

Aristotle's Elegiacs to Eudemus

(Fr. 673 Rose³ = Olymp. in Pl. *Gorg.* Comm.
p. 214. 25 ff. Westerink)

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ὅτι δὲ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης σέβει αὐτὸν ὡς διδάσκαλον, δῆλός ἐστι γράψας ὅλον λόγον ἐγκωμιαστικόν· ἐκτίθεται γὰρ τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπερεπαινεῖ· οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐγκώμιον ποιήσας αὐτοῦ ἐπαινεῖ αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις τοῖς πρὸς Εὐδήμον αὐτὸν ἐπαινῶν Πλάτωνα ἐγκωμιάζει γράφων οὕτως·

ἐλθὼν δ' ἐς κλεινὸν Κεκροπίης δάπεδον
εὐσεβέως σεμνῆς Φιλίης ἰδρύσατο βωμὸν
ἀνδρὸς ὃν οὐδ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις·
ὃς μόνος ἢ πρῶτος θνητῶν κατέδειξεν ἐναργῶς
οἰκείῳ τε βίῳ καὶ μεθόδοισι λόγων, 5
ὡς ἀγαθὸς τε καὶ εὐδαιμόνων ἅμα γίνεται ἀνήρ·
οὐ νῦν δ' ἔστι λαβεῖν οὐδενὶ ταῦτά ποτε.

v. 2 ἰδρύσατο] ἰδρύσαο Bergk || v. 6 malim γίγνεται, ut persuasum habeo Aristotelem sic scripsisse || v. 7 verba saepe in dubium vocata, varie tentata; haec exempli causa adfero: οὐ νῦν] τῶν νῦν Bergk, οὐκοῦν Geffcken | οὐ νῦν δ' ἔστι] νῦν δ' οὐκ ἔστι Wil. | λαβεῖν οὐδενὶ] λαθεῖν οὐδένα Rose | ταῦτά ποτε] ταῦτ' ἄπορον Theiler

That these verses are genuine is not in doubt, their meaning is. Much of the difficulty is directly traceable to the two facts that (1) the poem itself is incomplete and (2) the time and circumstances of its composition are uncertain. It is essential to keep these unfortunate gaps in our knowledge ever present in attempting to interpret the verses; more than one scholar who has tried his hand at this has put forward unproven assertions as if they were undoubted matters of historical record.

The number of problems which these few verses raise is remarkable; for convenience I list the main difficulties: (1) Olympiodorus cites these verses from τὰ ἐλεγεία τὰ πρὸς Εὐδήμον. Which Eudemus is intended? (2) Who set up the altar mentioned in verse 2? (3) Is the ἀνὴρ of verse 3 Socrates or Plato? (4) Was the altar set up in honor of the goddess Friendship (Φιλία) or of the man mentioned in verse 3? If the latter, does

this imply deification? (5) Who are the κακοί mentioned in verse 3? (6) What is the meaning of verse 7? To these difficulties I would add a seventh, hitherto ignored: What is the meaning of the Greek in verse 3, ὄν οὐδ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις?

Of the numerous discussions of this poem the most important are those of Wilamowitz¹ and of Jaeger.² Konrad Gaiser's useful study, "Die Elegie des Aristoteles an Eudemos," in *Mus. Helv.* 23 (1966) 84-106, provides a very full bibliography; for further details the reader should consult this paper.

There are two presumptive candidates to be the Eudemos of Aristotle's poem, (1) Eudemos of Cyprus, a fellow Platonist of Aristotle's who died in battle at Syracuse, probably either in the year 354 or in 353,³ and in memory of whom Aristotle composed his dialogue *Eudemus*, and (2) Eudemos of Rhodes, a well-known student of Aristotle's. Both men have found their supporters. For instance, Wilamowitz and Gaiser (for very different reasons) favor the Cyprian, Jaeger and Düring the Rhodian. At first sight Eudemos of Cyprus seems an attractive choice; what more natural than that Aristotle should address a poem on friendship to the friend whose death so moved him that he named a dialogue after him? "Sehr viel ansprechender [sc. than that the poem is addressed to Eudemos of Rhodes] ist dagegen, dass der Unbenannte, dem das Gedicht galt, der Kyprier Eudemos war, und dass das Gedicht durch die Freundschaft zu diesem dem Aristoteles entlockt ist, ganz wie der Dialog seines Namens," wrote Wilamowitz⁴ who dated the poem to before the year 357. But there are difficulties: "The traditional text is ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις τοῖς πρὸς Εὐδημον. That is to say, a *living* Eudemos

The following abbreviations are used in this article:

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| Düring ¹ | I. Düring, <i>Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition</i> (Göteborg 1957) |
| Düring ² | I. Düring, review of <i>Vita Aristotelis Marciana</i> , ed. O. Gigon, <i>Gnomon</i> 35 (1963) 342-46 |
| Düring ³ | I. Düring, <i>Aristoteles. Darstellung und Interpretation seines Denkens</i> (Heidelberg 1966) |
| Gaiser | K. Gaiser, "Die Elegie des Aristoteles an Eudemos," <i>Mus. Helv.</i> 23 (1966) 84-106 |
| Immisch | O. Immisch, "Ein Gedicht des Aristoteles," <i>Philol.</i> 65 (1906) 1-23 |
| Jaeger ¹ | W. Jaeger, <i>Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of his Development</i> ² . Translated with the Author's Corrections and Additions by Richard Robinson (Oxford 1948) |
| Jaeger ² | W. Jaeger, "Aristotle's Verses in Praise of Plato," <i>CQ</i> 21 (1927) 13-17 = <i>Scripta Minora</i> I (Rome 1960) 339-45 |
| Wil. ¹ | U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, <i>Aristoteles und Athen</i> II (Berlin 1893) |
| Wil. ² | U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, <i>Platon</i> I ⁵ (Berlin 1959) |

¹ Wil.¹ 412-16.

