EURHYTHMIA IN ISOCRATES

GREEK PROSE RHYTHM: MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Active interest in Greek prose rhythm gained pace around 1880. Blass's studies of
Isocrates and Demosthenes in his *Die attische Beredsamkeit II* (Leipzig, 1874/92),
163–170 and *IIIi* (Leipzig, 1877/93), 105–12, 125–45 and his *Die Rhythmen der
attischen Kunstprosa* (Leipzig, 1901) were joined by E. Norden in his *Die antike
Kunstprosa* (Leipzig, 1898). A.W. de Groot's *Handbook of Antique Prose-Rhythm*
(Groningen and The Hague, 1919) contains bibliography up to that date, and is con-
cerned mainly with Greek prose rhythm; his *Der antike Prosarhythmus* (Groningen,
1921) and his *La Prose métrique des anciens* (Paris, 1926) are studies of both
Greek and Latin prose rhythm. S. Skimina, *État actuel des études sur le rhythme
de la prose grecque* (Cracow, 1937) reviews earlier and current research. The entry
'Prose Rhythm' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* by W.H. Shewring (1950, rev.
Dover 1970) summarizes conclusions on the practice of the different Greek authors,
and at the same time exposes the limitations of the results obtained. Most study
has been focussed on clausulae, even though it is the Latin rather than the Greek
critics who made clausulae central to their work on prose rhythm. A more balanced
approach has been needed, and is provided to some extent by K. Dover, in chapter
8 ('Rhythm') of his *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style* (Oxford, 1997), 160–81.
Dover finds rhythmic passages in all the major Greek prose authors. The present
study of the only fifth/fourth-century prose author who actually professes to use
rhythm assumes, in the absence of empirical evidence to the contrary, that it can
occur anywhere in a sentence: anywhere but not everywhere. It is contended that
Isocrates deploys prose rhythm only where he is striving to produce a particular
effect in a given context, rather than as a colouring to his style in general.

THE LITERARY BACKGROUND: SUMMARY

Characterized as 'the most Homeric' of writers ([Longinus], *Subl.* 13.3), Herodotus
recited his work to the same fifth-century audiences as did contemporary rhapsodes
and dramatists.[1] The opening sentence of his History begins with two dactyls and
an *ionicus a maiore*, and contains groups of short syllables contrasted with groups
of long syllables. Similar sequences occur in the opening sentence of the Croesus
logos (1.6), though precise analysis is hazardous (see n. 2). Any prose author of

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[1] See J.P. Gould, *Herodotus* (London, 1989), 19: 'We have almost certainly to imagine
Herodotus reading aloud his text, in whole or in part, to an audience gathered to hear him
perform.' According to Thucydides' biographer Marcellinus (*Life of Thucydides*, 54) the later
historian was a member of his audience at one of these hearings, which he left in tears of
emulation. This source is late, but attempts to discredit it have been hitherto unconvincing.
Many of the stories (*logoi*) and episodes in the History are of ideal length for an oral session.

this early period who wanted to imbue his writing with a moralistic or proverbial tone might deliver his key thoughts in the impressive rhythms used by the great poets, and thereby lay claim to their authority. Hence many passages in the early philosophers have a poetic ring to them, even though they are formally prose.[2] A similar desire to add an extra dimension to their performance prompted certain sophists to turn their lectures into histrionic tours de force.[3] Hence the first names that are associated with the introduction of rhythm into prose by ancient critics are sophists: Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, Hippias of Elis and Gorgias of Leontini.

In the case of Thrasymachus a passing reference by Aristotle (*Rh.* 3.8.5) is amplified by Cicero (*Orat.* 175): *princeps inveniendi* [sc. *numerum oratorium*] *fuit Thrasymachus*. No direct pronouncement by him on the subject is preserved.[4] Similarly, interest in and knowledge of 'rhythms' is attributed to Hippias by Plato,[5] and in the case of Gorgias these are surmised from its perceived presence in the extant writings that have survived under his name.[6] Aristotle is the first critic to discuss the nature of prose rhythm. But his contribution to our understanding of it, depending heavily as it does on negatives, is of limited value. After prescribing that prose should be 'neither metrical nor without rhythm' (8.1), he describes the characteristics of the metrical feet of verse and shows how they are unsuited to prose: the dactyl is too dignified, the trochee is too dance-like, the iambus observes the rhythm of common speech; and they are severally associated with particular genres of verse – epic, lyric and dramatic poetry (8.4). Yet prose rhythm must involve some kind of metre, so Aristotle, following earlier theorists, and seemingly by a process of elimination, recommends the paeon (– ˘ ˘ ˘, ˘ ˘ ˘ –), 'because it is the only one of the rhythms which is not adapted to a metrical system' (8.5). We shall shortly consider positive reasons for its incorporation in prose.

[2] The occurrence of dactylic and anapaestic rhythms in early Greek prose is explained by K. Dover, *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style* (Oxford, 1997), 160–2, in some cases by its relative closeness in time to the mainstream of Greek epic poetry, and in others to its philosophical and hence gnomic content. His citations from these mainly Ionic authors come with a salutary reminder of the uncertainties surrounding the prosody of their dialect (160–1), with its uncontracted vowels and the consequent question of the application of synizesis.

[3] Aristotle (*Rh.* 3.14.9), when discussing means of recalling an audience's attention, tells how the sophist Prodicus, when he saw some of them nodding off, would 'slip in a bit of the fifty-drachma *epideixis*'. Through these public displays, the sophist illustrated all the means of persuasion which potential pupils could learn from him.

[4] Aristotle credits Thrasymachus only with the advocation of the paeon, not with the invention of prose rhythm. The reference is interesting, therefore, only as evidence that prose rhythm was the subject of critical discussion in the last quarter of the fifth century.

