individualism of lyric poetry. All these phenomena—and one could add many others, such as the monologues of heroes in epic poetry—have some vague connection with the creation of historiography and biography, but they belong to earlier centuries. They are neither contemporary with the rise of historiography and biography nor with each other. Either taken one by one or taken together, they do not explain the appearance of the first historical and biographical books in the fifth century.

For those who care to understand the mood which characterizes the little we know of biographical research in the fifth century, the extant fragments of Ion and Stesimbrotus are better guides. We can observe curiosity for the ways of eminent men, taste for the adroit answer, dislike for political opponents. With more diffidence and reserve, and therefore with fewer personal dislikes, the same mood is to be found in Herodotus.

III The Fourth Century

I

As soon as we turn to the fourth century the change is obvious. We no longer have to explore remote corners to find evidence of interest in biography and autobiography. We no longer have to ask why the contemporaries of great Greek men were so little interested in them. The evidence for interest in biography and autobiography becomes abundant and permeates all aspects of literature. Funerary monuments confirm this interest by their presentation of intimate personal and family life. I shall only recall the well-known fact that in the fourth century B.C. epigrams on tombs contain more biographical details than those of former centuries. Age, place of birth, name of father, cause of death become more frequent elements of an epitaph. Thus Asclepiades Maeander is presented as a successful doctor who followed the profession of his father Maeander.[1] In the joint monument of Philagros of Angele and Hegilla daughter of Philagros, the daughter gives her age and says that her husband will bear witness to her virtues (Peek 107). In an epigram from Thebes young Timocles, son of Asopichos, has his victories in the horse races exactly recorded (Peek 95). Visitors to sanctuaries recorded their experiences on stone. More particularly the patients in the sanctuaries of Asclepius were talkative about

1 W. Peek, *Griech. Grabgedichte* (1962) no. 82.

their experiences. This later developed into the autobiographical effusions of Aelius Aristides.[2]

On the other hand, the attempts at biography and autobiography in the first part of the fourth century do not seem to be a direct continuation of the analogous attempts of the fifth century. I speak here with great hesitation because we have seen how little is known about biography and autobiography in the fifth century. But three or four facts seem to have emerged from our search. In the fifth century there was at least one attempt to write the life of a man: this was the biography of Heraclides of Mylasa by Skylax. The same Skylax produced some sort of autobiographical account in his book on his travels. Ion of Chios also wrote a book of personal recollections in his *'Επιδημίαι*. There was a great deal of research into the biography of poets of the past; and it is possible that Xanthus of Lydia gave a biographical sketch of Empedocles. Now we do not know of anything of this kind for the first half of the fourth century. One possible explanation of such discontinuities is that we are the victims of our imperfect information. It is possible that there never were any biographies of Heraclides and of Empedocles in the fifth century and that we have been misled by our sources; alternatively, it is possible that our sources are silent about similar attempts of the early fourth century which constituted the link between fifth-century and late fourth-century biography and autobiography. But our evidence, as far as it goes, really points to a different conclusion: namely that the fifth-century experiments in biography came to a sudden end and that in the fourth century biography and autobiography made a fresh start. The situation is not without analogies in

[2] The inscriptions of the sanctuary of Asclepius in Epidaurus are, however, not autobiographical accounts, but a semi-official registration of miracles. For such books of *'Επιφάνειαι* see R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros* (1931) 49. But even in the fourth century B.C. there were registrations of miracles in the first person. See for instance Aeschines' epigram, *Anth. Pal.* 6.330 (Herzog, p. 39) and Isyllus' poem E, where the first and third persons alternate (U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Isyllos von Epidauros* [1886] 22–29; *IG* IV², 128.57–79).

other cultures. In England Cavendish's life of Wolsey and Roper's life of More represented the foundations of a new tradition of biography. But the subsequent Elizabethan Age was poor in memorable biographies. Francis Bacon complained: "I do find it strange . . . that the writing of lives should be no more frequent." The details will emerge from our survey of the biographical and autobiographical explorations of the fourth century before Alexander the Great. But some of the general features of the new situation can easily be indicated beforehand and related to the new political, social, and intellectual climate.

