries to save the formula by separating making from doing and working: Hesiod, the early epic poet, he argues, called works only “things made finely and beneficially”, not cobbling shoes or selling salt fish (163b–c).⁷

Socrates next asks whether a doctor must know when his treatment is beneficial, and each craftsman when he is going to profit from his work. “Perhaps not,” Critias answers (164b), and rather than concede that “a man who does not know himself is temperate”, he makes temperance knowing oneself (164c–d). From then on the crafts measure it. Medicine, Socrates says, produces health, “a fine work for us”, and house-building houses, “and the same with the other crafts”; what fine work, then, does temperance produce, “worthy of its name” (165c–e)? Critias answers that “the art of calculation” and geometry have no work “in the way that a house is the work of house-building, or a cloak of weaving” (165e). Socrates grants it, “That’s true”, and moves the test from the work to the object: calculation is of the even and the odd, weighing of the heavier and the lighter, and each, Critias agrees, is “something other than” the knowledge itself (166a–b). Asked, then, what temperance is knowledge of, Critias answers that it “alone is knowledge both of the other kinds of knowledge and of itself” (166c).

The same principle then turns the crafts against him. Medicine was defined “by being knowledge of the healthy and the diseased” (171a), so a doctor must be examined “in what is said or done” in that field, and no one can do it without medicine; if the temperate man could, “he would be a doctor in addition to being temperate” (171b–c). If temperance is only knowledge of knowledge, it will be able to tell “neither a doctor who knows the things of his craft from one who does not know them but pretends or

⁷ Hesiod, *Works and Days* 311, the line Critias cites as “work is no disgrace” (163b); it goes on, “but not working is the disgrace”.

thinks he does, nor anyone else who knows anything at all”, except a man of the temperate man’s own craft, as any craftsman can (171c).

Socrates now grants temperance all that was claimed for it (172c–d) and tells his dream, “whether it has come through horn or through ivory” (173a), the *Odyssey*’s gates of true and false dreams.⁸ Under temperance no false pilot, doctor or general would escape us; we would be “healthier in body than we are now, and come through safe when in danger at sea and in war”, and our equipment, clothing, footwear and possessions would be expertly made, “because we would be using genuine craftsmen” (173b–c), and prophecy, if it is a knowledge, would be cleared of impostors (173c). We would “act and live knowledgeably”, Socrates grants, but “that by acting knowledgeably we would do well and be happy, this, my dear Critias, we cannot yet learn” (173d). Knowledgeably about what, Socrates asks: cutting leather, working bronze, wool, wood? Critias refuses each, and Socrates observes that “these people live knowledgeably”, yet Critias does not admit that they are happy (173d–e). Critias then names the knowledge that makes a man happy: the one “by which he knows good ... and bad” (174a–b).

Socrates then puts the crafts to a test of subtraction, taking that knowledge away: “will medicine make us any less healthy, or cobbling any less well shod, or weaving any less well clothed, or will the pilot’s art any less prevent us from dying at sea, and generalship in war?” “No less,” Critias says. “But, my dear Critias, each of these things being done well and beneficially: that will be gone from us, if this is absent” (174c–d). The questions run again through the goods of the dream: health, footwear, clothing, and safety at sea and in war. The knowledge of good and bad, “whose work is to benefit us”, is not temperance (174d). When Critias answers that temperance, presiding over all knowledge, would rule this one too and so benefit us (174d–e), Socrates objects that it would not then heal us in place of medicine, nor do each craft’s work: health and benefit each belong “to another craft”, and temperance is “the craftsman of no benefit” (174e–175a).

The crafts come through intact; it is Critias’ temperance that has no work, no object but knowledge, no power to judge a craftsman and no share in benefit. Yet the crafts are not sufficient either. The doctor of 164b can be read as the first sign of what the subtraction test shows: a craft by itself can make us healthy or shod without doing so to our benefit. The argument ends with two kinds of knowledge where Critias wanted one, the many crafts, each the knowledge of its own field, and the knowledge of good and bad, which Socrates also calls a craft. A knowledge of knowledge is neither.

⁸ Homer, *Odyssey* 19.562–567, where Penelope says that dreams that pass through the gate of ivory deceive and those that pass through the gate of horn come true.

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

- 161d–162a** Writing others' names, healing, building, weaving and producing the works of any craft are doing something; a city where each man made all his own things would not be well managed.
- 162e–163c** All craftsmen make, and make other people's things; Critias separates making from doing and working, on the authority of Hesiod.
- 164a–c** Critias allows that a doctor may not know when his treatment is beneficial, nor a craftsman when he will profit from his work; a man could then, Socrates infers, be temperate without knowing it.
- 165c–166b** Medicine produces health and house-building houses; Critias objects that calculation and geometry have no such work; Socrates answers that each knowledge is of something other than itself.
- 170e–171c** Only medicine can examine a doctor; a knowledge of knowledge could judge no expert, beyond the temperate man's own fellow craftsman.
- 173a–d** The dream: under temperance no pretender escapes, and genuine craftsmen make all we have; whether acting knowledgeably makes us happy is not yet learned.
- 173d–174b** Those who live knowledgeably about leather, bronze, wool or wood Critias will not call happy; the knowledge that makes a man happy, he says, is of good and bad.
- 174b–d** Without that knowledge, medicine, cobbling, weaving, the pilot's art and generalship would still do their work, but not "well and beneficially".
- 174d–175a** Critias sets temperance over all knowledge; but it would not make us healthy, health and benefit belong to other crafts, and it is "the craftsman of no benefit".

Elsewhere in Plato

The rule that each craft has its own field is stated most plainly in the *Ion*. Asked who would better judge Homer's lines on driving a chariot round the turn, a doctor or a charioteer, Ion, a professional reciter of Homer, answers the charioteer, because he has the craft. Socrates draws the rule: to each craft the god has given a work that it can know, so that what we know by piloting we shall not know by medicine, and whoever lacks a craft will not be able to judge well what is said or done in it (537c–538b). That is the test the *Charmides* applies to the doctor, "in what is said or done" (171b).

Two other dialogues draw the limit of the crafts much as the subtraction test does (174c–d). In the *Laches* the Athenian general Nicias says that doctors know only what is healthy and what is diseased, not whether health is more to be feared than sickness for a given man, though for many it would be better not to rise from their sickness; and a prophet need know only the signs of what is to come, death, disease, loss of property, victory or defeat in war, not whether it is better for someone to suffer them or not (195c–196a). In the *Gorgias* Socrates tells Callicles that the pilot’s art saves lives, bodies and goods from the worst dangers, yet the pilot asks two drachmas at most even from Egypt or the Black Sea, and walks modestly by the shore; for he can reckon that it is unclear which passengers he has benefited by not letting them drown and which he has harmed, since he has landed them no better in body or soul than they were when they embarked (511c–512b).

The *Euthydemus* reaches the *Charmides*’ last difficulty by another road. Socrates tells his old friend Crito how he and the young Cleinias sought the kingly craft, to which, it seemed to them, generalship and the other crafts hand over the rule of the works they make, since it alone knows how to use them. Asked what work it produces, as medicine produces health and farming food, they could not say. It must give us some good, and they had agreed that the only good is a kind of knowledge, so that making the citizens rich, free and free from faction proved neither good nor bad; it does not hand on cobbling or carpentry either; and so it must be the craftsman of none of the works that are neither good nor bad, and hand on no knowledge but itself (291b–292e). The search ends where the *Charmides* does, with a ruling knowledge that has no work of its own.

Later readings

Plato’s pupil Aristotle drew the line between making and doing that Critias tried to draw (163b–c). A craft, for him, is a reasoned state concerned with making, whose end lies outside the making; practical wisdom is concerned with doing, about what is good and bad for a human being, and deliberates not about what serves health or strength in part but about living well as a whole. The subtraction test can be read as pointing toward that line (174b–d), with one difference: Aristotle denies that practical wisdom is a craft at all, since doing and making differ in kind, while the *Charmides* still assigns benefit to “another craft” (175a).⁹ He opened the *Nicomachean Ethics* with the order Critias reached for at the end (174d–e), crafts ranged under master crafts, bridle-making under horsemanship and horsemanship under generalship, and the chief good under the most authoritative knowledge, the “architectonic” or master-builder’s knowledge, which is politics.¹⁰

⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.4–5, 1140a1–b7.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1–2, 1094a1–28.