[5] In *Hp. mai.* 285c–d and *Hp. mi.* 368d, Socrates says that Hippias knows about the elements of speech – letters (*grammata*), syllables (*syllaboi*) and their arrangement (*harmoniai*) – and rhythms (*rhuthmoi*). As Hippias himself wrote copiously in both verse and prose (locc.citt.), the evidence provided by these passages is equivocal.

[6] See Dover (n. 2), 171. The 'Gorgianic figures' of parallelism were naturally prone to produce rhythm (see Cic. *Orat.* 175). On the general affinity of Gorgias' style with that of poetry, see Arist. *Rh.* 3.1.9 and F.Blass, *Die attische Beredsamkeit* 1.63.

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Isocrates' first reference to prose rhythm, and also the earliest by any author, is in his polemic *Against the Sophists*.[7] After attacking unnamed rivals for making false promises to potential students of his 'political philosophy', he gives a synopsis of his own teaching programme. Central to this is training in the persuasive presentation of ideas, for which even the pupil with natural ability needed the special tuition which only Isocrates could offer. He undertook to teach him (16):

…τὸ δὲ τούτων ἐφ᾽ ἑκάστῳ τῶν πραγμάτων ἃς δεῖ προελέσθαι καὶ μῖξαι πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ τάξαι κατὰ τρόπον, ἔτι δὲ τῶν καιρῶν μὴ διαμαρτεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐνθυμήμασι πρεπόντως ὅλον τὸν λόγον καταποικίλαι καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν εὐρύθμως καὶ μουσικῶς εἰπεῖν …

… to choose from the elements of composition those which should be employed for each subject, to join them together, to arrange them properly, and also not to miss what the occasion demands, but to adorn the whole speech with fittingly striking thoughts and to deliver it in rhythmical and melodious words …

This is a general description of Isocrates' own style, as we encounter it in his discourses. But for the purposes of the present discussion attention focusses on τοῖς ὀνόμασιν εὐρύθμως καὶ μουσικῶς εἰπεῖν. This clause is to be interpreted as a statement that both the choice of words and their arrangement is made with a view to their rhythmical and musical effect. Practically applied, this means that words which form recognizable rhythms are placed successively, or in corresponding positions (for example, at the beginning or end), in parallel clauses or phrases. The only criterion for effective prose rhythm is the ear of the listener, who will notice such repetitive occurrences. On the other hand, equal numbers of syllables in parallel cola, such as those observed by Blass in his examination of Isocratean eurhythmia,[8] are much less likely to have been noticed by an audience, while their quantitative parity would have been practically impossible for

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[7] *Against the Sophists*, which was circulated around the time when he opened his school, *c.* 390 B.C., did not silence Isocrates' critics, for we find him railing against them some 35 years later in his full-scale apologia, *Antidosis*. But it would have been viewed as his manifesto, and as such invited early opponents. One of those whose criticisms have survived is Alcidamas of Elea. In his tract *On Sophists*, he inveighed against unnamed proponents of an elaborate style of oratory which could be perfected only in the schoolroom and not reproduced in the heat of public debate. That Isocrates was the main, perhaps the only target of this invective is indicated by the close match between Alcidamas' description of the style he is criticizing and Isocrates' style and method of composition. Alcidamas writes (4): ἐν πολλῷ δὲ χρόνῳ γράψαι καὶ κατὰ σχολὴν ἐπανορθῶσαι, which is reminiscent of the tradition, begun by Isocrates himself, that he was engaged in writing *Panegyricus* for ten years (see n. 13). More particularly, in 16, βραδείᾳ τῇ τῆς διανοίας κινήσει χρώμενος ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν ἑρμηνείαν κατὰ μικρὸν ἐξεργάζεσθαι τοὺς λόγους καὶ μετ᾽ ἀκριβείας καὶ ῥυθμοῦ τὰ ῥήματα συντιθέναι combines the idea of the painstakingly constructed period, whose sense is completed only by its final words, with that of enhancement of its sound by the introduction of the poetical element of rhythm. These two ideas correspond, respectively, with Isocrates' practice in periodic writing and his statements about his eurhythmia.

[8] Blass's discussion of Isocratean eurhythmia (n. 6, 2.164–70) centres on its involvement in the symmetrical construction of the period. By 'scanning' successive cola and making rough counts of their syllables, he detects a scheme of corresponding lengths, but concludes that, rather than aiming at precise equality, cola in the second half of a period are made longer than their counterparts in the first half (166), and their pairing symmetry is made more complex. But

a declaimer to convey. The 'word' (ὄνομα) is the basic unit of prose rhythm.[9] This would explain the advocation of the paeon by Aristotle's predecessors, even though Aristotle himself may have given the wrong reason for it. As a foot of five 'times', the paeon could resolve into a cretic (– ˘ –), bacchius (– – ˘) and hypobacchius (˘ – –). Many common individual Greek words 'scan' as one of these feet, as do short grammatically connected combinations of words such as article + noun, preposition + noun, and noun + connective particle. Thus a hearer or reader would naturally scan τοὺς λόγους as a cretic, διὰ λόγων as a fourth paeon (˘ ˘ ˘ –), and πρῶτον μὲν as a bacchius. Further, such cohering units as this would decide, or at least influence, where breaks between feet should occur. Application of this principle of the word-centred scansion of prose is to be found in the examples which Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives in *De compositione verborum* 18 and 25;[10] and it is significant that he appears to feel no need to justify or rationalize his analyses, but seems to regard the whole procedure as orthodox and long-established. More enlightenment on it from Isocrates himself would have been welcome, but he has little more to say on the subject of his eurhythmia. The relevant passages contain conflicting statements. In the first, *Euagoras* 9–10, he explicitly denies the prose writer the poet's use of metre and rhythm. In the second, *Antidosis* 46, where he is discussing epideictic oratory, he describes it as 'more akin to works composed in rhythm and set to music than to the speeches that are made in court'. Finally, he says, of his discourse *To Philip* (27), 'I have not adorned its style with the rhythmical embellishments which I applied when I was a younger man' (οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῖς περὶ τὴν λέξιν εὐρυθμίαις καὶ ποικιλίαις κεκοσμήκαμεν αὐτόν, αἷς νεώτερος ὢν ἐχρώμην.) The first of these passages is the most important in the present context, and will be examined more closely later. In the second, he is making a comparison between epideictic and forensic oratory which most critics would find unexceptionable. As to the third passage, the same claim is made again, and with greater force, in his last discourse, *Panathenaicus* (2–3). Stylistic examination of the whole corpus shows that claim to be false.[11] But the latter passage is of interest because, while not referring to eurhythmia, it refers to two pervasive features of his style which have added to its brilliance, antithesis and parisosis. We shall see how these play a part in promoting Isocratean