² Jaeger¹ 106-10 and Jaeger².

³ Gaiser 102 n. 62.

⁴ Wil.¹ 413.

is addressed. This can be none other than Eudemus of Rhodes, the pupil of Aristotle. The poem, I take it, is composed after the death of Plato; and this Eudemus is appropriately addressed in a poem directed, after a recognized convention, to an ἐταῖρος for his enlightenment." So pronounced Jaeger,⁵ and Greek usage favors his position. His point is that πρὸς Εὐδημον is normal Greek when someone is being directly addressed (and therefore alive); the Greek for "in honor of Eudemus" would be εἰς Εὐδημον and that is not what Olympiodorus wrote.⁶ Moreover, κατέδειξεν . . . οἰκείῳ βίῳ (vv. 4–5) clearly suggests that the βίος in question is over (otherwise one might expect a present tense) and the emphatically contrasting οὐ νῦν in verse 7 leaves no doubt that such is the case. Furthermore, καταδείκνυμι was often applied, as Jaeger pointed out, "in a pregnant sense to religious revelation."⁷ Such is surely its force here. Now it has not been observed that these verbs, when so used, almost invariably occur in the aorist, as here, and refer to a time now past. For examples see N. J. Richardson's note to the *Hom. Hymn to Demeter* 474–76 and my *Greek Lexicographical Notes*, vols. I and II s.v. καταδείκνυμι.⁸ Plato, who is referred to here (as all now agree: see below), died some six or seven years after Eudemus the Cyprian, so that it follows that this latter individual cannot be directly addressed in this poem, which is what the πρὸς in the expression ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις τοῖς πρὸς Εὐδημον would unambiguously require. As noted above, the Greek for "in honor of Eudemus," not necessarily implying direct address, is εἰς Εὐδημον, and that is what we actually find in Plutarch, when he refers to the dialogue *Eudemus*, written after the death of Eudemus the Cyprian: . . . ὁ τε Κύπριος Εὐδημος, εἰς ὃν Ἀριστοτέλης ἀποθανόντα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς διάλογον ἐποίησε (*Dion* 22. 5 = *Eudemus* fr. 1 Ross, who translates, ". . . Eudemus the Cyprian, to whom after his death Aristotle dedicated his dialogue *On Soul* . . ."). Note that Plutarch makes no mention of the *Elegy to Eudemus* here. Has no one observed that this is a minor *argumentum e silentio* against the identification of the Cyprian Eudemus with the addressee of the poem? If Aristotle had composed the

⁵ Jaeger² 14 = 340–41.

⁶ I caution the inexperienced against assuming that such fine distinctions are artificial or imaginary; they are in fact very real. As good an illustration of this as any is the legal distinction seen in πρὸς *c. acc.* versus κατὰ *c. gen.* See Demosthenes' twenty-sixth oration, the title of which is Περὶ τῆς ἀτελείας πρὸς Λεπτίνην (*vel sim.*). One of the *argumenta* prefixed to this speech in the MSS begins Ὁ πρὸς Λεπτίνην λόγος ἐπιγραφὴν ἔχει τοιαύτην, ἐπειδὴ περ παρελθόντος τοῦ χρόνου ἐν ᾧ ὑπεύθυνος ἦν κρίσει καὶ τιμωρίᾳ γράφων τις νόμον, ἐφαίνετο Λεπτίνης ἀκίνδυνος· ὄθεν πρὸς αὐτόν, ἀλλ' οὐ κατ' αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος. The distinction enunciated here is no grammarian's invention but a reflection of actual classical usage: Isaeus 11. 34 εἰ δὲ μήτε πρὸς ἐμὲ μήτε κατ' ἐμοῦ δίκην εἶναι φησι τῷ παιδί, τὸν κωλύοντα νόμον εἰπάτω κτλ. For the legalities at issue see W. Wyse's edition of Isaeus (Cambridge 1904) ad loc. (p. 701) and J. E. Sandys' edition of Demosthenes' *Leptines* (Cambridge 1890) xxii–xxiii.

⁷ Jaeger² 16 = 343.

⁸ See also Gaiser 96 n. 41.

poem for *this* Eudemus, it would have been entirely appropriate for Plutarch, who was a man of wide and varied learning, to have mentioned the fact in this context.

Wilamowitz recognized the difficulty presented by *πρός* but could not explain it.⁹ Years later, he still adhered to his belief in the Cyprian, and still dated the poem after Eudemus' death despite the *πρός*: "... das Gedicht auf Eudemos von Kypros gemacht war, natürlich als Totenklage."¹⁰ There is the additional difficulty that a *Totenklage* for Eudemus, presumably composed not long after his death in 354/53, would have been written while Plato was still alive, and that cannot be reconciled with the Greek of verses 4-7. Gaiser returns to the older view (considered, but not favored by Wilamowitz) that the poem was addressed to Eudemus the Cyprian *while he was still alive*, which would account for the *πρός* at least, but his new interpretation of the meaning of the poem seems completely untenable to me (see below). On the whole, despite the natural wish to associate the Eudemus of the poem with the Eudemus of Aristotle's dialogue on the soul, the position of Jaeger and some others is best supported by the evidence. Beyond the likelihood that Eudemus of Rhodes is intended by the words *πρός* Εὐδήμων we know nothing of the external occasion of the poem.