Translation in this edition

Τέχνη occurs at 161e, 165d, 165e, 171c, 174e and 175a, and is “craft” at every place but one: Critias’ τῆς λογιστικῆς τέχνης at 165e is “the art of calculation”, as English idiom has it, though the same sentence ends with “many crafts”. Λογιστική on its own is “calculation” (166a, and τὸ λογιστικόν at 174b). “Art” occurs once more, in “the pilot’s art” (174c), where the Greek has the adjective κυβερνητική without τέχνη. The other craft names, adjectives in the Greek, are English nouns: “medicine” (ιατρική, though “doctoring” once, of Socrates’ pretence, at 158e), “house-building” (οἰκοδομική), “weaving” (ὑφαντική), “geometry” (γεωμετρική), “weighing” (στατική), “statesmanship” (πολιτική), “music” (μουσική), “cobbling” (σκυτική), “generalship” (στρατηγική), “prophecy” (μαντική) and “draughts” (τὸ πεττευντικόν). Δημιουργός is “craftsman” at all seven places, and ὁμότεχνος “fellow craftsman” (171c). Τεχνικῶς is “expertly” in “expertly made for us” (173c), where “made” renders a form of ἐργάζεσθαι, “work”. Because “craft” and “craftsman” are kept throughout, the end of the argument sounds in English as it does in Greek: temperance is not “the craftsman of health”, health belongs “to another craft”, and temperance is “the craftsman of no benefit” (174e–175a).

ἀμπεχόνη

Attested: ἀμπεχόνην (*ampechonēn*; 173b). Clothing, a wrap worn about the body. In the dream “our equipment and clothing and our footwear, all of it, and all our possessions would be expertly made for us” (173b–c); in the subtraction test weaving still keeps us “well clothed” (174c), where the verb is ἡμφιέσθαι, from ἀμφιέννυμι, “to clothe”. Lemma: ἀμπεχόνη.

ἀποθνήσκω

Attested: ἀποθνήσκειν (*apothnēiskein*; 174c). To die. With the knowledge of good and bad taken away, Socrates asks whether the pilot’s art will “any less prevent us from dying at sea, and generalship in war”; Critias answers “No less”, and Socrates replies that their being done “well and beneficially” will be gone (174c–d). Lemma: ἀποθνήσκω.

δημιουργός

Attested: δημιουργούς (*dēmiourgous*; 162e, 164a), δημιουργῶν (*dēmiourgōn*; 164b), δημιουργοί (*dēmiourgoi*; 171c), δημιουργοῖς (*dēmiourgois*; 173c), δημιουργός (*dēmiourgos*; 174e, 175a). A craftsman, one who practises a craft and makes its works. Craftsmen make other people’s things as well as their own (162e–163a, recalled at 164a); Critias allows that each may not know when he will profit from his work (164b); each can judge a fellow craftsman in his own craft (171c); in the dream we would be “using genuine craftsmen” (173c). At the end the word is turned on

temperance, which is not “the craftsman of health” and proves “the craftsman of no benefit” (174e–175a). Lemma: δημιουργός.

ἔριον

Attested: ἐρίων (*erion*; 173e). Wool. Asked what the man who lives knowledgeably knows about, Critias refuses cutting leather and working bronze, and then “wool, or wood, or anything else of that sort”; those who live knowledgeably in such work, Socrates observes, Critias does not admit to be happy (173d–e). Lemma: ἔριον.

ξύλον

Attested: ξύλων (*xylōn*; 173e). Wood, timber, the material of the carpenter and the joiner. It comes in the same question as wool, among the things one might work knowledgeably without, by Critias’ answer, being happy (173e). Lemma: ξύλον.

πόλεμος

Attested: πολέμῳ (*polemōi*; 173b, 174c). War. In the dream we would “come through safe when in danger at sea and in war” (173b); in the subtraction test generalship would still keep us from dying in war without the knowledge of good and bad, though not well and beneficially (174c–d). Lemma: πόλεμος.

σκεῦος

Attested: σκεύη (*skeuē*; 173b). Equipment: the gear, vessels and implements of a house or a campaign. First of the things that in the dream would be “expertly made for us” by “genuine craftsmen” (173b–c). Lemma: σκεῦος.

σκυτική

Attested: σκυτική (*skytikē*; 174c). Cobbling, the shoemaker’s craft. Without the knowledge of good and bad it would leave us no less “well shod” (174c), but not “well and beneficially” (174c–d). Lemma: σκυτική.

σκυτῶν τομῆς

Attested: σκυτῶν τομῆς (*skytōn tomēs*; 173d), “cutting leather”; the compound verb σκυτοτομεῖν (*skytotomein*; 161e) and σκυτοτομοῦντι (*skytotomounti*; 163b), “cobble”. The cobbler’s trade, named by its first task. “About cutting leather?” is the first of Socrates’ suggestions for the knowledge by which the happy man lives, and Critias rejects it with an oath (173d–e). The verb gives the law Socrates imagines, under which each man would “cobble his own shoes” (161e), and the first of the trades by which Critias argues that Hesiod did not count every making as work (163b). Lemma: σκυτός; τομή; σκυτοτομέω.

στρατηγική

Attested: στρατηγική (*stratēgikē*; 174c). Generalship. It comes last in the subtraction test: without the knowledge of good and bad it would no less keep us from dying in war, though not well and beneficially (174c–d). Lemma: στρατηγική.

στρατηγός

Attested: στρατηγός (*stratēgos*; 173b). A general. In the dream, under temperance, no doctor or general “or anyone else” who “pretended to know what he did not know” would escape our notice (173b). Lemma: στρατηγός.

σώζω

Attested: ἐσώθης (*esōthēs*; 153b), σώζεσθαι (*sōizesthai*; 173b). To keep safe, and in the passive to come through safe. When Socrates is just back from the army besieging Potidaea in the north Aegean, his friend Chaerephon’s first question is “how did you come out of the battle alive?” (153b); in the dream, with genuine pilots and generals, we would “come through safe when in danger at sea and in war” (173b). Lemma: σώζω.

τέχνη

Attested: τέχνη (*technē*; 161e, 175a), τέχνης (*technēs*; 161e, 165e, 171c, 175a), τεχνών (*technōn*; 165d, 165e, 174e); the compound ὁμότεχνον (*homotechnon*; 171c), “fellow craftsman”. A craft: a teachable skill with its own field and, mostly, its own work. Healing, building, weaving and producing “any of the works of craft” are doing something (161e); each craft, like house-building, has its work (165d), though Critias names “the art of calculation” as a knowledge with no such work (165e); only one who has the craft can tell whether a doctor knows “the things of his craft” (171c); and at the end health and benefit each belong to “another craft”, not to temperance (174e–175a). Lemma: τέχνη; ὁμότεχνος.

τεχνικῶς

Attested: τεχνικῶς (*technikōs*; 173c). Expertly, as a craft would do it. In the dream our possessions “would be expertly made for us ... because we would be using genuine craftsmen” (173c). Lemma: τεχνικῶς.

ὑπόδεσις

Attested: ὑπόδεσιν (*hypodesin*; 173b); from the same root ὑποδήματα (*hypodēmata*; 161e), “shoes”, and ὑποδεδέσθαι (*hypodedesthai*; 174c), “shod”. Footwear, literally a binding under the foot. In the dream our footwear, “all of it”, would be expertly made (173b–c); under the law Socrates imagines each man would cobble his own “shoes” (161e); and without the knowledge of good and bad cobbling would leave us no less “well shod” (174c). Lemma: ὑπόδεσις; ὑπόδημα; ὑποδέω.

χαλκός

Attested: χαλκού (*chalkou*; 173e). Bronze, the smith's metal. "Working bronze, then?" is Socrates' second suggestion for the knowledge by which the happy man lives; Critias answers "Not at all", and so the bronze-worker, like the leather-cutter, lives knowledgeably without being, on Critias' account, happy (173e). Lemma: χαλκός.