he is not interested in examining the distribution of long and short syllables and the rhythmic textures that result from it.

[9] Cf. Dion, Hal. *Comp*. 17: 'Every noun and verb, and every other part of speech which does not consist of a single syllable only, is spoken in some sort of rhythm'. This relationship has been overlooked or unrecognized by most subsequent critics, an exception being H.D. Broadhead, *Latin Prose Rhythm : A New Method of Investigation* (Cambridge, 1922), who writes: 'words have an inherent rhythm, which is not changed by their appearance in various metrical contexts … if there are feet in prose, they must be not artificial constructions, but *units naturally inhering in the words themselves* (my italics) (39) … what we have said about the inherent rhythm of words applies equally to the Greek language' (42).

[10] His scansion of the opening of Demosthenes, *De corona* into mainly cretics and bacchii observes word–foot coincidence closely enough to illustrate his thesis. See W.R. Roberts, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus On Literary Composition* (London, 1910), 183–5; S. Usher, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus : Critical Essays II* (Cambridge, MA, 1985), 139–41.

[11] See S. Usher, 'The style of Isocrates', *BICS* 20 (1973), 46–7, 56–9. *To Philip*, like *Antidosis*, registers below the average for the corpus in antithesis and parisosis. As to *Panathenaicus*, only the figures for parisosis are below the average: for antithesis, correspondence and, most notably, for amplification, which can also be associated with prose rhythm, they are above average.

eurhythmia. But before investigating that subject in detail, it will be useful to consider the word itself a little more closely.

The principle stated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, generally in *De compositione verborum* 11, and specifically in *Demosthenes* 50, that artistic prose should not be 'in metre' or 'in rhythm', (ἔμμετρον, ἔρρυθμον), but should be 'pleasing in its rhythm and metre' (εὔρρυθμον, εὔμετρον), is a gloss on Aristotle's negative injunction in *Rhetorica* 3.8.1. But it also adds clarity to the idea that eurhythmia in prose is not the all-controlling, omnipresent force that it is in poetry, but a relatively unassertive and occasional adornment of style. The passage from *Euagoras* 9–10, in which Isocrates admits that the prose writer cannot wear all the poet's clothes, seems to indicate acknowledgement of the permissible limits of eurhythmia. As we approach the texts of Isocrates' discourses, another of those limits becomes apparent, one of location: in order to achieve its desired impact, prose rhythm may be restricted to elevated passages, such as those of intense encomium and invective, and opening or closing sections, where extra attention from the audience is being sought.

Helen and *Busiris*, early works composed partly as models of encomiastic oratory, should be expected to provide a variety of examples of Isocrates' deployment of prose rhythm. In its simplest form, the agitated, highly strung mood of the contentious opening period of *Helen* (1) is mirrored in the frequency of short syllables in it; but the encomium proper begins at 16, where Isocrates recounts how Helen's father Zeus endowed her with 'the gift of beauty, which by its nature brings even strength itself into subjection to it'. In the opening sentence: Τὴν μὲν οὖν | ἀρχὴν | τοῦ λόγου | ποιήσομαι | τὴν ἀρχὴν | τοῦ γένους | αὐτῆς the natural division of the words gives a sequence of cretic, spondee (– –), cretic, iambic metron (– – ˘ –), molossus (– – –), cretic, spondee. The opening of the following sentence: πλείστων γὰρ | ἡμιθέων | ὑπὸ Διὸς | γεννηθέντων divides into bacchius, choriamb (– ˘ ˘ –), paeon, and two spondees, but there seem to be no discernible rhythmical effects in the rest of the sentence. Perhaps the presence of the iambic metron and the choriamb have added a temporary poetical flavour. However that may be, clearer exemplification of prose rhythm is to be found in the phrasal pleonasm (17) οὐκ ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας, | ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν πολέμων | καὶ τῶν ἀγώνων γιγνομένας. Here the rhythms of the first two are similar (– – – – ˘ ˘ – | – – – – ˘ ˘ –), showing how this kind of correspondence, rather than the character of the individual feet themselves, produces the rhythmical effect. This middle section of the period also contains three words of five-times length (here first and fourth paeons): βουλόμενος, ἀναγαγεῖν, καταλιπεῖν, the last two in corresponding positions in their clauses. In the antithetical clauses that end the period, once again it is the approximate rhythmical correspondence rather than the intrinsic metres that strike the ear: τοῦ μὲν ἐπίπονον καὶ φιλοκίνδυνον τὸν βίον κατέστησε, τῆς δὲ περίβλεπτον καὶ περιμάχητον τὴν φύσιν ἐποίησεν.