In the fourth century individual politicians found themselves in a position of power very different from that of their predecessors in the previous century. In the fifth century Miltiades, Themistocles, Leonidas, even Pericles and Cleon, had been the servants of the state to which they belonged. The tyrants of Sicily had been the exception, which disappeared in the course of the century. In the fourth century the initiative passes to states which built up their new power under the guidance of individual leaders. The conservative states, such as Sparta and Athens, have to adapt themselves to the new situation. Hence the new power of professional military commanders; hence ultimately the emergence of a professional politician like Demosthenes who cannot rely on the steady support of his city as Pericles had done, but has to establish or re-establish his authority in a succession of crises within his own city. In the fourth century Lysander, Conon, Agesilaus, Dionysius the Elder, Epaminondas, Philip of Macedon, and ultimately Demosthenes and Alexander the Great have a personal political line. They represent, as individuals, a greater source of hope and fear than the Athenian and Spartan politicians of the fifth century.

The new trends in philosophy and rhetoric emphasized the importance of individual education, performance, self-control. We have denied that the origins of biography are to be exclusively connected with Socrates and the Socratics. We have tried to show that the most ancient evidence for Greek

biographical and autobiographical work is earlier than Socrates. This has thrown doubt also on F. Leo's thesis that Hellenistic biography is a product of the Aristotelian school and therefore in some sense a Socratic product. But this does not mean denying the obvious—namely that the Socratics were the leaders in biographical experiments in the fourth century.

II

The Socratics were infuriating in their own time. They are still infuriating in our time. They are never so infuriating as when approached from the point of view of biography. We like biography to be true or false, honest or dishonest. Who can use such terminology for Plato's *Phaedo* or *Apology*, or even for Xenophon's *Memorabilia*? We should all like to dismiss Plato, who cared too much about the bigger truth to be concerned with the smaller factual accuracy. We should like to save Xenophon the honest mediocre historian, who told the facts as he knew them best, by damning Xenophon the Socratic memorialist, who lost interest in historical correctness. But the fact we have to face is that biography acquired a new meaning when the Socratics moved to that zone between truth and fiction which is so bewildering to the professional historian. We shall not understand what biography was in the fourth century if we do not recognize that it came to occupy an ambiguous position between fact and imagination. Let us be in no doubt. With a man like Plato, and even with a smaller but by no means simpler man like Xenophon, this is a consciously chosen ambiguity. The Socratics experimented in biography, and the experiments were directed towards capturing the potentialities rather than the realities of individual lives. Socrates, the main subject of their considerations (there were other subjects, such as Cyrus), was not so much the real Socrates as the potential Socrates. He was not a dead man whose life could be recounted. He was the guide to territories as yet unexplored. Remember Phaedo's words: "I thought that in going to the other world he could not be without a divine call, and that he would be happy, if any man ever was, when he arrived there; and therefore I did not pity him as might have seemed natural at such an hour" (transl. B. Jowett). In Socratic biography we meet for the first time that conflict between the superior and the inferior truth which has remained a major problem for the student of the Gospels or of the lives of Saints. Nor is this the only type of ambiguity we discover in fourth-century biography. If philosophy introduced the search for the soul, rhetoric introduced the search for the improving word: anything can appear better or more than it is, if the right word is used. Plato sensed his enemy in Isocrates and the enmity was cordially reciprocated.

The fourth century is a time of strong, self-willed personalities which offer plenty of good opportunities to biographers. But it is also a time of divergent and conflicting explorations of the limits of human life, in terms of philosophy or in terms of rhetoric.

Both Plato and Xenophon apparently created new types of biographical and autobiographical narration: Xenophon especially must be regarded as a pioneer experimenter in biographical forms. Behind them there is the problematic personality of Antisthenes—an older man who, if we knew him better, might easily appear an original and powerful contributor to biography. Apart from writing two dialogues on Cyrus, which may have influenced Xenophon's *Cyropaedia,* Antisthenes composed a book (perhaps a dialogue) on Alcibiades. This book certainly discussed details of Alcibiades' life, especially his relation to Socrates. It is going too far to describe it as a biography of Alcibiades, as Mullach did in the *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*; but it contributed to Alcibiades' biography. Antisthenes also wrote an attack against Athenian politicians in general, which was inevitably full of biographical details.[3] Nor must we forget that Theo-

[3] See *Antisthenis Fragmenta,* collegit F. Decleva Caizzi (1966), for texts and bibliography.

pompus, the first historian to give a large place to biography, was an admirer of Antisthenes, whose skill he praised and whom he declared capable of winning over whomever he wanted by means of agreeable discourse (Diogenes Laertius 6.14).