χρήμα

Attested: χρήματα (*chrēmata*; 173c). Things one has and uses, possessions, and not only money. In the dream "all our possessions would be expertly made for us" (173c). Lemma: χρήμα.

See also

Calculation and geometry; Doing and action; Fellow expert; Good and bad; Making and production; Product and object of knowledge.

Drama and conversational tone

Age and maturity

Youth and age · Charmides

παῖς, *pais*, "child", "boy", "son"; μεῖράκιον, *meirakion*, "young man"; νεανίσκος, *neaniskos*, "young man"; νεανίας, *neanias*, "youngster"; ἡλικία, *hēlikia*, "age"; ἡλικιώται, *hēlikīōtai*, "people my age", "those his age"

At a Glance

The word. Παῖς is a child or boy, a son, and in address a slave; μεῖράκιον a lad past childhood; νεανίσκος and νεανίας a young man; ἡλικία age, and ἐν ἡλικίᾳ the age of maturity; ἡλικιώται are those of one's own age.

In the *Charmides*. Charmides was not yet grown up when Socrates left for the siege of Potidaea, the rebel city in the north Aegean, and Socrates expects to find him now "quite the young man" (154a–b). His age is a reason to expect him to converse (154e), a limit on Critias' praise (157d) and what makes his bashfulness becoming (158c). At 162e Socrates excuses the boy's ignorance "at his age" and expects Critias to know, because of his age and his study, an expectation the rest of the dialogue does not bear out.

In this edition. Παῖς is "child", "boy" or "son"; "young man" renders μεῖράκιον, νεανίσκος and the plural of νέος; νεανίας is "youngster"; ἡλικία is "age", "years" or "grown up".

A place to read. 153d–154c, where Charmides, not yet grown up when Socrates left, comes in watched by young men, grown men and boys.

Meaning

Παῖς (*país*) is the child or boy; with a father's name it is "son", and in address it is used to call a slave or attendant. Μειράκιον (*meirakion*), a diminutive, is a lad no longer a child, and νεανίσκος (*neaniskos*) and νεανίας (*neanias*), from νέος (*neos*), "young", both mean a young man. Ἡλικία (*hēlikia*), akin to ἡλιξ (*hēlix*), "of the same age", is a person's time of life, and ἐν ἡλικίᾳ is "of age", grown up; the same family gives ἡλικιώτης (*hēlikiotēs*), an age-mate, and τηλικούτος (*tēlikoutos*), "of such an age". The *Charmides* gives no one's age in years. What it marks are relations: then and now, equal in age, younger and older; even the argument at 168c takes age as an example of a relation.

Use in the book

Socrates asks "about the young men" (153d), and Critias, Charmides' cousin and guardian, glancing toward the door, sees some coming in, "trading insults with one another", the "advance guard and the lovers" of the boy now thought most beautiful (154a). Asked who the boy is, Critias answers, "You know him ... but he wasn't yet grown up when you went away: Charmides" (154a–b), and Socrates remembers him: "He was nothing to sniff at even then, when he was still a child; by now ... he must be quite the young man" (154b). Of the crowd's astonishment he says, "With us grown men that was less surprising. But I watched the boys too, and not one of them was looking anywhere else, not even the littlest: they were all gazing at him as if he were a statue" (154c).

Age then licenses the conversation. Proposing to strip the boy's soul before his body, Socrates says, "At his age he must surely be willing to have a conversation" (154e). When he asks Critias to "call the youngster over", the ground shifts from age to supervision: "Even if he were younger still, there would be nothing improper in his talking with us in front of you, his guardian and his cousin" (155a; see Guardian and cousin). Παῖς has its other use when Critias turns to his attendant: "Boy, call Charmides" (155b). Charmides remembers Socrates from his own childhood (156a).

Praise is scaled to age. Critias says the boy is thought "to surpass those his age", and "in every other respect, as far as his years allow, second to none" (157d); and of his blush Socrates as narrator says that "his bashfulness was becoming at his age" (158c; see Modesty and shame). Socrates then asks him to answer "properly and like a man", and the boy thinks it over "very much like a man" (160d–e) before answering that temperance makes a person "bashful", the word used of him at 158c (αἰσχυντηλός, *aischyntēlos*), and the answer can be read as a self-portrait.

The turn comes at 162d–e. Charmides has hinted that the definition's author may not know what he meant, and Critias, in Socrates' eyes, is angry (162d; see Anger). Socrates steps in: "it is no wonder that he doesn't know, at his age. You, though, may reasonably be expected to know, both because

of your age and because of the study you have given it.” Invited to take the argument over, Critias does (162e). The same word, *τηλικούτος*, that at 154e made Charmides old enough to converse now makes him young enough to be excused. The rest of the dialogue tests that expectation. Critias, “used to being admired on every occasion”, is soon “ashamed in front of the company” (169c). It is the boy who draws the conclusion: “how could I know, when not even you two are able to discover what it is, as you say?” (176a–b).

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

153d–154c Socrates asks about the young men; Charmides, not yet grown up when Socrates left, comes in, and young men, grown men and boys all watch him.

154e–155b At his age he must surely be willing to converse; even younger, he could properly talk with them before his guardian; Critias sends his attendant: “Boy, call Charmides.”

156a Charmides knows of Socrates from people his age and remembers him from his boyhood.

157d Critias praises Charmides above those his age, and second to none as far as his years allow.

158c The narrator finds Charmides’ bashfulness becoming at his age.

160d–e Asked to answer like a man, Charmides thinks it over very much like a man, and answers that temperance makes one bashful.

162d–e The boy’s ignorance is no wonder at his age; Critias may be expected to know, because of his age and his study, and takes the argument over.

176a–b Charmides cannot know whether he has temperance when the two older men cannot discover what it is.

Elsewhere in Plato

The *Republic* makes age a condition of argument. Those chosen from among the guardians are to be tested in dialectic when they pass thirty (537d), and one great precaution, Socrates tells Plato’s brother Glaucon, is to keep the young from tasting arguments at all. Youngsters who get their first taste of them treat them as play and use them only to contradict; they copy the refuters and refute others themselves, and, like puppies, enjoy worrying and mauling with words whoever comes near. The older man wants no part of that frenzy, and takes as his model the one who is “willing to converse” and to look for the truth (539b–c), in the same Greek words (τὸν διαλέγεσθαι ἐθέλοντα) that Socrates used of Charmides at 154e (ἐθέλει διαλέγεσθαι). Charmides, who laughs slyly, looks across at his guardian and

keeps prodding him (162b–d), can be read as one of these young men in small; but in the *Charmides* it is the older man who loses his temper. Callicles in the *Gorgias* tips the scale the other way. Philosophy, he tells Socrates, is an attractive thing if one handles it in moderation at the proper age, and there is nothing shameful in a lad's pursuing it, but in an older man it becomes laughable, while a small child's lisping and playing please him as fitting the child's age (484c–485b). His words for that fitness, *πρέπον τῇ ... ἡλικίᾳ*, are those of the narrator's remark on Charmides' bashfulness (*τῇ ἡλικίᾳ ἔπρεψεν*, 158c).

Later readings

Aristotle's ethics can be read as giving the reason for the expectation of 162e, and its limit. The young man, he says, is not the right audience for the study of politics, since he has no experience of the business of life, which is what its arguments start from and are about; and youth of years and youth of character come to the same thing here, since the shortfall is due not to his years but to his living by feeling and chasing each thing as it comes.¹¹ In the sixth book he notes that the young turn into geometers and mathematicians, clever in such matters, but no one supposes that they become practically wise; for practical wisdom deals with particulars, particulars are learned through experience, and a young man has none, since experience takes a long while to build. He then asks why a child can become a mathematician but not wise, nor a student of nature, and offers his answer as a further question: is it that mathematics works by abstraction, while the starting-points of the other two come from experience, so that the young repeat them without being convinced?¹² Charmides, offering a definition he once heard someone say (161b), can be read as the young man who says what he does not yet believe; Critias, who has the years and the study but is “eager to shine” and angry when crossed (162c–d), as the man who is young not in years but in character.