Similar combinations of rhythmic effects are to be found in the passages of heightened encomium in *Helen* 23–4, 26–7. In 26: οἳ | καὶ τάχει | καὶ ῥώμῃ | καὶ τόλμῃ | διενεγκόντες τὰς μὲν ἐπόρθουν, τὰς δ' ἤμελλον, τὰς δ' ἠπείλουν τῶν πόλεων, the three initial trisyllabic phrases are followed by three closely parallel clauses dominated by long syllables. A particular issue is raised by the above phrases. Strict observance of their length values would make a sequence of cretic and two molossi, because the α in τάχει is short. Yet to the ear the three phrases are of equal length value. In such cases it is reasonable to suppose that

the lengths of the vowels α, ι and υ can be decided by their rhythmical context in prose. Here too the lengthening of α is needed to complete the weighty effect that is obviously being sought. This flexibility may be a distinguishing feature of prose rhythm. Dionysius of Halicarnassus seems to have thought so, when he wrote (*Comp.* 11):

The diction of [ordinary] prose does not violate or even alter the quantities in any noun or verb, but keeps the syllables long or short as it has received them from nature. But the arts of music and rhythm change them by shortening or lengthening them, so that they often pass into their opposites.

He applies this principle, that a prose writer who is seeking rhythmic effect enjoys a limited degree of inverted 'poetic licence' as to his quantities, when he is scanning the opening period of Demosthenes *De corona* in *De compositione verborum* 18. In the middle of his analysis he writes:

… a hypobacchius comes first; then a bacchius or, if you like, a dactyl … Next follows a molossus, or a bacchius, for it can be scanned either way.

There are obvious dangers of a charge of arbitrariness, and even of circular argument when the critic is trying to prove that a certain passage is replete with 'noble rhythms'. But it is unlikely that Dionysius' attitude to prose rhythm was unorthodox or revolutionary, since, as I have already noted, he does not feel any necessity to justify it.

Apparent rhythmic effects are more difficult to find in *Busiris*, which contains more argument than *Helen*, and at times even has a quasi-forensic tone. But the opening of the encomiastic passage, celebrating Busiris' noble lineage (10), when divided into its natural verbal and phrasal units, reveals some of the same rhythms as those favoured in Helen: Περὶ μὲν οὖν | τῆς Βουσίριδος | εὐγενείας | τίς οὐκ ἂν | δυνηθείη | ῥᾳδίως | εἰπεῖν … Here paeon is followed by spondee–dactyl, trochaic metron, bacchius, two spondees, cretic and spondee. In the sentence (10): τυχὼν δὲ τοιούτων προγόνων | οὐκ ἐπὶ τούτοις μόνοις μέγ᾽ ἐφρόνησεν, | ἀλλ᾽ ᾤήθη δεῖν καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς τῆς αὑτοῦ μνημεῖον εἰς ἅπαντα | τὸν χρόνον καταλιπεῖν, in the contrasting οὐκ … ἀλλὰ clauses, the futile and temporary vainglory of the first idea is marked by a ratio of six short syllables to six long, whereas the serious thought given to the more permanent commemoration of his legacy is marked by a longer clause with a ratio of eighteen longs to eight: which is a difference great enough to be noticed by the hearer. The concluding three words form a cretic and a paeon. Correspondingly, an upbeat description of the bounties afforded by the Egyptian climate and terrain is reinforced by the deliberate inclusion of short-syllabled words (12–13): πλεῖστα δὲ καὶ παντοδαπώτατα φέρειν δυναμένην, ἀθανάτῳ δὲ τείχει τῷ Νείλῳ τετειχισμένην, ὅς οὐ μόνον φυλακὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τροφὴν ἱκανὴν αὐτῇ πέφυκεν, and in the succeeding antithetical clauses, the parison is underlined by approximate rhythmical parallelism: ἀνάλωτος μὲν ὢν καὶ δύσμαχος τοῖς ἐπιβουλεύουσιν, εὐαγωγὸς δὲ καὶ πρὸς πολλὰ χρήσιμος τοῖς ἐντὸς αὑτοῦ κατοικοῦσιν.

Isocrates continues to celebrate the felicities bestowed on Egypt by the Nile with sequences of short syllables (ἐργ|ασίαν ἰσόθεον) contrasted with sequences of longs (ὄμβρων καὶ τῶν αὐχμῶν) avoiding rhythmic monotony. Indeed, this avoidance is a major characteristic of Isocratean eurhythmia. In particular, he seems studiously

to avoid sustained sequences of the shorter feet, iambs and trochees,[12] probably because of the jerky effect which they can produce. Not much more enlightenment, however, is to be gathered from *Busiris*. After all, Isocrates warns us (9, 44) not to expect the full fireworks of a display speech in it. Even a passage that seems to invite the full treatment, like 24, with its impressive opening sentence (μάλιστα δ' ἄξιον ἐπαινεῖν ... θεραπείαν) is not overtly rhythmical beyond the antithetical openings of the coordinate clauses (ὅσοι μὲν γὰρ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ... ὅσοι δὲ τῶν θείων) round which that period is constructed, although a syllable count of the two halves of it shows close correspondence (49:53).