Yet Theopompus was also, and even more, a pupil of Isocrates; and Isocrates has his part in the history of biography. In his turn Isocrates cannot be separated from the general trends of rhetorical and forensic eloquence which contributed more than is usually admitted to the technique of biographical and autobiographical accounts. I hope I am not surprising anyone if I say that I shall later treat Demosthenes' *De corona* as an autobiographical document. The technique for winning lawsuits and making political propaganda relied generally on the ability to present one's own and somebody else's life in a suitable light. The earliest extant biography of Alcibiades is in the speech Isocrates wrote for Alcibiades' son about 397 B.C.: the speech "On the Team of Horses." Later Isocrates added something of his own. He proposed a system of education which selected pupils according to inborn qualities and trained them according to a precise ideal of intellectual and moral perfection. He made it clear that eloquence was in itself productive of moral excellence. He also claimed for eloquence the old prerogative of poetry, which was to confer immortality by discovering and praising virtue. He defended this ideal in an autobiographical speech, "About the Exchange."

Isocrates' *περὶ ἀντιδόσεως* was never uttered before a court of law: it was a rhetorical exercise. But neither were the speeches which Plato and Xenophon put into the mouth of Socrates in self-defense ever uttered, at least not in that form. A conventional form of eloquence was used for new experiments. Being conventional, it set certain clear limits to the experiments. The biographic and autobiographic experiments of the fourth century see a man in relation to his profession, to his political community, to his school: they are portraits of public figures, not of private lives. The transitional character of these compositions is undeniable. The

picture becomes even more complex if we remember that Isocrates was conscious of turning into prose that art of encomium for which Pindar had been richly paid (see *Antidosis* 166). Xenophon, on the other hand, must have had the portraits by Euripides, *Suppliants* (860ff), in his mind when he wrote the portraits of the dead generals in the *Anabasis*. The interplay between new political and social ideals and old forms is an essential feature of fourth-century writing. At the same time the search for rules of life had to reckon with the new power of words. Plato's fear of being overpowered by rhetoric is as real as Isocrates' fear of having his words controlled by philosophers.

III

Isocrates' *Euagoras* was written about 370 B.C. Isocrates was not new to biographical sketches in speeches. I have already referred to the portrait of Alcibiades he drew in the speech "On the Team of Horses" about 397 B.C. But the *Euagoras* was something more ambitious. He considered it to be the first attempt at a prose encomium by a contemporary. Aristotle apparently did not accept this claim. In the first book of his *Rhetorics* (1368a17) he implicitly claimed priority for an obscure encomium for the Thessalian Hippolochus who, as Wilamowitz said in one of his most temperamental *Lesefrüchte*,[4] was the boy for whom the courtesan Lais lost her life at the beginning of the fourth century (Plutarch *Amatorius* 21.767F). But Isocrates may not have been conversant with this Thessalian product. Isocrates described Euagoras as an enquiring mind, a man who never thought of injustice and gained friends by generosity. The encomium is organized in chronological order but cannot properly be described as a biography of Euagoras from birth to death. While the reactions of Conon, of the king of Persia, and of the Spartans to Euagoras' achievements are told at some length, there is hardly one episode of Euagoras' life that can be said to be

[4] *Hermes* 35 (1900) 533 = *Kl. Schriften* IV 111.

narrated. Isocrates combines rather ineffectually a static description of Euagoras' character with a chronological account of what other people did to Euagoras.