Translation in this edition

Παῖς is “child” when Socrates recalls Charmides as he was (154b), “boy” for the boys in the crowd, Critias' attendant, the beautiful boy in the lines of Cydias, a lyric poet otherwise almost unknown, Charmides' memory of himself and the writing-master's pupils (154c, 155b, 155d, 156a, 161d), and “son” in the address “dear son of Glaucon” (158b), and in “son of Callaeschrus” (169b), said to Critias, a grown man. “Child” at 158b, “blessed is the child ... your mother bore”, renders no Greek noun. “Young man” renders three words: the plural of νέος (153d), νεανίσκος (154a, 154d, 157c) and μειράκιον (154b); at 162e “this young man” renders only the demonstrative οὗτοσί (*houtosi*), “this one here”. Νεανίας is “youngster”

¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3, 1095a2–8.

¹² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.8, 1142a11–20.

(155a). Ἡλικία is “grown up” in ἐν ἡλικίᾳ (154a), “of that age” (154b), “his years” (157d) and “age” (158c, 162e); τηλικούτος is “at his age” at both its places (154e, 162e), and ἡλικός ... γέγονεν is “how big he’s grown” (154b). Ἡλικιώται are “people my age” (156a) and “those his age” (157d). The comparatives νεώτερος and πρεσβύτερος are “younger” and “older” (168c), and ἔτι νεώτερος is “younger still” (155a). The adverbs ἀνδρείως (*andreĩōs*) and ἀνδρικῶς (*andrikōs*), both from ἀνὴρ (*anēr*), “man”, are “like a man” and “very much like a man” (160d–e), so that the English keeps the echo of the Greek.

ἀνὴρ

Attested: ἀνδρῶν (*andrōn*; 154c), ἄνδρα (*andra*; 154d), ἀνὴρ (*anēr*; 158a), ἄνδρες (*andres*; 160e), ἀνδρί (*andri*; 161a), ἀνδρός (*andros*; 169a). A man, as against a woman or a boy. Once it names the grown men as an age-group: “With us grown men that was less surprising” (154c), where Socrates sets his own company against the boys. At its other places it is simply “man”, with no thought of age: the “invincible man” Charmides would be if his soul were well made too (154d), Charmides’ uncle Pyrilampes, than whom, it is said, no man on the continent, that is, in the Persian empire, was thought handsomer or bigger whenever he went there as ambassador (158a), temperate men who are good men (160e), Homer’s “man in need” (161a), and the “great man” needed to determine whether anything can have its own power in relation to itself (169a). Lemma: ἀνὴρ.

γίγνομαι

Attested: ἐγεγονέι (*egegonēi*; 153b), γεγονέναι (*gegonenai*; 153c), γέγονεν (*gegonen*; 154b), ἐγένετο (*egeneto*; 155b, 162c), γεγονός (*gegonos*; 157c), γενέσθαι (*genesthai*; 157d, 169a, 169d), γέγονας (*gegonas*; 157e), γεγονότα (*gegonota*; 158a, 174a), γιγνόμενα (*gignomena*; 159d), γίγνεσθαι (*gignesthai*; 163c, 166d, 174c), γίγνηται (*gignētai*; 163c), γένοιτο (*genoito*; 164c, 175c), γεγονότων (*gegonotōn*; 174b). To come to be, become, happen, be born. At 154b it measures the change in Charmides since Socrates left: Socrates will know in a moment, Critias says, “how big he’s grown and how he’s turned out” (ἡλικός καὶ οἷος γέγονεν); at 157e and 158a it is birth, “the two you are sprung from” and “Born of such people”. Compounds such as παραγίγνομαι and ἐργίγνομαι are not listed. Lemma: γίγνομαι.

ἡλικία

Attested: ἡλικία (*hēlikiai*; 154a, 154b, 158c), ἡλικίας (*hēlikias*; 157d, 162e). Age, a time of life, and in ἐν ἡλικίᾳ the age of maturity: Charmides “wasn’t yet grown up” when Socrates left (154a). Socrates finds nearly everyone “of that age” beautiful (154b); Critias praises Charmides “as far as his years allow” (157d); his bashfulness was “becoming at his age” (158c); and Socrates tells Critias, “You, though, may reasonably be expected to

know, both because of your age and because of the study you have given it” (162e). Lemma: ἡλικία.

ἡλικιώτης

Attested: ἡλικιώταις (*hēlikīōtais*; 156a), ἡλικιωτῶν (*hēlikīōtōn*; 157d). One of the same age, a contemporary. Charmides tells Socrates, “You’re talked about a good deal among people my age” (156a), and Critias says the boy is thought “to surpass those his age” (157d). Lemma: ἡλικιώτης.

λοιδορέω

Attested: λοιδορουμένους (*loidoroumenous*; 154a). To abuse or revile; in the middle, as here, to rail at one another. The young men who come in ahead of Charmides, his lovers and “advance guard”, are “trading insults with one another” (154a). Lemma: λοιδορέω.

μειράκιον

Attested: μειράκιον (*meirakion*; 154b). A lad, a youth past childhood. Socrates, who remembers Charmides “when he was still a child” (παῖς), supposes that by now “he must be quite the young man” (154b): the two words mark how Charmides has changed while Socrates was away. Lemma: μειράκιον.

νεανίας

Attested: νεανίαν (*neanian*; 155a). A young man. Socrates asks Critias, “why don’t you call the youngster over and show him off to me?” (155a). Lemma: νεανίας.

νεανίσκος

Attested: νεανίσκους (*neaniskous*; 154a), νεανίσκος (*neaniskos*; 154d), νεανίσκῳ (*neaniskōi*; 157c). A young man. The plural names the young men, the boy’s lovers, who come in first (154a); the singular is Charmides himself, in Chaerephon’s “what do you think of the young man?” (154d) and in Critias’ joke that the headache will be “a godsend for the young man” (157c). Lemma: νεανίσκος.

νέος

Attested: νέων (*neōn*; 153d), νεώτερος (*neōteros*; 155a), νεώτερον (*neōteron*; 168c). Young. Socrates asks “about the young men” on his return (153d); there would be nothing improper in Charmides’ talking with them “even if he were younger still” (155a); and in the argument about self-relation, what is older than itself would be younger (168c). Lemma: νέος.

παῖς

Attested: παῖς (*pais*; 154b, 156a), παισί (*paissi*; 154c), παῖ (*pai*; 155b, 158b, 169b), παιδός (*paídos*; 155d), παιδᾶς (*paidas*; 161d). Child, boy, son,

and in address a slave. Charmides was “still a child” when Socrates left (154b), and he tells Socrates, “I remember you from when I was a boy” (156a); the boys in the crowd gaze at him (154c); Cydias’ advice concerned “a beautiful boy” (155d); and Socrates asks Charmides, “do you think the writing-master writes and reads, or teaches you boys, only his own name?” (161d). Critias’ “Boy, call Charmides” is said to his attendant (155b); in “dear son of Glaucon” (158b) and “son of Callaeschrus” (169b) it is “son”, with the father’s name, said to the boy and to the grown man alike. Lemma: παῖς.

πρέσβυς

Attested: *πρεσβύτερον* (*presbyteron*; 168c). Old; the comparative is “older”. In the argument about self-relation, Socrates asks whether what is more than itself will not also be less, “and what is heavier lighter, and what is older younger” (168c). *Πρεσβεύων*, “went as ambassador”, of Pyrilampes (158a), is from the verb *πρεσβεύειν* and is not listed. Lemma: *πρέσβυς*.

See also

Anger; Charmides; Guardian and cousin; Modesty and shame; Palaestra; Schooling and the letter-master.

Images poetry and proverbial language

Anacreon

Ἀνακρέων, *Anakreōn*, “Anacreon”

At a Glance

The word. Anacreon of Teos was a lyric poet of the late sixth century BC, a singer of love and wine, who was at the court of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, and was brought to Athens by Hipparchus, son of the tyrant Pisistratus.