The related question of the identity of the person who dedicated the altar can be dealt with expeditiously. Wilamowitz seems to have always remained convinced that Eudemus of Cyprus was the dedicator. Jaeger described the dedicator of the altar as unknown to us. The Aristotelian *vitae* preserve a garbled account which makes Aristotle himself the dedicator.¹¹ In modern times Immisch and Düring have argued for this identification. This latter scholar is almost dogmatic: "Ist wirklich die Elegie so rätselhaft? Wem ist das Gedicht gewidmet, und wer ist Subjekt zu ἰδρύσατο? Ich kann nicht verstehen warum die Antworten, die auf der Hand liegen, nichts taugen: (1) Eudemos von Rhodos, sein treuer Schüler, (2) Aristoteles selbst, der nach langer Abwesenheit nach 'Kekropias heiligem Boden' zurückkehrte."¹² To this theory more than one scholar has objected that it is excluded by the verb in the third person. The objection is serious, but not decisive. So long as the poem remains fragmentary, and therefore the context unknown, it remains possible, despite the third-person verb, that the speaker is in fact Aristotle. It is even possible that the speaker of these words was not Aristotle himself; he could have put them in the mouth of another person referring not to himself, but to Aristotle. In sum, with our present knowledge we cannot answer the question; we just do not know. Here again Jaeger was correct.

⁹ Wil.¹ 413: "Dann war es aber nicht an ihn gerichtet, da er in dritter Person erwähnt wird, und Olympiodor hätte εἰς Εὐδήμων sagen sollen. Wenn ich nun auch diese ... Auffassung vorsiehe, so muss ich doch gestehn, dass die Sache keineswegs sicher ist."

¹⁰ Wil.² 561 n. 4 (emphasis mine).

¹¹ For details see Jaeger¹ 107 with n. 2 and Gaiser 97-100.

¹² Düring² 345; see also Düring¹ 317.

A far more interesting question is the identity of the ἀνὴρ of verse 3: Socrates or Plato? Bernays and Theodor Gomperz argued for the former. No one, I think, would agree with them nowadays, and it would be superfluous to refute anew in any detail. Suffice to point out that Olympiodorus' sole reason for adducing these verses was to provide evidence that Aristotle was not hostile to *Plato*. If the verses referred to Socrates they are pointless in this context, and surely it is most improbable that Olympiodorus, or rather his learned source, presumably still with access to the entire poem, was guilty of such a gross confusion.¹³ There is no doubt that the reference is to Plato and the verses do reflect Aristotle's attitude towards Plato. They constitute a precious human document which strikingly illustrates Aristotle's veneration for Plato, as Jaeger has eloquently demonstrated. Scholars in antiquity at times assumed that Aristotle's disagreements with Plato meant that he must have been his enemy; we know better. Aristotle himself, practicing what he had learned from Plato, gave beautiful expression to his own attitude in the famous passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1096a11–16 (. . . καίπερ προσάντους τῆς τοιαύτης ζητήσεως γινομένης διὰ τὸ φίλους ἀνδρας εἰσαγαγεῖν τὰ εἶδη κτλ.).

The poem also contains some slight doxographical clues, both about Socrates and about Plato, and these have perhaps not been adequately explored. There is a minor point of grammatical usage which is of interest because it proves that Aristotle regularly distinguished carefully between (1) the historical Socrates and (2) the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues. I refer to the so-called "Fitzgerald's Canon," according to which Aristotle wrote Σωκράτης (anarthrous) when he was referring to the Socrates of history and ὁ Σωκράτης when he meant the Platonic Socrates of the dialogues.¹⁴ Now in verse 6 of our poem the revelation (κατέδειξεν) is announced: ὡς ἀγαθός τε καὶ εὐδαίμων ἅμα γίνεται ἀνὴρ. At first glance the thought looks "Socratic" and one understands why some scholars wished to assign it to Socrates. Others, correctly, objected both that Socrates taught nothing (he certainly never proclaimed a religious "revelation"!) and that this doctrine is that of the *Republic* and *Gorgias*.¹⁵ As Jaeger observed, "it is improbable that the ethical rigorism of the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* is

¹³ For further particulars see Jaeger¹ 106 n. 3. I add only that it is inconceivable that Aristotle could have written μόνος in v. 4—qualified by ἡ πρῶτος or not—of Socrates. Even a tentative exclusion of Plato's primary claim here on the part of Aristotle would be psychologically unconvincing. The enormous impact which contact with the living Socrates had on Plato was not, indeed could not be, experienced by Aristotle. Contrast his relatively subdued assessment of Socrates at *Met.* 1078b17–31.

¹⁴ For Fitzgerald's Canon see W. D. Ross' edition of the *Metaphysics* (Oxford 1924), vol. I, xxxix–xli; the evidence for the validity of this "rule" (which is actually only a particular application of the normal use of the definite article) is quite convincing.