A few years later, about 360, Xenophon took *Euagoras* as a model for his *Agesilaus*. He had known Agesilaus personally; he had written or was going to write about him in his Hellenic History: the relation between the encomium of Agesilaus and the relevant sections of the *Hellenica* is notoriously a matter of dispute. The very fact that he wrote twice on Agesilaus shows that he made a distinction between the historical account of the *Hellenica* and the encomiastic (I do not say biographical) account of the pamphlet. He described the latter as an ἔπαινος and an encomium, namely an appreciation of the virtues and glory of the dead king. He therefore did for Agesilaus what Isocrates had done for the dead Euagoras. Like Isocrates before him, he must have been conscious of turning into prose the traditional poetic eulogy of a dead man; and he must also have shared Isocrates' belief or illusion that there was no clear link between his encomium and the prose funeral speeches for dead men of earlier times.

Xenophon, however, was not the man to follow Isocrates blindly. To begin with, he was much more interested in Agesilaus' actual achievements than Isocrates had been in Euagoras' deeds. He also had greater historical sense and experience than Isocrates. He knew, for instance, that notable sayings were normally not considered worth presenting in a book of history (*Hellenica* 2.3.56). We shall later see that he may have experimented with character drawing in the *Anabasis*. The untidy mixture of static eulogy and chronological account was not easily acceptable to the historian of the *Anabasis* and of the *Hellenica*. He therefore divided the encomium of Agesilaus into two parts. The first was written in the chronological order suggested by Isocrates, but was more factual. We can even say that it was much nearer to what later became a conventional biography. The second part was a nonchronological, systematic review of Agesilaus' virtues. As Xenophon explains at the beginning of chapter 3, after

having given the record of the king's deeds he is now attempting to show the virtue that was in his soul. In arranging the praise of Agesilaus' virtues—"piety, justice, self-control, courage, wisdom, patriotism, urbanity"—he follows a scheme going back to Gorgias and adopted by other Socratics. There were also contingent reasons for such a systematic review of Greek virtues as typified by Agesilaus. Around 360 B.C. Xenophon was anxious to give an anti-Persian slant to his characterization of the Greek king: "I will next say how his behaviour contrasted with the *alazoneia*—the vain-boasting—of the Persian king." But the dichotomy between the chronological survey of events and the systematic analysis of inherent qualities was an attempt to solve one of the most difficult problems facing a biographer: how to define a character without sacrificing the variety of events of an individual life. When we talk of *Life and Works* or of *The Man and his Work* we are still within the borders of Xenophon's dichotomy.

The same Xenophon wrote character sketches of contemporaries in his *Anabasis*. This work was certainly composed before the *Agesilaus*, but its relation to the *Euagoras* is much more difficult to define. The portraits of Proxenus and Meno appear to be written in the antithetic style dear to Isocrates (*Anabasis* 2.6.16–29), whereas the other two portraits of Cyrus (1.9) and of Clearchus (2.6.1–15) are stylistically independent. Ivo Bruns, who called attention to this difference,[5] suggested that Xenophon had just written the portrait of Clearchus when Isocrates' *Euagoras* came into his hands: he hastened to imitate Isocrates in the portraits of Proxenus and Meno which follow that of Clearchus. This is too good to be true. It would of course imply a date for the *Anabasis* later than the publication of the *Euagoras*—that is, a terminus post quem of about 370 B.C. But even apart from the fact that there are more solid arguments for believing the contrary—namely that Isocrates had read the *Anabasis* when he published the *Panegyricus* in 380 B.C. (*Anabasis* 2.4.4 ~ *Panegyricus*

[5] *Literar. Portr.*, 137ff.

149)—I am not convinced that the influence of Isocrates' *Euagoras* on the *Anabasis* exists. These portraits are not *encomia*. If anything, the portrait of Meno is a ψόγος, a censure. Taken together, the four portraits represent four different types of men. Cyrus is more complex: a loyal friend and a ruthless enemy, brave in war, skilful in administration. His chief quality is loyalty and generosity towards friends. The typological interest is directly emphasized in the case of Clearchus: "Now such a conduct as this, in my opinion, reveals a man fond of war." Proxenus is the ambitious man in a good sense, Meno in the bad sense. It is worth noticing that even in the brief portrait of Cyrus great importance is attributed to his education. There is here a clear indication of the interest which Xenophon was to develop later in writing about the education of the other Cyrus, *Cyropaedia*. My tentative conclusion is that Xenophon had already shown an independent inclination to draw character before he came across Isocrates' *Euagoras*. The portraits of the *Anabasis* are Xenophon's own, and the influence of Isocrates on the *Agesilaus* is secondary.