Isocrates reputedly took ten years to write *Panegyricus*,[13] so that it may be expected to embody his mature style in all its aspects. In fact statistical comparison with the rest of the Isocratean corpus confirms this.[14] Incidence of long, complex periods, some containing parison, is high, as is antithesis and hyperbaton, both of which can be related to a quest for rhythmic effect. But the first three examples of this appear to be aimed at underlining subject matter. In the first (3): ἥκω συμβουλεύσων περί τε τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους καὶ τῆς ὁμονοίας τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτούς, the portentous announcement of his subject is marked by the six long opening syllables, relieved by the following shorts, but returning to end with further weighty sequences. In 5: οὐδ' οἱ καιροί πω παρεληλύθασι, the contrast between the opening five longs and the succeeding shorts may be designed to characterize the fleeting nature of *kairos*, as personified in Lysippus' famous statue of 'him' as a running figure with a seizable forelock, but with the back of his head bald, so that he cannot be caught once he has gone past.[15] Then in 9, of the two antithetical clauses, the second is significantly the longer, reflecting the greater weight Isocrates wishes to place on its content, 'the ability to make proper use of them [*sc*. the deeds of the past] at the appropriate time, how to use them at the right time, how to apply the right arguments to each of them, and how to invest them with suitable language, only the wise know'. Related to this function of rhythm as an agent of emphasis is its presence when amplification is being used. In 14, Isocrates invites his audience to show him no indulgence if he falls short of his pretentions, but καταγελᾶν καὶ καταφρονεῖν (two paeons). The juxtaposition of two words establishes a rhythm which might not be noticeable if only one of them were used, and drives home the point. In 23, sequences of two or more short syllables are underlined by amplification: ὁμολογεῖται μὲν γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ἀρχαιοτάτην εἶναι καὶ μεγίστην καὶ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὀνομαστοτάτην. Here the two anapaests in ὀνομαστοτάτην reinforce the spondee + anapaest in ἀρχαιοτάτην. The story of Demeter's sojourn in Attica (28–30) is introduced by mainly anapaestic (a) and bacchic (b) rhythms· Πρῶτον μὲν (b) | τοίνυν, | οὗ πρῶτον (b) | ἡ φύσις | ἡμῶν | ἐδεήθη, | διὰ τῆς (a) | πόλεως (a) | τῆς ἡ|μετέρας (a) | ἐπορίσθη. | καὶ γὰρ εἰ | μυθώδης | ὁ λόγος (a) | γέγονεν, (a) | ὅμως αὐτῷ καὶ νῦν ῥηθῆναι προσήκει. Preparation for the narrative is thus

[12] The text of a digest of an Isocratean *techne* preserved by Syrianus, *In Hermog*. I, p. 28, 6 R and Maximus Planudes, *In Hermog*. W V, p. 469, 6 (Sh. 7) prescribes the admixture of 'every rhythm, especially iambic and trochaic'. The editors who have bracketed these words seem to have read Isocrates with due attention.

[13] Dion. Hal. *Comp*. 25; [Plut.] *X orat*. 837F(10 or 15 years); Quint. *Inst*. 10.4.4.

[14] See Usher (n. 11), 46–7, 51.

[15] For the religious background to the statue, its history and its afterlife, and illustrations, see A.B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion* 2, Part 2, Appendix A 859–68.

concluded by predominantly long syllables. The narrative itself begins with contrast between sequences of long and short syllables, without any discernible pattern, but the heightened emotion involved in describing the Athenians' unselfish sharing of Demeter's divine blessings is expressed rhythmically, featuring especially cretics (c), and paeons (p), but also dactyls (d) and spondees (s), and ending in an *ionicus a minore* (˘ ˘ – –): οὕτως (s) | ἡ πόλις (d) | ἡμῶν (s), | οὐ μόνον (c) | θεοφιλῶς (p,c [?]) | ἀλλὰ καὶ (c) | φιλανθρώπως ἔσχεν, ὥστε | κυρία (d) | γενομένη (p) | τοσούτων (b) | ἀγαθῶν (a) | οὐκ ἐφθόνησε τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἀλλ' ὧν ἔλαβεν ἅπασι μετέδωκεν· (29). Later in his encomiastic history, Isocrates complicates his use of rhythms as a means of enhancing correspondence, first phrasally on a small scale (34): … καὶ πρώτου γενομένου καὶ πᾶσι κοινοτάτου, and subsequently in the construction of a period (39): παραλαβοῦσα γὰρ τοὺς Ἕλληνας (1) | ἀνόμως ζῶντας καὶ (2) | σποράδην οἰκοῦντας καὶ | (3) τοὺς μὲν ὑπὸ δυναστείων ὑβριζομένους (4) | τοὺς δὲ δι᾽ ἀναρχίαν ἀπολλυμένους, (5) | καὶ τούτων τῶν κακῶν αὐτοὺς ἀπήλλαξε, | τῶν μὲν κυρία γενομένη, (6) | τοῖς δ᾽ αὐτὴν παράδειγμα ποιήσασα (7) |. The opening clause (1) consisting of a paeon, bacchius and hypobacchius, (˘ ˘ ˘ – | ˘ – – | – – ˘) is followed by parallel commata (2,3) beginning with anapaests. Likewise, the initial rhythms of 4 and 5 are the same (paeons), and their concluding words (ὑβριζομένους, ἀπολλυμένους) have similar rhythms and concluding sound (homoeoteleuton). 6 and 7 open with the same pattern of three long syllables followed by a succession of shorts.

In the above examples of Isocratean rhythm it has been possible to identify the specific moods which they have aimed to engender: excitement, alarmed agitation, seriousness, reverential dignity (never humour). It has also been seen how some of them can characterize the person or the situation that is being described. In other cases, the choice and arrangement of words seems to have been dictated simply by a desire to confer on the discourse some of the qualities of verse, with clauses balancing one another and having corresponding component parts with similar rhythms. Rhythm has also been used to stress a particular idea through amplification, by juxtaposing two or more words which are similar in both meaning and rhythm. Such groupings may involve alliteration and/or anaphora. Their effect depends on a word-end–metron-end correlation, which is surely intentional. This correlation is also to be observed in rhythmical passages generally. Finally, Isocrates' choice and deployment of individual rhythms is historically interesting. Generally absent are sequences of iambic and trochaic metre.[16] Now these metres were identified by a later critic as 'ignoble' rhythms, overused by inferior writers, such as the 'Asiatic' Hegesias of Magnesia. Frequent double trochees are a feature of a passage of Hegesias quoted by Dionysius (*Comp*. 18, see Roberts [n. 10], 53). These could produce a disagreeable effect on the ear because of their obvious jerky intrusiveness; while a certain monotony might arise from a run of iambs. Isocrates aimed at greater subtlety and refinement than this, and his frequent preference for longer rhythms (dactyls, anapaests, bacchii, cretics and ionics) is to be explained stylistically: these rhythms were potentially more impressive, as the poets had demonstrated them to be by their deployment of them in their choruses and in epic poetry.