¹⁵ For references see Gaiser 84 n. 2 (on p. 85). Scholars also rightly refer to the *Laws* 660e (. . . ὡς ὁ μὲν ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ σώφρων ὦν καὶ δίκαιος εὐδαίμων ἐστὶ καὶ μακάριος) and 742e (σχεδὸν μὲν γὰρ εὐδαίμονας ἅμα καὶ ἀγαθοὺς ἀνάγκη γίγνεσθαι).

substantially Socratic."¹⁶ In verse 4 Aristotle explicitly states *πρῶτος θνητῶν κατέδειξεν ἐναργῶς* and, as we have seen, all now agree that the reference is to Plato. From this we may legitimately draw the inference that Aristotle did not believe that Socrates had clearly demonstrated *both* by his life *and* by his philosophical teachings that "a man becomes both good and happy at the same time." Plato was the first to achieve that. Whether Aristotle felt that Socrates could not make such a claim because of his life's unhappy end¹⁷ or because of his lack of positive teachings, or both, who can say? This conclusion is negative; it has a positive counterpart.

That Aristotle had great admiration for (much of) Plato's philosophizing—*μέθοδοι λόγων*—is hardly a new discovery. But this poem tells us explicitly that Aristotle believed Plato to be good (*ἀγαθός*) and happy (*εὐδαίμων*) and that he became so not only because of his philosophical dialectic, but also because of *his personal way of life* (*οἰκείῳ βίῳ*). This is a precious testimony, of a sort not found in his formal philosophical treatises, for Aristotle's own opinion of Plato the man, and it is deserving of comparison with Plato's judgment of Socrates in the *Seventh Letter*.¹⁸ It merits greater attention than it seems to have received.

Next we consider briefly the meaning of vv. 2–3 (*εὐσεβέως . . . ἀνδρός*). Of these words Wilamowitz once wrote: "Und nun die Hauptfrage: *εὐσεβέως σεμνῆς φιλῆς ἰδρύσατο βωμὸν ἀνδρός* (Πλάτωνος), was heisst das?"¹⁹ His answer was that *βωμὸν ἀνδρός* go together and *φιλῆς* is a genitive of cause ("der Genitiv ist der des Grundes . . . zu dem die alten Grammatiker ein *λείπει ἢ ἔνεκα* zu bemerken pflegen"). That is, he took the Greek to mean, as he paraphrased it, *σεβόμενος τὴν σεμνὴν φιλίαν βωμὸν ἰδρύσατο Πλάτωνος*. Wilamowitz then went on, in eloquent and stirring language, to argue that Aristotle here represents Plato as a god. Jaeger argued vigorously against this notion of an apotheosis of Plato, and printed *Φιλῆς* with a capital phi for clarity, correctly in my view. Wilamowitz's interpretation involves a curious and compound aberration both of style and sense. Verse two is an integral unit:

¹⁶ Jaeger² 15 = 342.

¹⁷ One tends to forget that the Greeks did not fully share our romantic view of Socrates' death. That it was a *noble* end they understood; that it was a *desirable* end would have struck them as paradoxical, not to say quixotic. Aristotle's own views on happiness are well known from his *Ethics*; he looked to the end in deciding whether a man was truly happy. At *EN* 1101a6–8 he states *ἄθλιος μὲν οὐδέποτε γένοιτ' ἂν ὁ εὐδαίμων, οὐ μὴν μακάριός γε, ἂν Πριαμικαῖς τύχαις περιπέσῃ*. However he is not fully consistent in his views on what the prerequisites for happiness are (W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* VI [Cambridge 1981] 342–43, has some good remarks on Aristotle's inconsistencies in this regard) and, in any event, it is not at all clear to what extent, or how rigorously, one should apply Aristotle's formal ethical teachings to the interpretation of this poem.

¹⁸ 324 d–e: . . . φίλον ἄνδρα ἐμοὶ πρεσβύτερον Σωκράτη, ὃν ἐγὼ σχεδὸν οὐκ ἂν αἰσχυνοίμην εἰπὼν δικαιοτάτον εἶναι τῶν τότε.

¹⁹ Wil.¹ 414.

εὐσεβέως σεμνῆς Φιλίης ἰδρύσατο βωμόν. What Greek who read thus far could have failed to join Φιλίης βωμόν together? If that question, so put, seem too facile to any, I shall be more specific. In a dedicatory epigram, real or literary, a certain neatness of diction is expected. For the name of the recipient of the altar to be postponed to the following verse when there is an abstract noun capable (1) of being personified as a deity and (2) of being governed by the word "altar" in that same verse is stylistically intolerable, and not to be explained away as due to Aristotle's lack of poetic ability when another explanation is ready to hand. Go now to the third verse. However one interpret ἀνδρός, it is undeniable that the following clause, ὃν οὐδ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις, must go closely with it. Take ἀνδρός as Wilamowitz does and the result is a dedicatory statement of the form "X set up an altar of the man whom it is right for the wicked not even to praise." In a dedication one wants a simple genitive of the name, not such a verse as ἀνδρός . . . θέμις. Compare Aelian, *Var. Hist.* 8. 19 = Anaxagoras A 24 D-K: ὅτι καὶ βωμὸς αὐτῷ ἴσταται καὶ ἐπιγέγραπται οἱ μὲν Νοῦ, οἱ δὲ Ἀληθείας.²⁰ Far smoother stylistically is Jaeger's interpretation: "He piously set up an altar of holy Friendship / For the man whom it is not lawful for bad men even to praise."