Xenophon made a third experiment in biographical writing with his *Apomnemoneumata*. We call them *Memorabilia,* the arbitrary title given to them by Johannes Leonclavius in 1569. The correct translation of *Apomnemoneumata* is *Commentarii*, which is the title given to Xenophon's work by Aulus Gellius (14.3): "libros quos dictorum atque factorum Socratis commentarios composuit." The unity of the work, which was disputed in the past, is now hardly in doubt. H. Erbse made it clear that the whole work, not only the first two chapters of the first book, is a defense of Socrates in a legal style, which has its parallels in Lysias 16.[6] Xenophon probably had in mind not the real accusers of Socrates, but the sophist Polycrates, who in about 393 B.C. had attacked Socrates' memory.[7]

[6] *Hermes* 89 (1961) 257.

[7] J. Humbert, *Polycratès, L'accusation de Socrate et le Gorgias* (1930); P. Treves, *RE* XXI 1736–1752; E. Gebhardt, *Polykrates' Anklage gegen Sokrates* (diss. Frankfurt 1957).

Polycrates had produced an imaginary judicial speech against Socrates, and Xenophon answers in a judicially acceptable form. After having concluded the defense in the first two chapters of book 1, he says at the beginning of chapter 3: "I propose to show how Socrates helped his companions both by his deeds and his words, and in order to do so, I shall relate all that I remember about them." This corresponds to the rule enunciated by Lysias: "In the *dokimasiai* one is justified in giving an account of the whole life." But in taking advantage of a legal device, Xenophon exploits it to an extent which makes it impossible to call his work an apology for Socrates. The report, the *Memorabilia* or *Commentarii*, became far more important than the apology.

Two questions interest us: whether Xenophon created the new literary genre of the *Memorabilia* and whether he intended to preserve real conversations of Socrates for posterity. We do not know of any *Memorabilia* before Xenophon. The fact that they combine a defense of Socrates with recollections of Socrates seems to speak for their originality.

Collections of sayings of philosophers and wise men had undoubtedly circulated in the fifth century. As we have seen, sayings of the Seven Wise Men were known before Socrates. Herodotus quotes some of them and knows that there were variants in the tradition (1.27). The popular wisdom of Aesop was known in the fifth century (Herodotus 2.134; Aristophanes *Wasps* 1446). It is also possible that written collections of Pythagorean sayings existed before Aristoxenus.[8] But a collection of philosophical conversations as given by Xenophon is another matter, for which I cannot quote an exact parallel in Greece. What we can say is that Xenophon became a model for later compilations. Zeno collected *Memorabilia* of Crates (Diogenes Laertius 7.4). Persaeus similarly tried to preserve recollections of Zeno and Stilpo in convivial dialogues which were apparently also called *Memorabilia* (Athenaeus

[8] On this complex question it will be enough to refer to C. J. De Vogel, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (1966).

4.162). This tradition has given us Epictetus' speeches, *Memorabilia*, or, as Stobaeus called them, *Apomnemoneumata Epictetou* (*Florilegium* 6.58–60, 29.84).

It is even more difficult to decide whether Xenophon intended to present real speeches. The question of Xenophon's intention is of course different from the question of whether Xenophon, even if he had intended to give the substance of real conversations in which Socrates had a leading part, was in a condition to fulfil his intention. The more one looks at the speeches, the less one can believe that Xenophon really intended to preserve the memory of the real Socrates. We may stretch our belief to accept that Socrates was waiting for the arrival of Xenophon to lecture his own son Lamprocles on his duties towards his mother (2.2). But the conversation between Socrates and Pericles the Younger is placed in the year in which the latter was a strategos (407 B.C.), though it reflects the situation of the Theban hegemony about 370 B.C. (3.5). The best research from K. Joël to O. Gigon has shown that what Xenophon does is to discuss topics which had been the subject of debate by other Socratics before him.[9] If Xenophon was not exactly the cynic Joël envisaged in his classic book, he learned perhaps more from Antisthenes' writings than from Socrates by word of mouth. All the Socratics were involved in elaborate developments of Socrates' thought which bore little resemblance to the original. The paradoxical conclusion from our point of view is that in the so-called *Memorabilia* Xenophon created or perfected a biographical form—the report of conversations preceded by a general introduction to the character of the main speaker—but in actual fact used this form for what amounted to fiction.