[16] See n. 12.

EURHYTHMIA AND THE PERIOD

Examination of some of the longer periods in *Panegyricus* reveals the variation in intensity and scope that rhythm can have in a complex structure. The period which spans 43–5, instead of sustaining long rhythmic sequences, for most of its length is studded with individual words which have palpable metron rhythms: πανηγύρεις (˘ – ˘ –) διαλυσαμένους (˘ ˘ – ˘ ˘ –) συγγενείας (– ˘ – –) διατεθῆναι (˘ ˘ ˘ – –) διενεγκοῦσι (˘ ˘ – – –) ἐγγενέσθαι (– ˘ – –) ἐπιδείξασθαι (˘ ˘ – – –). Otherwise there is not much to catch the ear until the main clause which rounds off the whole complex sentence: τοσούτων | τοίνυν ἀγαθῶν διὰ τοὺς συνόδους | ἡμῖν γιγνομένων οὐδ᾽ ἐν τούτοις | ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν ἀπελείφθη. Here the final four words scan as a choriamb followed by a heroic hexameter ending, while anapaestic followed briefly by dactylic rhythms are prominent in the two middle sections, with a bacchius beginning the sentence. This ending corresponds with the idea of a rhythmic rounding-off of the period noted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Isoc.* 2, 3). But it is now beginning to become apparent that, even within passages of heightened emphasis and emotion, Isocrates uses rhythm for momentary impact, not to create a general effect. In another intensely encomiastic passage (75), he emphasizes the idea of Athenian heroes' merit with two cretic words, αἰτίους … ἀξίους, and he lingers over key themes with the successive longs in the words προκινδυνεύσαντας, δυναστευσάντων. The following sentence (76):

οὐ γὰρ ὠλιγώρουν τῶν κοινῶν, οὐδ ᾽ ἀπέλαυον μὲν ὡς ἰδίων, ἠμέλουν δ ᾽ ὡς ἀλλοτρίων, ἀλλ ᾽ ἐκήδοντο μὲν ὡς οἰκείων, ἀπείχοντο δ ᾽ ὥσπερ χρὴ τῶν μηδὲν προσηκόντων· οὐδὲ πρὸς ἀργύριον τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἔκρινον, ἀλλ ᾽ οὗτος ἐδόκει πλοῦτον ἀσφαλέστατον κεκτῆσθαι καὶ κάλλιστον ὅστις τοιαῦτα τυγχάνοι πράττων ἐξ ὧν αὐτός τε μέλλοι μάλιστα εὐδοκιμήσειν καὶ τοῖς παισὶ μεγίστην δόξαν καταλείψειν.

is constructed round οὐκ … ἀλλὰ pleonasm and μὲν … δὲ antithesis, and Isocrates achieves the effect he wants largely through parison and homoeoteleuton. The rhythmic correspondence that is observable in the parallel clauses is temporary and approximate, and is discernible in these words and phrases only through the assumption of resolution or substitution, i.e. the equation of long with two shorts. Nevertheless, the sentence undoubtedly has a rhythmical 'feel' to it, and this is more strongly sustained towards the end, where οὗτος … κάλλιστον scans as a trochaic tetrameter with an added spondee, and the period ends with the final feet of a heroic hexameter. This mixture of rhythmic effects, varying in intensity and sporadic in occurrence, seems to be characteristic of prose rhythm as practised by Isocrates. It should also be observed that it has so far been found in epideictic discourses, in which it might be expected to find its most natural place. In fact, there is comparatively little prose rhythm to be found in *Antidosis*, *On the Peace* and *Areopagiticus*. It should therefore be concluded that Isocrates' own later limiting statements about his deployment of prose rhythm accurately reflect his practice during his later years. Passages in which prose rhythm is detectable become rarer, as the subject matter and Isocrates' handling of it become more contentious. Yet even in his last discourse, *Panathenaicus*, there is one episode in which rhythmical features may be occasionally discerned. It is the digression praising the achievement of Agamemnon in uniting the Greeks against the barbarian (74–90). In the clause μόνος γὰρ ἁπάσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἠξιώθη γενέσθαι στρατηγός (76), the pairs of bacchii beginning and ending it, and the extraordinary sequence of longs in …

αὐτὸν δόξης τοῖς ἄλλως πως τιμηθεῖσιν, are unlikely to have been accidental. The same applies to the opening paeon and the two concluding cretics of the clause στρατόπεδον δὲ συστήσας ἐπὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους ἤγαγεν (77). In 81 the unusual word ἐγκεκωμιασμένων has a purely trochaic rhythm. Sequences of three or more longs are contrasted with sequences of three or more shorts in this passage (81–2). But these are isolated manifestations of rhythm in the *Panathenaicus*, and this observation completes a trend. Isocratean eurhythmia, used in a limited number of contexts even in the discourses that are most suited to it, occurs with decreasing frequency.

RHYTHM IN GREEK ORATORY?

The above conclusion must affect any general expectations regarding the incidence of prose rhythm in the speeches of other orators. As the only fifth/fourth-century author who is known to have professed to have used prose rhythm, Isocrates embodies an a fortiori argument. If Isocrates used prose rhythm to a limited extent in his discourses, which were designed to incorporate a wide range of refinements, how much less is it to be expected in the speeches which Antiphon, Lysias and Isaeus wrote for their clients to deliver? Such untrained speakers as the latter, performing under stress, are unlikely to have been equipped with the vocal skills that would have enabled them to realize a rhythm-conscious speechwriter's intentions. Of course, the published speech may well have been a polished version of the one delivered, but if a speechwriter rewrote his speech with enhanced rhythmical features, he might risk deterring potential clients who read it, while violating the norms for the genre.[17] With Demosthenes, however, the case is different. He delivered his most important speeches himself, having prepared for the task through rigorous training.[18] Therefore the possibility that he deployed prose rhythm, alongside the other devices designed to attract and maintain the attention of audiences, must be considered with due seriousness. In the first place, Isocrates provided him with models and a precedent, and we can believe that Demosthenes used them from the start in his obsessive quest to outdo all his rivals on the political stage and in the courts, (though he would have had to observe the same restraint as other speechwriters in the many speeches he wrote for his clients to deliver). Later critics accorded him primacy in all aspects of style; and this included the rhythm of his prose. But such admiration could lead to hyperbole, as when Dionysius of Halicarnassus says (*Dem.* 50):

[17] Alcidamas, *Against the Sophists*, 13 was probably giving the common view when he stated that the most effective forensic speeches were those whose style least resembled that of written speeches, and had an improvisatory character. Further on Alcidamas, with bibliography, see M.J. Edwards, 'Alcidamas', in I. Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford, 2007), 47–57.

