BOOK REVIEW

The Theory and Practice of Life. Isocrates and the Philosophers. By TARIK WAREH. Hellenic Studies 54. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2012. Pp. viii + 236. $24.95 (pb). ISBN 978-0-674-06713-4.

This book announces itself as "a study of the professional, literary, political, and theoretical links between the school of Isocrates and the schools and careers of recognized philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle" (1). Rightly contesting the tendency to locate Isocrates as a "rhetorician" in a different profession from "philosopher," Wareh seeks to show in Part I that Isocrates' theory of forming mind and character was a "provocation" and "creative inspiration" for Plato and Aristotle, as all three sought to formulate accounts about the practical sphere of human life.

In Part II, Wareh moves on to "a new history of the school movement of the fourth century, bringing together for the first time" into a single account the participation of Isocrates' students in contests, debates and interschool polemics—often, in rivalry with students of Plato and Aristotle. The result is a fascinating survey of one quadrant of the shifting intellectual sands in the middle fourth century bce, The book ends with a coda on Isocrates' ethical addresses to princes and his inspiration of this genre in the Renaissance.

For evidence that Plato and Aristotle "directly digested and reworked" positions of Isocrates, Wareh adduces and dissects themes found both in Isocrates and in Plato (*Phaedrus*) and Aristotle (primarily the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Protrepticus*). He maintains that the "seriousness and philosophical potential" of Isocratean "theory," a potential residing in its accommodation of practice, is revealed when Aristotle "recognizably" takes this approach "back up against Plato" (58).

Agreements of Plato or Aristotle with Isocrates on some things and disagreements on others are well-plowed ground. To show that their thinking was shaped by Isocrates in any important way takes some doing. Wareh may be right to accept reports in Cicero (*De Or.* 3.141, *Tusc.* 1 .7) and Philodemus (*Rhet.*,

PHerc 832 col. 36) that Aristotle began lecturing on rhetoric in emulation of Isocrates, although such later stories present their own problems. It is possible that Isocrates' example was a stimulus to Xenocrates to write moralizing exhortations (109).

Stopping short of claiming that Isocrates directly influenced Plato and Aristotle, however (14), Wareh leaves it unclear how he will demonstrate that they "consciously mov[ed] closer" to Isocrates' ideas (69). Since, as he notes, all three inherited from sophists, practitioners of rhetoric, and theorists of practice such as medical writers, Wareh needs to show that it was Isocrates who bequeathed a given notion to Plato or Aristotle, and as support he needs plausible allusions to the former's writings. I find only one in an apparent case of agreement, viz. ἀδολεσχίας καὶ μετεωρολογίας, "highfalutin discourse" (*Phdr.* 270a1, and cf. *Cra.* 401b7-8), which Wareh argues (70) may be Plato's "sympathetic borrowing" from *Against the Sophists* 7; *LSJ* are aptly criticized for inventing a special sense of ἀδολεσχία for this passage.

A phrase, however, is not an idea, and indeed, I think Wareh too generous in ascribing "theory," at least in the modern sense, to Isocrates (14, 58). His reading of the *Protrepticus*, using Hutchinson's and Johnson's reconstruction, does not do justice to that work as what those editors describe as Aristotle's crushing reply to Isocrates' *Antidosis*, and Wareh unaccountably assigns its final exhortation, "we must do philosophy," to the "Isocrates" character, not "Aristotle" (46). While offering acute analyses of many passages, Wareh fails to make a convincing case that Plato's or Aristotle's thought owes significant debt to Isocrates.

More promising is Wareh's examination of the interactions among the three, their students, and contemporary rulers in the years when Philip II was expanding his power. Wareh is right to highlight the philosophical pedigree of polemic by Isocrateans like Cephisodorus. He shows that the jockeying for position, which was taken up by followers like Theopompus and Speusippus, aimed at public intellectual status as well as direct political influence with monarchs. Isocrates comes off well in his dealings with Philip for eschewing the flattery of a Speusippus. Welcome are sketches of obscure Isocrateans like Isocrates of Apollonia or Theocritus of Chios. Although Speusippus' *Letter to Philip II* has been recently re-edited and translated by Anthony Natoli, Wareh offers his own, more literal translation, which is generally serviceable save for its replacing Natoli's "reprehensible" and "despicable" for ψυχρός (describing Theopompus' behavior) with the uninformative "frigid." Accounts of the oratorical competition among Isocratean students at the funeral of Mausolus of Caria, or of friendship

between Academics and Hermias, tyrant of Atarneus, exemplify fourth-century intellectuals' attempts to promote themselves and their work before the great.

One wishes, therefore, that Wareh's study were more accessible to a range of readers. Greek in the notes is often not translated; aristocrats (e.g. Harpalus), scholars or works (e.g. Didymus' *Commentary on Demosthenes*) can be introduced without identification; weight can be put on unexplained modern theories from other disciplines (e.g. Bourdieusian "field"). Prolixity and vagueness too often necessitate repeated readings of a section. Statements must be checked: e.g. *contra* Wareh (146), Simon Hornblower (*Mausolus* [Oxford 1982] 334) showed that the *agôn* at the dynast's funeral "was a very Isokratean affair," and he anticipated Wareh's identification of Isocrates in Theopompus fr. 25 as the Apollonian. Wareh's study provides much valuable material; some of it must be sifted before use.

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