Not only the style, but also the sense of the verses is most peculiar, if Aristotle has intended to proclaim the apotheosis of Plato: He introduces him by the word ἀνδρός (v. 3), then seems to reinforce the point in verse 4 (θνητῶν), and, above all, in verse 6 incorporates ἀνὴρ in the philosophical truth exemplified by Plato in his own person. Wilamowitz himself seems later to have quietly dropped this interpretation: "Der Altar war von Eudemos der Freundschaft errichtet; mehr als dies ein Wort brauchte nicht auf ihm zu stehen. Gemeint war die Freundschaft Platons; das schliesst Aristoteles in einem zweiten Genetiv an . . ."²¹

Moreover, there is a passage in the *Magna Moralia* which, if it represents Aristotle's own position (as it probably does), raises the fundamental question whether friendship with a deified Plato would even be possible according to Aristotle: "First, then, we must determine what kind of friendship we are in search of. For there is, people think, a friendship towards god and towards things without life, but here they are wrong. For friendship, we maintain, exists only where there can be a return of affection, but friendship towards god does not admit of love being returned, nor at all of loving. For it would be strange if one were to say that he loved Zeus."²² The fact remains, nor is it my intention to deny it, that Plato enjoys a very

²⁰ W. Haase *ap.* Gaiser 96 n. 39 adduced this passage.

²¹ Wil.² 561 n. 4 (on p. 562).

²² 1208b26-31 (tr. S. G. Stock). I do not wish to press this passage too much, not only because (1) it occurs in the *Magn. Mor.* and (2) because we cannot know whether Aristotle's formal doctrines are to be imposed upon this poem (cf. above, note 17), but also (3) because the *date of composition* of the poem is unknown, and Aristotle's beliefs could, and did, change.

special, indeed unique, position in these verses; we could describe him not unfairly as a θεῖος ἀνὴρ.

Next we must consider the meaning of verse 3, for it may be that no one has understood the Greek quite correctly. There seems no disagreement as to its rendering: "... for the man, whom it is permissible for the wicked not even to praise." What, precisely, is the reference? Wilamowitz: "... so war [Platon] ein Gott, und es war eine Blasphemie, wenn ein schlechter Mensch selbst lobend von ihm redete. Dies sagt Aristoteles von ihm aus: aber die notwendige Folge daraus, dass er ihn für einen Gott erklärt, will man nicht ertragen?"²³ Jaeger: "The name of 'friend' in Plato's sense could be claimed only by the good. If we remember that, we shall feel it no accident that Plato is characterized in this context as 'the man whom bad men have no right even to praise.' The words are no mere rhetorical hyperbole, they have reference to actualities. They are directed against a eulogy of Plato, which was of no account, against the sharp tongues of fellow-pupils who reproached Aristotle with unworthiness of Plato's friendship because he had criticized certain doctrines of the master."²⁴ And again: "... the 'bad men' whose praise Aristotle thinks damaging to the master are not just any *misera plebs*, but those mistaken admirers who thought it their duty to defend Plato against Aristotle's criticism of his doctrine."²⁵ Earlier Gomperz and Immisch had thought that the reference might be to such Cynic or Cyrenaic philosophers as Diogenes, Aristippus and Antisthenes. Gaiser proposes the tyrant Dionysius the Younger or Callippus, the Academic philosopher who killed Dion.²⁶ We may say at once that the notion that Aristotle would describe Academic philosophers as κακοί is incredible. That he would so describe any philosopher, qua philosopher, is most doubtful. Gaiser's suggestion in and of itself may seem a bit more plausible, for such a characterisation of either Dionysius or Dion would be founded on a moral, not a philosophical, judgment. The difficulty here is that we do not know that Aristotle would have so described them and, as Gaiser himself points out (103 n. 68), in *Rhet.* 1373a18-20 Aristotle treats Callippus without hostility, going so far as to say of Dion's murder, τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐγγὺς τοῦ μὴ ἀδικεῖν φαίνεται! More importantly, Gaiser's identification is closely connected with his general interpretation of the poem, which assumes that both Eudemus the Cyprian and Plato were still alive at the time of composition and this, as we have seen, cannot be.

What all these proposals have in common is the assumption that *some* κακοί, whoever they may be, actually do praise Plato and that Aristotle is condemning them for so doing (οὐ θέμις).²⁷ These wicked men, we are to

²³ Wil.¹ 416.

²⁴ Jaeger² 15 = 341.

²⁵ Jaeger¹ 106-07.

²⁶ Gaiser 101.

²⁷ Bemays, who believed that the reference was to Socrates, took verse 3 to mean that wicked men could not praise him without thereby condemning themselves as

understand, have lauded Plato and thereby have been guilty of blasphemy. See especially Jaeger's explicit comments. On this interpretation, currently orthodox, we have the rather curious (though not impossible) situation that Aristotle is reproaching people for speaking well of Plato.