In the *Charmides*. He is named once, first of the poets who, Socrates says, celebrated Charmides’ father’s house, named after an ancestor, Critias son of Dropides; it is also the house of the boy’s cousin and guardian, Critias, who on Athenaeus’ evidence praised Anacreon in verse (157e–158a). The praise makes Charmides only likely to excel, and Socrates turns to examining him (158a–159a).

In this edition. “Celebrated” renders *ἐγκεκωμιασμένη* (*enkekōmiasmenē*), “praised in an encomium”, and “has come down to us” *παράδδοται* (*paradedotai*): Socrates reports a tradition of praise and quotes none of it.

A place to read. 157e–158a, Socrates’ praise of the two houses from which Charmides is sprung.

Meaning

Ἀνακρέων (*Anakreōn*) is Anacreon of Teos, a Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor, whose songs were chiefly of love and wine.

Use in the book

Anacreon enters in a compliment. When Critias says that Charmides is thought “far and away the most temperate of anyone nowadays”, Socrates answers that it is only right he should excel, for his father’s house, “the house of Critias son of Dropides, has come down to us celebrated by Anacreon and by Solon and by many other poets for its outstanding beauty and virtue and everything else that goes by the name of happiness”, and his mother’s side, the house of his uncle Pyrilampes, is “no different” (157d–158a). Solon, the Athenian lawgiver and poet of the early sixth century BC, was kin to the house (155a). The house is named after an ancestor, Critias son of Dropides, who on the usual modern reconstruction was the great-great-grandfather of both Charmides and Critias son of Callaeschrus (153c). The two are first cousins: Charmides’ father Glaucon was Critias’ uncle (154b, 158b), and Critias is the boy’s guardian (155a). The “your” of “your family” (ὑμῖν, *hymin*) is plural in the Greek, and can be read as taking in Critias, whose father’s house this is as well.

The praise of the two houses ends in a likelihood, not a verdict: “Born of such people, you are likely to be first in everything” (158a). Socrates then puts the question to the boy himself, “So tell me yourself” (158c), and the question whether he has temperance turns into the question what it is (158e–159a). This can be read as the dialogue’s answer to the poets’ testimony: famous witnesses make it likely that the boy excels, but only an examination of what he says can show whether he is temperate. A few pages later, when Charmides asks what it matters whom he heard a definition from, Socrates gives the rule: “what we have to look into is not who said it, but whether what is said is true or not” (161c).

Places to read

The one passage.

157e–158a Socrates praises Charmides’ two houses: his father’s, the house of Critias son of Dropides, celebrated by Anacreon, Solon and many other poets; and his mother’s, the house of his uncle Pyrilampes, in no way inferior.

Elsewhere in Plato

Socrates names Anacreon in three other dialogues of the Platonic corpus. In the *Hipparchus* he says that Hipparchus, son of Pisistratus, sent a fifty-oared ship to fetch Anacreon of Teos to Athens, because he wished to

educate the citizens (228c). In the *Phaedrus*, unwilling to grant that the speech on love Phaedrus has just read him leaves nothing more to say, he guesses that he has heard better from the poets, “Sappho the beautiful, perhaps, or Anacreon the wise”, or else from some prose writers (235b–c). In the *Theages* he recalls a song in which Anacreon said that Callicrite, daughter of Cyane, knew the arts of tyranny (125d–e).

Other ancient sources

Herodotus, the historian of the fifth century BC, places Anacreon at the court of Polycrates: in the less common of two accounts of why Oroetes, the Persian governor of Sardis, set out to destroy Polycrates, Anacreon is with Polycrates in the men’s hall when Oroetes’ herald comes.¹³ Pausanias, who described Greece in the second century AD, records Anacreon’s statue on the Athenian Acropolis, posed like a man singing in his cups, and calls him the first poet after Sappho of Lesbos to make love the subject of most of what he wrote.¹⁴

Of the praise of Critias’ house two traces are given in the edition’s note at 157e: Solon’s verses bid someone “tell fair-haired Critias to listen to his father”,¹⁵ and Anacreon was said to have celebrated a Critias of the same house. An ancient commentator on Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* says that Anacreon stayed in Attica in love with Critias, without saying which Critias he means.¹⁶ The praise also ran the other way. Athenaeus, whose *Deipnosophists* of about AD 200 is a vast miscellany of quotations, quotes hexameters by Critias in praise of “sweet Anacreon”, whom Teos brought to Greece, “the spur of drinking parties, the beguiler of women”; the lines tell him that love for him will never grow old or die. Elsewhere, quoting a couplet from Critias’ *Elegies*, Athenaeus names the poet as the son of Callaeschrus, the Critias of the *Charmides*.¹⁷ The first poet Socrates names as a praiser of the house is thus one whom, on Athenaeus’ evidence, Critias himself praised in verse, and the compliment can be read as paid to the guardian as much as to the boy.

Translation in this edition

“Celebrated by Anacreon and by Solon and by many other poets” keeps the threefold “by” of the Greek (καὶ ὑπὸ Ἀνακρέοντος καὶ ὑπὸ Σόλωνος καὶ ὑπ’ ἄλλων πολλῶν ποιητῶν). “Celebrated” renders ἐγκωμιασμένη, from ἐγκώμιον (*enkōmion*), a song or speech of praise, and “has come down to us”

¹³ Herodotus, *Histories* 3.120–121; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.2.3, also has Anacreon with Polycrates.

¹⁴ Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.25.1.

¹⁵ Solon, fr. 22a West, as quoted in the edition’s note at 157e. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.15.13, 1375b31–34, cites the line, with “red-haired” (πυρρότριχι), as used against Critias by the orator Cleophon.

¹⁶ Scholium on Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 128.

¹⁷ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 13.600d–e (the hexameters) and 15.666b (the *Elegies*).

renders παραδέδοται, “has been handed down”: Socrates reports a tradition of praise, and quotes none of it.

Ἀνακρέων

Attested: Ἀνακρέοντος (*Anakreon*; 157e). Anacreon of Teos, the lyric poet, named first of the poets who celebrated the paternal house of Charmides and Critias. Lemma: Ἀνακρέων.

See also

Dropides and ancestral Critias; Erotic attraction; House, lineage and nobility; Solon.

Knowledge ignorance and self-knowledge

Adequacy and deficiency

ἱκανῶς, *hikanōs*, “well enough”, “enough”, “sufficient”, “adequately”; ἱκανός, *hikanos*, “capable”; ἐπιδεής, *epideēs*, and ἐνδεής, *endeēs*, “lacking”

At a Glance

The word. ἱκανός is sufficient and, of a person, capable; the adverb ἱκανῶς is “enough”. Ἐπιδεής and ἐνδεής are its opposites, “lacking”.

In the *Charmides*. Socrates’ first question to Charmides about temperance is whether he is temperate enough to need no charm or still lacking (158b–c). At the centre Socrates does not trust himself to be capable of deciding adequately whether anything has its own power in relation to itself (169a), and at the end Charmides offers to be charmed every day until Socrates says it is enough (176b).

In this edition. ἱκανῶς is “well enough”, “enough”, “sufficient” and “adequately”, ἱκανός is “capable”, and both words of want, ἐπιδεής and ἐνδεής, are “lacking”.

A place to read. 158b–159a, Socrates’ question and Charmides’ dilemma.

Meaning

ἱκανός (*hikanos*), related to ἰκάνειν, “to reach, to arrive”, is what reaches the mark: enough for a purpose and, of a person, able to do a thing; the adverb ἱκανῶς (*hikanōs*). Ἐπιδεής (*epideēs*) and ἐνδεής (*endeēs*), from the root of δεῖν, “to lack”, are “in want”, “lacking”. Μετέχειν (*metechein*) is to have a share in a thing. “Enough” is always enough for something.

