

# Paideia and Rhetoric/Philosophy in Isocrates' Cyprian Speeches: Rhetoric of Exhortation Enabled by Textual Dissemination in the Literacy

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This essay offers a performative reading of Isocrates' Cyprian Speeches, *To Nicocles* (BCE365), *Nicocles* (BCE374/3), and *Evagoras* (BCE372-365), as his theorization of rhetoric/philosophy that critically intervenes into the polity of monarchy and democracy. In those speeches, as part of the King's education, Isocrates gave his exhortations of philosophy/rhetoric to Cyprian King, Nicocles, who had once been Isocrates' pupil. Against the backdrop of historical transformation from orality to literacy in the 5th and 4th century BCE—wherein Isocrates engaged both in the education of Greek youth at his academy and in writing political pamphlets and speeches, ideological texts, to disseminate to Hellas—words and written texts gained a new cultural status that enabled writers as well as readers to self-reflexively critique their own *doxa*. This newly acquired status became the driving force behind the dissemination of Isocrates' ideology. By means of this new textual power of literacy, Isocrates as well as other intellectuals attempted political critiques through productions of written text, propagated throughout the Hellas. In this essay, I present Isocrates' Cyprian speeches as examples of such political texts, and his exhortation to philosophy/rhetoric to the King became political activity that constituted the King as the subject of philosophy/rhetoric. This essay analyzes the ways in which Nicocles becomes the King in the rhetorical constitution of power given by Isocrates' texts. Isocrates' rhetorical texts, aiming at philosophical/rhetorical education, gave rise to the King (and democratic citizens) as those who can conduct deliberation and self-reflexively interrogate his (their) own ideological prejudice by means of the culture of literacy. By analyzing the texts in which the King emerges as the subject who becomes capable of philosophical/rhetorical deliberation and of self-critiquing absolute monarchy (as well as demagogy for democratic citizens) by *sōphrosynē* or self-restraint, I hope to reveal Isocrates' rhetoric of exhortation that brings power through the texts to the King as its subject.