I call attention to several details. First, in this poem αἰνεῖν perhaps does not mean "praise" at all. The primary meaning of this non-Attic verb is not "praise," but "tell" or "speak of" (see LSJ *s.v.*), and the most natural, and expected, thought in such a context is, "in honor of a man whom it is right for the wicked not even to mention."²⁸ Compare Aesch. *Agam.* 97–98, ὄ τι καὶ δυνάτων καὶ θέμις, αἶνει.²⁹ What is more, it is a curious fact that, if (it is a large "if") Aristotle is employing his formal philosophical vocabulary in this poem, it would, strictly speaking, be inappropriate for anyone to make Plato the object of αἰνεῖν in the sense of "praise" (i.e. = ἐπαινεῖν). For, while, pace Wilamowitz, Aristotle does not look upon Plato as a god in this poem, he clearly looks upon him as godlike, as θεῖος, and it is a tenet of Aristotle's that such people, like gods, are not the proper recipients of praise at all. They are above it.³⁰

"Unglückselige," because they would thus be acknowledging the truth of the doctrine set forth in verse 6 that only the *good* man is simultaneously "glücklich"—and they themselves are not good (*Rh. Mus.* 33 [1878] 232–33). We need not linger over this curiosity, which seems to assume that the allegedly "wicked" men would have the same opinion of themselves as Aristotle had of them. Surely they would not.

²⁸ This and similar expressions are widespread; compare a tomb marker in Tama, Iowa, U.S.A.:

Assassinated
July 19, 1913
By a dirty coward
Whose name is not worthy
to be mentioned here.

(Quoted in *Sudden & Awful: American Epitaphs and the Finger of God*, by T. C. Mann and J. Greene [Brattleboro, VT 1968] 53.)

²⁹ αἶνει Wieseler: αἰνεῖν MV, a corruption which shows how naturally αἰνεῖν can follow θέμις (and here the verb cannot mean "praise"; note also that there is another variant, namely εἰπεῖν).

³⁰ In his formal philosophy Aristotle uses ἔπαινος and ἐπαινεῖν in a technical sense. *EN* 1101b10 ff.: ἐπισκεψώμεθα περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας πότερα τῶν ἐπαινετῶν ἐστὶν ἢ μᾶλλον τῶν τιμῶν (i.e. does Happiness possess relative or absolute value?). The distinction between τὰ ἐπαινετά and τὰ τίμια is that the former is relative, not absolute; it is applied with reference to a discrete standard (δι' ἀναφορᾶς). For this reason Aristotle regards praise of the gods as ridiculous (γελοῖος); he states explicitly τῶν ἀρίστων οὐκ ἐστὶν ἔπαινος, ἀλλὰ μείζον τι καὶ βέλτιον . . . τοὺς τε γὰρ θεοὺς μακαρίζομεν καὶ εὐδαιμονίζομεν καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τοὺς θειοτάτους (1101b22–24). Compare further *MM* 1183b19–27; *EE* 1219b11–16. As M. Nussbaum succinctly observes at *MA* 700b34: "θεϊότερον καὶ τιμώτερον. These words are linked elsewhere, and contrasted with ἐπαινετόν: the τιμίον and the divine are above praise; the object of praise is praised because it stands in a certain relation to something else." If, I say, Aristotle intended a strict distinction here, there can be no doubt that Plato is to be ranked among the objects of τιμή, not of ἔπαινος. If such be the case, the meaning of αἰνεῖν is settled.

Next, I list some expressions, the relevance of which will soon become apparent: (1) Lysias, fr. 53. 1 Thalheim = Athen. 12. 555 e-f οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοιαῦτα περὶ θεοὺς ἐξαμαρτάνων, ἃ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις αἰσχρὸν ἐστὶ καὶ λέγειν κτλ.; (2) Isocr. 4. 92 οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε θέμις εἰπεῖν; (3) Dem. 18. 128 ποῦ . . . παιδείας σοι θέμις μνησθῆναι; (= οὐ θέμις σοι . . . ; compare the context); (4) Pl. *Tim.* 29a εἰ δὲ ὁ μὴδ' εἰπεῖν τι θέμις κτλ.; (5) [Pl.] *Epin.* 986b . . . οἱ δὲ τοιοῦτοὶ τινες οἴους οὐδὲ θέμις εἰπεῖν ἡμῶν οὐδενί; (6) Plut. *Mor.* 1076b εἰ γοῦν, ὁ μὴδὲ θέμις ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν, κτλ. These passages show how common verbs of mentioning are with οὐ θέμις and comparable phrases. While this evidence does not prove that such is the meaning of αἰνεῖν here, it lends support to such an interpretation. Θέμις, as well as οὐ θέμις (*fas/nefas*) is common in such expressions, Pl. *Phdr.* 250b ἐτελοῦντο τῶν τελετῶν ἦν θέμις λέγειν μακαριωτάτην; *Soph.* 258b εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν; *Symp.* 195a εἰ θέμις καὶ ἀνεμέσητον εἰπεῖν. Naturally, where the context calls for it, other infinitives also occur, e.g. Eur. *Hipp.* 1396 κατ' ὄσσω δ' οὐ θέμις βαλεῖν δάκρυ; Pl. *Apol.* 30c-d οὐ γὰρ οἶομαι θεμιτὸν εἶναι ἀμείνονι ἀνδρὶ ὑπὸ χείρονος βλάπτεσθαι; Theocr. 1. 15-16 οὐ θέμις ἄμμιν συρίσδεν; [Dem.] 25. 81 τούτων γ' οὐθ' ὅσιον οὔτε θέμις τῷ μιὰρῷ τούτῳ μεταδοῦναι.³¹ In any event, the basic interpretation of the poem is not dependent upon the specific meaning of αἰνεῖν here, since either "mention" or "praise" makes sense.