Use in the book

Hearing Charmides' figure praised, Socrates says he would be invincible "if he has just one little thing more": that he be "in fact well made" where his soul is concerned (154d–e). Critias, Charmides' cousin and guardian, answers in superlatives: the boy is thought "far and away the most temperate of anyone nowadays" (157d). Socrates makes the praise a condition: "And if, as Critias here says, you are also well enough endowed for temperance and the rest, then blessed is the child, my dear Charmides, ... your mother bore" (158b). "Endowed" renders the same Greek verb as "well made", with "well" become "well enough". If he is already "temperate enough", he needs no charms. "But if you seem still to be lacking in these things, the charm must be sung before the remedy is given. So tell me yourself: do you agree with Critias here, and say that you already have a sufficient share of temperance, or that you are lacking in it?" (158b–c).

Charmides blushes and, in Socrates' report, "said that it was not easy, in the circumstances, either to agree or to deny what he had been asked" (158c–d): "For if I say I'm not temperate, ... I shall be showing up Critias here as a liar, ... But if I say I am, and praise myself, that will probably seem obnoxious" (158d). Asked about enough and lacking, he answers about being temperate or not. Socrates proposes that they look into it together, and the question whether temperance is in him becomes the question what it is: "Then, so that we can make a guess whether it is in you or not, tell me ... what you say temperance is, in your opinion" (159a).

At the centre the words of measure are turned on the inquirer. "It needs a great man, my friend, to determine this adequately for all cases," Socrates says: whether nothing has its own power in relation to itself or only some things do, and, if some do, whether among them is the knowledge of knowledge that he and Critias are calling temperance. "I, for my part, don't trust myself to be capable of making these distinctions" (169a). Critias, challenged to make the distinctions, was "ashamed in front of the company" and "kept covering up his perplexity" (169c–d). His position can be read as Charmides' at 158c–d: unable to own a want without loss of face.

At the end Charmides cannot say whether he has temperance: "But by Zeus, Socrates, I don't know whether I have it or whether I don't" (176a). Yet he thinks he very much needs the charm, which by Socrates' condition is for one still lacking: "As far as I'm concerned, nothing stops me from being charmed by you every day, until you say it's enough" (176b). He leaves the measure to Socrates, who did not trust himself to settle the central question adequately, and Critias turns the condition round: the charm meant for one still lacking becomes, to him, the proof that Charmides is temperate, if he lets Socrates charm him and does not desert him, "great or small" (176b); and he orders it (176c). The conversation that began by asking whether Charmides had enough temperance closes with no measure for the temperance or for the charm.

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

154d–e Charmides would be invincible with “one little thing more”: that he be well made where his soul is concerned.

158b–159a Socrates asks whether Charmides is temperate enough or still lacking; Charmides cannot answer either way without offence, and the question whether temperance is in him becomes the question what it is.

168e–169d Socrates does not trust himself to be capable of determining adequately whether anything has its own power in relation to itself, or whether knowledge is such a thing; Critias, who cannot do it either, will not admit it.

176a–c Charmides, not knowing whether he has temperance, offers to be charmed daily until Socrates says it is enough; Critias will take it as proof of his temperance if he lets Socrates charm him and does not desert him, “great or small”, and orders it.

Elsewhere in Plato

In the *Republic* Socrates reminds Adeimantus, Plato’s brother, that they had worked out what justice, temperance, courage and wisdom each are, after saying that a longer way round was needed to see them as finely as possible; the hearers had said the shorter account would do, and to Socrates it had seemed to fall short in precision (504a–b). When Adeimantus answers that it seemed to him in due measure, Socrates replies that in such matters a measure which falls short of what is, in any degree, is not in due measure at all, for what is unfinished is the measure of nothing; “yet some people sometimes think that things are already enough, and that there is no need to inquire further” (504c). Many suffer that through idleness, says Adeimantus, and Socrates answers that a guardian of a city and its laws can least afford it, and must go the longer way (504c–d). The words for “enough” there, *ἱκανῶς ἔχειν*, are the ones with which Charmides leaves the measure to Socrates at *Charmides* 176b, and among the accounts the *Republic* finds short is one of temperance. The *Charmides* can be read against this passage: its account of temperance never reaches the measure, and Charmides, far from thinking that he already has enough, leaves it to Socrates to say when he has.

In the *Symposium* Diotima of Mantinea, the woman from whom Socrates says he learned about love, uses all three words of this family. No god loves wisdom, for he is wise, and neither do the ignorant; this is the trouble with ignorance, that one who is neither fine and good nor wise thinks himself sufficient (*ἱκανόν*), and one who does not think himself lacking (*ἐνδεής*) does not desire what he does not think he needs (*ἐπιδείσθαι*) (204a). By this measure Charmides, who at 176b thinks he very much needs the charm, can be read as free of the ignorance that thinks itself sufficient.

Translation in this edition

The adverb *ικανῶς* has four renderings, each fitted to its sentence: “well enough” in “well enough endowed” (158b), “enough” in “temperate enough” (158b) and “until you say it’s enough” (176b), “sufficient” in “a sufficient share” (158c), and “adequately” (169a). The adjective *ικανός* is “capable” (169a). The two words of want, *ἐπιδεής* in Socrates’ condition and *ἐνδεής* in his question, are both “lacking” (158c). *Σμικρός* is “littlest” (154c), “little” (154d, 156d, 173a) and “small” (165d, 173d, 176b).

ἐνδεής

Attested: *ἐνδεής* (*endeēs*; 158c). Lacking, in want. It ends Socrates’ question whether Charmides says that he already has a sufficient share of temperance or is “lacking in it” (158c). Lemma: *ἐνδεής*.

ἐπιδεής

Attested: *ἐπιδεής* (*epideēs*; 158c). Lacking, falling short. It comes in the condition Socrates sets before his question: if Charmides seems “still to be lacking in these things”, the charm must be sung before the remedy is given (158c). Lemma: *ἐπιδεής*.

ικανός

Attested: *ικανός* (*bikanos*; 169a); the adverb *ικανῶς* (*bikanōs*; 158b twice, 158c, 169a, 176b). Sufficient, adequate; of a person, capable. The adverb measures Charmides’ temperance (158b, 158c), the task Socrates leaves to “a great man” (169a) and how long Charmides is to be charmed (176b); the adjective is Socrates’ doubt that he is “capable of making these distinctions” (169a). Lemma: *ικανός*.

μετέχω

Attested: *μετέχειν* (*metechein*; 158c). To have a share in. Socrates asks whether Charmides says that he already has “a sufficient share of temperance” (158c), so that temperance is spoken of as something held in a measure. Lemma: *μετέχω*.

σμικρός

Attested: *σμικρότατος* (*smikrotatos*; 154c), *σμικρόν* (*smikron*; 154d, 156d, 173a, 173d, 176b), *σμικράν* (*smikran*; 165d). Small, little. Twice it carries weight: Charmides would be invincible with just “one little thing more” (154d), which Socrates then names as a soul well made, and Critias’ “great or small” means in anything at all (176b). At its other places it is ordinary: “the littlest” of the boys (154c), “little by little” (156d), “No small benefit” (165d), “even a little” (173a), “one small thing more” (173d). Lemma: *σμικρός*.

See also

Charm; Possibility and impossibility; Power and capacity; Temperance.

Language definition and interpretation

Advice and greeting

συμβουλή, *symbolōlē*, “advice”; συμβουλεύειν, *symboloulein*, “advise”; πρόσρησις, *prosrēsis*, and πρόσρημα, *prosrēma*, “greeting”; χαίρε, *chaire*, “Rejoice!”; ὑποτίθεσθαι, *hypotithesthai*, “advise”

At a Glance

The word. Συμβουλή is advice, and συμβουλεύειν is to give it; πρόσρησις and πρόσρημα are a greeting, and χαίρε, “rejoice”, was the everyday Greek one.

In the *Charmides*. Critias, Charmides’ cousin and guardian, reads “Know thyself” at Apollo’s temple at Delphi as the god’s greeting “Be temperate!”, set up in place of “Rejoice!”, and says that the men who dedicated the later inscriptions mistook it for advice (164d–165a). Advice is given twice besides: by the poet Cydias (155d–e), and by Socrates at the end, on a condition Charmides cannot tell whether he meets (176a). The dialogue closes on Critias’ order and “There’s no counsel left” (176c–d).

In this edition. The συμβουλ- family is “advice” and “advise”, πρόσρησις and πρόσρημα are “greeting”, and χαίρε is “Rejoice!”, “advising” at 155d is ὑποτίθεσθαι.