[18] Dion. Hal. *Dem*. 53; Plut. *Dem*. 11.1, [Plut.] *X orat*. 844D–F. See C. Cooper, 'Philosophers, politics, academics: Demosthenes' rhetorical reputation in antiquity', in I. Worthington (ed.), *Demosthenes: Statesman and Orator* (London, 2000) 224–45, esp. 226–34.

There is no passage in Demosthenes that does not contain rhythms and metre, some perfect and complete, some incomplete, wrought in such a complex relationship to one another and so dovetailed together that their metrical character is not obvious to us.

Dionysius' enthusiasm for Demosthenes is patent; but when compared with his references to Isocratean prose rhythm, the above description is restrained and almost generic, in that it shares with other descriptions the paradoxical idea that prose rhythm is unobtrusive.[19] By contrast, he says that Isocrates uses 'strong rhythms which are not far removed from those of verse' (*Isoc*. 2), that he is 'the slave of rhythm and the rounded period' (ibid. 3); and 'the thought often becomes slave to the rhythm of the words' (ibid. 12). Elsewhere its ubiquitousness in Isocrates' discourses is stressed: he is styled as 'wrapping everything up in rhythmically constructed periods' (Dion. Hal. *Dem*. 18). That Demosthenes was not particularly preoccupied with prose rhythm may be inferred from a few items of negative evidence: the remarks made about his style by his contemporary and arch-critic, Aeschines. These are: an obscure reference to Demosthenes' 'odious antitheses' (*Embassy* 4), his penchant for peculiar words (ibid. 40, *In Ctes*. 167) and mannerisms (49); his lame humour (112), his antics on the bema (*In Ctes.* 167) and his long-windedness (ibid. 100). Absent are any references to other aspects of his style. If Demosthenes' use of prose rhythm had been notably pronounced, Aeschines, who, as an ex-actor must have thought himself a connoisseur of poetic diction, might have been expected to make disparaging allusions to it, perhaps accusing him of aping the poets, or the actors (Neoptolemus, Andronicus and Satyrus,)[20] whose help he enlisted to strengthen his powers of delivery. One similarly looks in vain for any references to it in Plutarch and in the author of *Lives of the Ten Orators*. But the silence of these sources is much less significant than the comparative reticence of Demosthenes' most talented and critically aware admirer, Cicero. When he discusses prose rhythm in *Orator*, Cicero has much to say about Isocrates' use of it and his part in its development (37–8, 40, 74–6, 190, 207–8). On Demosthenes' deployment of prose rhythm, on the other hand, he offers a single sentence (234): *cuius non tam vibrarent fulmina illa, nisi numeris contorta ferrentur* ('Those famous thunderbolts of his would not have spun towards their target with such force if they had not been propelled by rhythm'). Even in this isolated allusion, Cicero is implying that Demosthenes used rhythm only in passages where he was seeking special effects. In his discussion of rhythm in *De oratore* (3.182–99), the name of Demosthenes does not appear at all. It therefore seems unlikely that Demosthenes stood out among the post-Isocratean orators in respect of prose rhythm:[21] they all used it to some extent, following the lead of Isocrates, who was not only the pioneer in its deployment but also its prime exponent.

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[19] Isoc. *Techne* (see n. 12); Demetr. *Eloc.* 180; Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 50: … ὥστε μὴ δῆλον εἶναι, ὅτι ἐστὶ μέτρα.

[20] [Plut.] *X orat*. 844F, 845A–B; Plut. *Dem.* 7.1–5.

[21] In spite of its title, D.F. McCabe's *The Prose Rhythm of Demosthenes* (New York, 1981) is concerned not with the analysis of individual Greek texts for their rhythmical or metrical content, but with the application of computer programmes to the counting of long and short syllables, with all the quantitative and textual uncertainties that this involves. Unfortunately, the whole exercise is compromised by his apparent acceptance of the now discredited 'Blass's Law'. But the book should be read by anyone interested in computer-led authorship studies.

We are now in a better position to consider the full implications of Isocrates' remarks about the differences between prose and poetry in *Euagoras* 9–10. After defining the licence permitted to poets in respect of language – they can create their own vocabulary, coining words and using exotic metaphors, and they can colour their verse stylistically in every conceivable way – he draws this sharp contrast:

τοῖς δὲ περὶ τοὺς λόγους οὐδὲν ἔξεστι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ ᾽ ἀποτόμως καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων τοῖς πολιτικοῖς μόνον καὶ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τοῖς περὶ αὐτὰς τὰς πράξεις ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι χρῆσθαι. πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οἱ μὲν μετὰ μέτρων καὶ ῥυθμῶν ἅπαντα ποιοῦσιν, οἱ δ᾽ οὐδενὸς τούτων κοινωνοῦσιν.

Orators, however, cannot deploy such devices. They are restricted to the literal use of the words current in their society, and of ideas that bear upon the subjects they are discussing. Furthermore, whereas the poets compose all their works in metre and rhythm, the orators have no share in any of these refinements.