On the other hand, what is crucial for an understanding of our passage is the recognition that οὐ θέμις *with an infinitive of saying or mentioning (or praising) does not necessarily imply that anyone has actually mentioned the person or carried out the practice in question.* In this regard οὐ θέμις with any infinitive is at least neutral; the speaker who uses οὐ θέμις is expressing a moral judgment on an activity which may or may not have actually occurred. Very often the context shows that it did not and cannot. This is particularly clear at Pl. *Apol.* 20b, where Apollo, ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς, is the subject: τί οὖν ποτε λέγει [*sc.* ὁ θεὸς] φάσκων ἐμὲ σοφώτατον εἶναι; οὐ γὰρ δῆπου ψεύδεταιί γε· οὐ γὰρ θέμις αὐτῷ. Inspection of the contexts of the other examples of οὐ θέμις cited above will provide further confirmation of this.

In other words, contrary to the widespread assumptions of previous interpreters, in the clause ὃν οὐδ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις, the dative τοῖσι κακοῖσι need not, and, I would say, certainly does not contain an allusion to any definite individuals. The clause is generic and there is no reason to assume that Aristotle has any specific person(s) in mind. Gaiser observed, "Dass der aristotelische Vers zum Teil formelhaften Charakter hat, beweist der Anklang an einen Vers des Euripides (Hippolytos 81), wo es den

³¹ For more examples of οὐ θέμις *c. inf.* and a discussion of the meaning of οὐ θέμις see A. W. Bulloch, *Callimachus. The Fifth Hymn* (Cambridge 1985) 185-86 (note to verse 78).

Schlechten verwehrt wird (τοῖς κακοῖσι δ' οὐ θέμις), die Blumen der Göttin zu pflücken."³² This is a useful observation, even if Aristotle's words are hardly a "reminiscence" of the *Hippolytus* passage. What that passage rather suggests is that οὐ θέμις τοῖς κακοῖς *cum infinitivo* was a stock religious expression. In the nature of things we would expect it to be so, and Aristotle's verse further suggests this. One should notice immediately that in Euripides, as in Aristotle, the dative τοῖς κακοῖς is most naturally understood as generic. I call attention to another passage, "Hippocrates" *Lex* c. 5: τὰ δὲ ἱερὰ ἔοντα πρήγματα ἱεροῖσιν ἀνθρώποισι δείκνυται· βεβήλοισι δὲ οὐ θέμις, πρὶν ἢ τελεσθῶσιν ὀργίοισιν ἐπιστήμης. Note the striking parallelism with Aristotle here. There is the same transference of mystery terminology to intellectual revelation (δείκνυται/κατέδειξεν), and the same expression of religious prohibition (βεβήλοισι οὐ θέμις/τοῖσι κακοῖσι οὐ θέμις). Above all, observe that the dative βεβήλοισι is unquestionably generic; no specific individual is, or can be, intended. This argues strongly that the article in τοῖσι κακοῖσι is generic and that both expressions should be interpreted along similarly general lines.

Let us return to Euripides' *Hippolytus*, verses 78–81, to which reference has just been made above:

Αἰδῶς δὲ ποταμίοισι κηπεύει δρόσοις,
 ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδὲν ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
 τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν εἰς τὰ πάντ' αἰεὶ,
 τούτοις δρέπεσθαι, τοῖς κακοῖσι δ' οὐ θέμις.

Hippolytus is the speaker, and his gospel is, in its own way, as strange for the fifth century as Plato's was for the fourth. Who are the κακοί whom he has in mind? W. S. Barrett *ad loc.* observes the following: "Eur. is not concerned to pass allusive judgement on any particular beliefs of his own day: his theme is not contemporary but timeless, and his purpose is simply to delineate in its beauty and inadequacy alike the puritan austerity of which Hipp. is the type. . . . this picture . . . is no piece of contemporary polemic but a dramatist's characterization of a type . . ." (p. 173). This is, *mutatis mutandis*, as good an exegesis as any of Aristotle's ὄν οὐδ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις.

Now verse 7, οὐ νῦν δ' ἔστι λαβεῖν οὐδενὶ ταῦτά ποτε: What does this mean? Not a few, including Wilamowitz, pronounced it corrupt. None of the numerous conjectures proposed carries conviction; in such a situation it is always prudent to return to the paradosis and attempt to extract sense from it. The verse has been approached from several directions. Rose's conjecture, λαθεῖν οὐδένα for λαβεῖν οὐδενὶ (= "No one can now fail to notice this"), cannot be correct, because it goes too far. Aristotle would not say that Plato's holy revelation was now obvious to everyone; only certain philosophers could hope to grasp it. The same objection applies to

³² Gaiser 101 (after H. Hommel: n. 60).