A place to read. 164d–165a, Critias on the inscription at Delphi.

Meaning

Συμβουλή (*symbolōlē*) is formed from σύν, “with”, and βουλή, “counsel”: counsel offered to another, which he may take or leave; συμβουλεύειν (*symboloulein*) is to give it. Ὑποτίθεσθαι (*hypotithesthai*), literally “to put under”, is to suggest or lay down, and so also to advise. Πρόσρησις (*prosrēsis*) and πρόσρημα (*prosrēma*), built on πρὸς, “to”, and the root of ῥήμα, “word”, both mean a greeting. Χαίρε (*chaire*), the imperative of χαίρειν, “to rejoice, to be glad”, served as both “hello” and “goodbye”. A greeting acknowledges the one who comes; advice tells him what to do.

Use in the book

Struck by Charmides’ beauty, Socrates “thought Cydias the wisest of men in the ways of love, who, speaking of a beautiful boy and advising someone else, told him to beware of coming, a fawn, into the lion’s presence, to be caught as a portion of meat” (155d–e). Cydias, a lyric poet otherwise almost unknown, reverses the usual image of love as a hunt: here

the lover is the fawn and the boy the lion. Socrates quotes the advice as one who has not taken it: he felt he “had been caught by just such a creature” (155e).

Pressed on whether a man can be temperate without knowing himself (164a–c), Critias all but defines temperance as knowing oneself and agrees “with the one who dedicated the inscription to that effect at Delphi” (164d). The inscription, he says, “was set up as the god’s greeting to those who enter, in place of ‘Rejoice!’, on the view that this greeting, ‘rejoice’, is not the right one, and that we ought not to urge this on one another, but ‘Be temperate.’” The god says it “as a prophet would, rather riddlingly” (164d–e), and Critias explains the riddle: “For ‘Know thyself’ and ‘Be temperate’ are the same, as the inscription says and as I say; but one might think them different” (164e–165a). That, he thinks, “is what happened to those who dedicated the later inscriptions, ‘Nothing too much’ and ‘Pledge, and ruin is near.’ For they thought ‘Know thyself’ was a piece of advice, and not the god’s greeting to those who enter; and then, so that they too, if you please, could dedicate useful advice no less, they wrote these up and dedicated them” (165a). “Pledge, and ruin is near” is usually taken as a warning against standing surety for another.

The scheme sets the god against men twice: men greet one another with “Rejoice!”, the god greets with “Be temperate!”, and where the god greets, men answer with advice. Critias’ explanation of the riddle can be read as his own definition of temperance given a god’s authority, without the god’s being asked.

Socrates’ last advice hangs on a condition, that Charmides has temperance: “For if you have it, I would sooner advise you to regard me as a babbler, unable to inquire into anything whatever by argument, and yourself to be happier just in proportion as you are more temperate” (176a). Charmides cannot tell whether he meets it: “But by Zeus, Socrates, I don’t know whether I have it or whether I don’t” (176a). He is “not altogether persuaded”, and offers himself to be charmed every day (176b). Critias makes Charmides’ submission to the charm the “proof”, to him, of his temperance (176b), and then orders it: “Well, I do order it” (176c). The closing exchange turns on βουλή, “counsel”, the root of συμβουλή, and its verb, rendered here “plotting” and “take counsel”. The two have “finished plotting”; they will use force, “since this man here gives the orders”; Socrates is told to “take counsel”, and answers, “There’s no counsel left” (176c–d). The dialogue in which Critias denied that the god’s word was advice closes on advice left hanging on its condition, an order, and no counsel left.

Places to read

The chief passages, in the order of the dialogue.

155d–e Socrates thinks Cydias wisest in love, who advised another to beware of coming, a fawn, before the lion; Socrates feels caught.

164d–165a Critias reads “Know thyself” as the god’s greeting, “Be temperate!”, in place of “Rejoice!”, and says that the dedicators of the later inscriptions took it for advice.

176a–b Socrates’ advice, if Charmides has temperance, to count Socrates a babbler and himself the happier; Charmides does not know whether he has it.

176b–d Critias orders Charmides to submit to the charm; the two have finished plotting, and Socrates has no counsel left.

Elsewhere in Plato

In the *Protagoras* Socrates gives a different history of two of the same inscriptions. The Seven Sages of the sixth century BC, Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mytilene, Bias of Priene, Solon of Athens, Cleobulus of Lindos, Myson of Chen and the Spartan Chilon, were, he says, admirers of Spartan education, and their wisdom was of the Spartan kind, short sayings worth remembering. Meeting together, they dedicated to Apollo in his temple at Delphi, as the first-fruits of their wisdom, the sayings everyone repeats, “Know thyself” and “Nothing too much” (343a–b). There the two sayings are dedicated together, by the same men, as wisdom; in Critias’ account the second is a later addition by men who misread the first.

In the *Alcibiades I* Socrates treats the inscription as a word to be obeyed and as advice. He bids the young Alcibiades, Pericles’ ward, obey him and the inscription at Delphi and know himself (124a–b); he asks whether the man who dedicated it in the temple at Pytho, the old name of Delphi, was a nobody, or whether knowing oneself is hard and not for everyone (129a); and he offers to say what he suspects the inscription says and advises us, imagining it advising an eye, as though the eye were a man, to see itself (132d). Where Critias denies that “Know thyself” is advice, the Socrates of the *Alcibiades I* calls what it does advising, συμβουλεύειν.

Other ancient sources

Pausanias, the traveller of the second century AD, records that in the front porch of the temple at Delphi there were written sayings of use to men for their life, the work of the men the Greeks call wise. Of these seven he notes that Plato counted Myson of Chen in place of Periander son of Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, and he says that the wise men, on coming to Delphi, offered to Apollo the much-sung “Know thyself” and “Nothing too much”.¹⁸ Both sayings are, for him, things of use for life, of a piece with the “useful advice” that Critias’ later dedicators wrote up.

The Platonists

The god’s greeting returns in *On the E at Delphi* by Plutarch of Chaeronea, the Platonist philosopher and biographer of the late first and

¹⁸ Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10.24.1.

early second centuries AD, a conversation held at the sanctuary about the letter E dedicated there. In the speech that closes it the philosopher Ammonius reads the E as εἶ (*ei*), “thou art”. The god, greeting each of us as we come up to his temple, says “Know thyself”, a word that is no less than “Rejoice”; and we give him back “Thou art”, the address of being, which alone is true and unfeigned and belongs to him alone.¹⁹ Ammonius keeps the inscription a greeting, as Critias did, and makes the greeting an exchange: the god greets, and man answers. Critias’ god speaks to everyone who enters, and no answer is mentioned.

Translation in this edition

The συμβουλ- family keeps “advice” and “advise”: “a piece of advice” and “useful advice” (165a), “advise” (176a). “Advising” at 155d, of Cydias, renders ὑποτίθεσθαι, the verb of “laid it down” at 163a. Πρόσρησις is “greeting” (164d, 165a), as is πρόσρημα in “this greeting, ‘rejoice’” (164e), and προσαγορεύειν is “address” (164e). Χαῖρε is “Rejoice!” (164d), kept literal because Critias’ argument depends on the word’s sense; the infinitive is “‘rejoice’” at 164e, and with ἔαν (*ean*), “let”, it is “say goodbye to” (166d). Παρακελεύεσθαι is “urge” in “urge this on one another” (164e), and διανοούμενος is “had in mind” in “what the dedicator had in mind” (164e). The verb of the greeting Critias puts in the place of “Rejoice!”, σωφρονεῖν (*sōphronein*), is “Be temperate” (164e).

διανοόμαι

Attested: διανοούμενος (*dianooumenos*; 164e). To have in mind, intend. The god’s addressing those who enter “differently from men” is, Critias thinks, “what the dedicator had in mind when he dedicated it” (164e). Lemma: διανοόμαι.

παρακελεύομαι

Attested: παρακελεύεσθαι (*parakeleuesthai*; 164e). To urge on, exhort. On the view Critias ascribes to the dedicator, men ought not to urge “rejoice” on one another as a greeting, but “Be temperate” (164e). Lemma: παρακελεύομαι.