The final clause of the concluding antithesis is definitive, categorical and uncompromising. Orators, and prose writers in general, cannot use metre and rhythm in their speeches. But Isocrates faced a dilemma. As an aspiring communicator, he was obliged to see himself as competing with others for the attention of listeners and readers, most of whom were seeking entertainment first, edification second.[22] He had to weigh this regrettable preference against his own purpose of propagating his *philosophia*, and he needed to find a style for his discourses which could accommodate both moods in his audiences. To his serious students, he presented the intellectual challenge of the delivery of his ideas through complex periods; and it was this group, who incidentally provided him with his livelihood, that was his primary target. The decorative or cosmetic[23] features which he deployed – alliteration, paromoiosis and the occasional short rhythmical sequence – were included in order to keep the attention of more casual listeners and readers. This order of priorities should be kept in mind when one is assessing the importance of prose rhythm in the writings of Isocrates.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Greek prose writers, Isocrates included, regarded their chosen medium as distinct from poetry. To this general statement may be added some further considerations which might discourage a prose author from introducing one of the salient features of verse liberally into his writings. Poetry was often characterized as 'allusive' or 'indirect' (Pl. *Resp*. 332b, cf. *Tht*. 180c–d), even on occasion 'enigmatic' (Pl. *Alc*. 2.147b).[24] To Aristotle, this was a fault to be avoided, but at the same time he acknowledged that poetical language should be clearly distinguishable from that of prose (*Poet*. 22 1458a). The obscurities resulting from this would be inimical to a writer who was trying to propound difficult ideas lucidly and convincingly.

[22] Isocrates bemoans this human weakness at length in *To Nicocles* 42–9, where he also attacks popular literary taste on a broader front. Men prefer 'the most worthless comedy' (44) and romance to serious thought about real life, and 'delight in such fictions just as spectators enjoy games and contests' (48).

[23] Cf. Cic. *Att*. 2.1.1: *Isocrati myrothecium* ('Isocrates' perfume cabinet', tr. Shackleton Bailey).

[24] See Dover (n. 2), 186.

Again, by making his prose sound like verse, he might lead the listener to suppose that his was a work of fiction and imagination, rather than rational discourse (Juv. 4.35). But his most compelling reason for avoiding the trappings of verse was probably poetry's association with song.[25] One consequence of this for the delivery of oratorical prose was potentially deleterious, even ludicrous, especially when the speaker lacked a sense of decorum. It was a short step from recognizing the 'music of words' to assuming 'the sing-song voice with violent modulations' of the Asiatic rhetoricians of Cicero's day (*inclinata ululantique voce modo Asiatico canere*, [*Orat.* 27]). We can be confident that the studious, retiring Isocrates would not have allowed himself to become implicated in such excesses as this. To him eurhythmia connoted suffusion rather than profusion. The contexts in which he uses the term suggest that he regarded it as a value word, implying critical good taste and moderation. He deployed it to impose balance and order on his style, and to highlight his key ideas, not to turn his discourses into theatrical performances.

It will be pertinent to end with a few summary remarks about the incidence of Greek prose rhythm. In the first place, it is easy to find rhythm in almost any passage; less easy to prove that its author put it there deliberately, and with a stylistic purpose. Further doubts about the status of rhythm in Greek prose generally are raised by the very sketchy treatment seen to have been given to it by Aristotle, and the complete absence of discussion of it from the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*. Finally, Dionysius of Halicarnassus introduces his account of prose rhythm (*Comp.* 18) thus: 'It was certainly no part of my intention to touch upon the subject of metre and rhythm, except in so far as it was necessary to do so'. This would have been a surprising statement if prose rhythm had been as firmly established in his programme as the other subjects which he covers; and his account of it certainly contains errors and inconsistencies.[26] His apparent lack of expertise in it[27] may be attributable to the rudimentary nature of the phenomenon itself, at least as it appears in most prose. The best explanation of Dionysius' reluctance to discuss it might be that prose rhythm was not closely studied by critics because it was not deployed widely by the prose authors on whom they passed their judgements. Modern critics have been too readily tempted to infer Greek usage from the theory of Latin prose rhythm constructed by Cicero (*De or*. 3.173–86, *Orat*. 164–236).[28] It has been seen that Isocrates was a pioneer of prose rhythm, but that he used it

[25] On this association, see Dover (n. 2), 182.

[26] See Dover (n. 2), 179–81. Before Norden expressed his contempt for Dionysius' attempts at prose 'scansion' in his *Die antike Kunstprosa* (1.79–91, 96–7, 104), Roberts (n. 10) found several cases of inexplicable quantities (179, 181, 183–5, 259–63).

[27] So G. Aujac, *Denys d'Halicarnasse: Opuscules rhétoriques III: La Composition stylistique* (Paris, 1981), 125, who regards the statement as an 'aveu de Denys qu'il n'est spécialiste ni de métrique ni de rhythmique'. Perhaps there were no experts in prose rhythm.

[28] Cicero's thorough examination of the subject is unmatched by anything in Greek, and this is a major reason why most modern scholarship has been directed towards the study of Latin prose rhythm. A selection from a large bibliography should include:

C. Zander, *Eurhythmia Ciceronis* (Leipzig, 1914).

Th. Zielinski, *Der constructive Rhythmus in Ciceros Reden. Philologus* Supplementband 18 (Leipzig, 1920).

W. Schmid, *Über die klassische Theorie und Praxis des antiken Prosarhythmus. Hermes* Einzelschrift 12 (Wiesbaden, 1959).

A. Primmer, *Cicero Numerosus : Studien zum antiken Prosarhythmus* (Vienna, 1968).

with discretion.[29] This finding should lower expectations of encountering its wide occurrence in the Greek prose authors who came after him.

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[29] See Cic. *Orat.* 190, who criticizes Hieronymus of Rhodes for using procrustean methods when identifying the sustained rhythms of verse in Isocrates' writings.