Theiler's ταῦτ' ἄπορον for ταῦτά ποτε. Gaiser, retaining the MS text, understands νῦν to mean "in this world," "in the here and now," in contrast to the incorporeal other world of the disembodied soul, so that for him the verse means: In this world of matter no one can grasp (λαβεῖν) the knowledge of ultimate reality; only in another existence can one truly acquire (λαβεῖν) the ideal knowledge of Platonic philosophy. He goes so far as to see an allusion to *anamnesis* in the poem. The meaning which he gives to νῦν here is, in this context and without further qualification, impossible, and his whole interpretation is, in my judgment, quite mistaken. To go no further, it was in the here and now that Plato showed clearly by his life (= ὁ νῦν βίος!) the truth expressed in the sixth verse. Jaeger also defended the paradox and explained οὐκ ἔστι λαβεῖν as a "standing expression in Aristotle's treatises for the unattainability of the ideal." (Against this interpretation of the Greek see Gaiser 91.) Jaeger renders the verse, "But now it is not possible for anyone ever to attain this." By "this" (ταῦτα) he understands what everyone else seems to, namely the philosophical "gospel" announced in the sixth verse. The objection to Jaeger's interpretation is the opposite of that to Rose's and Theiler's: It does not go far enough. By denying the possibility of anyone else's attaining this ideal,³³ Jaeger would have Aristotle deny the possibility of the philosophical life in a most un-Platonic, and un-Aristotelian, manner. Here it is relevant to recall the metaphor κατέδειξεν, which it was Jaeger's own merit to have elucidated. It is an image drawn from the sphere of religious revelation. It would be pointless, and no grounds for veneration, to have revealed the unattainable. Rather, literal sacred mysteries (τελεταί) are revealed *to the elect, to those capable of full initiation into them*. As applied to philosophers, the select few, the analogy here is obvious and perfect.

Let us try a different approach. That the verse, beginning with οὐ νῦν δ' and ending with ποτε, is inelegant seems clear. Aristotle was not a professional poet and some of his experiments with diction do not succeed. He has been harshly judged by distinguished critics: "... ein Dichter war Aristoteles nicht, das zeigen alle seine Verse;"³⁴ "... Aristotle, whose memory for poetry was as lamentable as his talent for composing it."³⁵ Others, including Guthrie³⁶ and Jaeger, have been kinder; in *GRBS* 23 (1982) 251-74 I have tried to show that Aristotle's Hermias poem was a technically sophisticated production. But rough edges there undoubtedly are. In verse 4 μόνος ἢ πρῶτος is prosaic; the collocation is partly borrowed from Aristotle's own technical rhetorical diction. See *Rhet.* 1368a10, 1375a2, 1385a21 (noted by Gaiser, after K. Thraede: 96 n. 42). In verse 7

³³ Jaeger² 17 = 344: "The doctrine is not the less true for the fact that only Plato himself was able wholly to realize it."

³⁴ Wil.² 561 n. 4 (on p. 562).

³⁵ M. L. West, *Hesiod. Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 68.

³⁶ W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* VI (Cambridge 1981) 33 (on the Hermias poem).

οὐ νῦν . . . οὐδενὶ . . . ποτε should be taken closely together: "But not now is it ever possible for anyone . . ." ³⁷ The general meaning would be more clearly represented by νῦν δ' οὐκέτι ἔστι κτλ. Aristotle seems to have attempted a stronger denial by using οὐποτε (i.e. "never again now") rather than οὐκέτι, and by placing οὐ at the beginning and ποτε at the end of the verse, somewhat infelicitously. Wilamowitz's νῦν δ' οὐκ ἔστι (*Hermes* 65 [1930] 246) seems to me a rewriting of Aristotle rather than a correction of the MSS.

If the reader is prepared to follow thus far, namely to accept (1) that the text is sound and (2) that Aristotle is stating, somewhat clumsily, that it is not now—and never will be—possible for any to attain this (λαβεῖν ταῦτα), to what, then, does ταῦτα refer? We have seen that scholars understand it of the content of the sixth verse and that the resultant sense is problematic. Greek often uses plural demonstratives where we expect a singular. May not ταῦτα refer rather to Plato's achievement as expressed in verses 4 and 5, namely μόνος ἢ πρῶτος θνητῶν κατέδειξεν ἐναργῶς κτλ.? Aristotle glorifies Plato as the πρῶτος εὐρετής of this philosophical truth, much as Lucretius has glorified Epicurus, especially in the proems to his third and fifth books. Plato it was who first revealed, by his life and teaching, this great mystery, that a man becomes good and happy simultaneously. To have revealed that—this is the distinction which no one else can ever attain, the prize which no one can now win (λαβεῖν can mean either or both). ³⁸ The glory is all Plato's and his alone.

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³⁷ Compare Jaeger² 17 = 344: "νῦν and ποτέ do not exclude one another, as has been thought. νῦν includes all time since Plato; ποτέ stands for any moment of time within this period . . . Attempts to alter the words οὐ νῦν are due to a failure to see that the sharp opposition is needed to distinguish the present of the writer from the time when Plato still moved among men."

³⁸ Λαμβάνω in the sense of "winning" a prize is common; see LSJ s.v. ἄθλον I. It is curious, and perhaps no mere coincidence, that the phrases μόνος καὶ πρῶτος and πρῶτος καὶ μόνος are technical terms of the vocabulary of athletic competition. See M. N. Tod, "Greek Record-Keeping and Record-Breaking," *CQ* 43 (1949) 111: "But by far the commonest phrase is the combination μόνος καὶ πρῶτος or πρῶτος καὶ μόνος, used interchangeably . . ." For occurrences in non-athletic contexts, see e.g. Pl. *Menex.* 237e (μ. καὶ π.) and Polyb. 4. 20. 3 (π. καὶ μ.).