προσαγορεύω

Attested: προσαγορεύει (*prosagoreuei*; 164e). To address, to greet. The god, Critias says, addresses those who enter his temple “differently from men” (164e). Lemma: προσαγορεύω.

πρόσρημα

Attested: προσρήματος (*prosrēmatos*; 164e). A greeting. The inscription, Critias says, was set up on the view that “this greeting, ‘rejoice’, is not the

¹⁹ Plutarch, *On the E at Delphi* 1, 385a–b (the setting); 17, 392a.

right one” (164e), and that men should urge “Be temperate” on one another instead. Lemma: πρόσρημα.

πρόσρησις

Attested: πρόσρησις (*prosrēsis*; 164d), πρόσρησιν (*prosrēsin*; 165a). Address, greeting. The inscription “was set up as the god’s greeting to those who enter” (164d), and the later dedicators thought “Know thyself” “was a piece of advice, and not the god’s greeting to those who enter” (165a). Lemma: πρόσρησις.

συμβουλευώ

Attested: συμβουλεύσαιμι (*sympouleusaimi*; 176a). To advise. Socrates’ last advice: if Charmides has temperance, Socrates would sooner advise him to regard Socrates as “a babbler, unable to inquire into anything whatever by argument”, and himself as the happier the more temperate he is (176a). Lemma: συμβουλεύω.

συμβουλή

Attested: συμβουλὴν (*sympoulēn*; 165a), συμβουλὰς (*sympoulas*; 165a). Advice, counsel. The later dedicators, Critias says, took “Know thyself” for “a piece of advice”, and wrote up their own sayings so that they too “could dedicate useful advice no less” (165a). Lemma: συμβουλή.

χαίρω

Attested: Χαῖρε (*chaire*; 164d), χαίρειν (*chairein*; 164e, 166d). To rejoice, to be glad; the imperative was the everyday greeting. The inscription, Critias says, was set up “in place of ‘Rejoice!’” (164d), and the infinitive names the greeting again in “this greeting, ‘rejoice’” (164e). With ἔαν, “let it rejoice”, it is a farewell: Socrates tells Critias to answer as it seems to him and “say goodbye to whether it is Critias or Socrates who is being refuted” (166d–e), which can be read as a smile at Critias, who has just banished “rejoice” as a greeting. Lemma: χαίρω.

See also

Cydias; Deliberation and decision; Delphi and Apollo; Knowing oneself; Moderation and excess; Persuasion and obedience.

Medicine soul and body

Abaris the Hyperborean

Ἀβάρης ὁ Ὑπερβόρειος, *Abaris ho Hyperboreos*, “Abaris the Hyperborean”

At a Glance

The word. Abaris was a legendary Hyperborean, of the people the Greeks placed “beyond Boreas”, the North Wind. Herodotus knew a story that he took an arrow round the whole earth without eating; later Pythagorean legend made him a priest of Apollo and a pupil of Pythagoras.

In the *Charmides*. Socrates names him once: if Charmides is already temperate, he needs no charms, “whether of Zalmoxis or of Abaris the Hyperborean”, and should have the remedy at once; if not, the charm must come first (158b–c).

In this edition. “Abaris the Hyperborean” keeps the epithet instead of spelling it out as “from beyond the North Wind”, and ἐπωδή (*epōidē*) is “charm” throughout.

A place to read. 158b–c, where Socrates sets out the two cases and asks Charmides which is his.

Meaning

ὑπερβόρεος (*Hyperboreos*) was heard by the Greeks as “beyond Boreas”: the Hyperboreans were a people whom Greek legend placed in the far north, beyond the North Wind. Ἀβαρίς (*Abaris*) already had a legend of his own in Plato’s day, but the *Charmides*, the only work of Plato to name him, tells none of it; in the dialogue his name stands only for charms from the far north.

Use in the book

Abaris belongs to the story of the charm, not to the argument about temperance. At Critias’ suggestion Socrates has pretended to know a remedy for Charmides’ heavy head in the mornings: a leaf, useless without the charm that goes with it (155b–e). He learned the charm, he says, “out there on campaign from one of the Thracian doctors of Zalmoxis, who are said even to make one immortal”; Zalmoxis, god of the Getae, a Thracian people of the lower Danube, is in the doctor’s words “our king, who is a god” (156d). The Thracian taught that the soul is treated with charms, “and these charms are beautiful words”; from them temperance comes to be in souls, and no one is to have the remedy for his head who has not first handed over his soul to the charm (157a–c). When Critias puts in that Charmides is thought “far and away the most temperate of anyone nowadays” (157d), Socrates, after praising the young man’s family, sets out the two cases: “If temperance is already present in you, as Critias here says, and you are temperate enough, then you would have no further need of charms, whether of Zalmoxis or of Abaris the Hyperborean; the remedy for the head itself should be given you straightaway. But if you seem still to be lacking in these things, the charm must be sung before the remedy is given” (158b–c).

Abaris has no part in the Thracian's teaching, and Socrates claims nothing from him; naming him beside Zalmoxis widens the case, so that a temperate soul would need no charm, whether from Thrace or from beyond the North Wind. Socrates then hands the question to Charmides, "So tell me yourself" (158c), and the question whether temperance is in him soon becomes the question what temperance is (158e–159a).

Places to read

The one passage.

158b–c If temperance is already present in Charmides, he needs no charms of Zalmoxis or of Abaris and should have the remedy at once; if not, the charm comes before the remedy.

Other ancient sources

Herodotus, the historian of the fifth century BC, ends his account of the Hyperboreans by passing over the story: "I leave out the tale about Abaris, reputedly a Hyperborean, of how he went round the whole earth bearing the arrow and taking no food"; and if there are people beyond Boreas, the North Wind, he adds, there are also others beyond Notus, the South Wind.²⁰ Zalmoxis, whom the Greeks of the Hellespont made a former slave of Pythagoras, comes later in the same book (4.94–96), and Socrates' pairing of the two can be read as drawing on the same stock of northern tales. Later Pythagorean legend told much more of Abaris. Iamblichus, the Syrian Platonist of the early fourth century AD, makes him in his *On the Pythagorean Life* an old priest of the Hyperborean Apollo, who takes Pythagoras for the god himself and gives him the arrow on which he had crossed rivers, marshes and mountains, purifying cities and driving off plagues; Pythagoras shows him his golden thigh, in token that he was not mistaken, and teaches him to foresee by numbers instead of by sacrifices (90–93).²¹ Iamblichus also records his byname, "air-walker", because he rode on the arrow over rivers and seas, and so does Porphyry, the Platonist of the third century AD, in his *Life of Pythagoras*.²² Herodotus' Abaris carries the arrow; the later Abaris is carried by it.

Translation in this edition

"Of Abaris the Hyperborean" renders Ἀβάριδος τοῦ Ὑπερβορέου; the repeated "of" in "whether of Zalmoxis or of Abaris" follows the Greek, which repeats the article with each name (οὔτε τῶν Ζαλμόξιδος οὔτε τῶν Ἀβάριδος). The epithet stays "Hyperborean" instead of being spelled out as "from beyond the North Wind", and ἐπωδή is "charm" at every place in the dialogue.

²⁰ Herodotus, *Histories* 4.36.1; on the Hyperboreans, 4.32–35; on Zalmoxis and Pythagoras, 4.94–96.

²¹ Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life* 90–93.

²² Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life* 136; Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 29.

Ἄβαρις

Attested: Ἀβάριδος (*Abaridos*; 158b). Abaris, the legendary Hyperborean whom Socrates names beside Zalmoxis as a source of charms that Charmides would not need if temperance were already present in him. Lemma: Ἄβαρις.

Ὑπερβόρεος

Attested: Ὑπερβορέου (*Hyperboreou*; 158b). Hyperborean, “beyond Boreas”, the North Wind: belonging to the legendary people of the far north, as Abaris does. Lemma: Ὑπερβόρεος.

See also

Charm; Immortalizing; Thracians; Zalmoxis.