This brings us to a point which becomes even more evident in Xenophon's greatest contribution to biography, the

[9] K. Joël, *Der echte und der Xenophontische Sokrates*, 3 vols. (1893–1901); O. Gigon, *Sokrates: Sein Bild in Dichtung und Geschichte* (1947); J. Luccioni, *Xénophon et le Socratisme* (1953); A. H. Chroust, *Socrates: Man and Myth* (1957), where other bibl. Cf. E. Salin, *Platon und die griechische Utopie* (1921).

Cyropaedia. The *Cyropaedia* is indeed the most accomplished biography we have in classical Greek literature. It is a presentation of the life of a man from beginning to end and gives pride of place to his education and moral character. Nevertheless it is a paedagogical novel. The *Cyropaedia* was not, and probably never claimed to be, a true account of the life of a real person. Like Ctesias before him, Xenophon took advantage of his oriental subject to disregard historical truth. He was not the first of the Socratics to do so, if we may assume that Antisthenes' *Cyrus* preceded Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* in the same direction. The existence of previous Socratic writings of the same type may explain why Xenophon felt no need to warn his readers about the fictitious character of his biography: this was understood. But we shall never be able to tell exactly—even less than in the cases of Ctesias and Theopompus—how much is conscious fabrication of details and how much is elaboration of a tradition already rich in fictional elements. Xenophon had personal knowledge of the Persian state and of Persian institutions, and especially of the Persian army. He had Greek sources to supplement his information. He obviously tried to look plausible and well-informed. The last chapter of the *Cyropaedia* shows that he was concerned with the decline of the power of Persia just as in the *Constitution of Sparta* he had shown his concern for the decline of Sparta.

The papyri have definitely shown that erotic oriental romances existed in the first century after Christ, the date of the three extant fragments of the Ninus romance. The Ninus romance itself must be earlier than the date of the earliest papyri and goes back to 100 B.C. at least. We have therefore good reason to believe in the existence of a Hellenistic novel of oriental character. What interests us is that it claimed Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as its model. It was remarked long ago that the *Suda* lexicon knows three Xenophons as authors of erotic romances, of which the alleged author of the extant story *Habrocomas and Anthia* is one. It seems probable that the name Xenophon in all these cases is a pseudonym or *nom de*

plume, which shows the popularity of the writer of the *Cyropaedia* among writers and readers of novels. The *Cyropaedia* included the episode of Abradatas and Panthea, the classic example of a love story. Xenophon himself would have been surprised to know that he had become the great master and model of erotic stories: his *Cyropaedia* was highly moral. But this was the price he had to pay for producing the first biography, which was no biography at all, being a mixture of facts and fancies to communicate a philosophic message.[10]

The *Cyropaedia* confirms a suspicion which the *Memorabilia* had already suggested: namely that true biography was preceded or at least inspiringly accompanied by fiction. The suspicion is reinforced when we think of Herodotus and even more of Ctesias. If Herodotus had honestly tried to separate what he could vouch for from what he could not, Ctesias had none of these preoccupations. He represented an uneasy compromise between history and historical novel which influenced Xenophon.[11] We might easily extend this consideration to Theopompus, who included in the *Philippica* a long excursus on θαυμάσια, on wondrous happenings, which gave a great deal of novelistic detail about religious prophets —Zoroaster, Epimenides, Silenus, Bakis. Theopompus was resolved to outbid Ctesias and perhaps Xenophon.[12]

This point is important for the understanding of ancient biography at large even after the fourth century B.C. The borderline between fiction and reality was thinner in biography than in ordinary historiography. What readers expected in biography was probably different from what they expected in political history. They wanted information about the education, the love affairs, and the character of their

[10] E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman* (2nd ed. 1900) 372 n. 2; B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances*, (1967) 168. On Xenophon and the novel see also E. Schwartz, *Fünf Vorträge über den griechischen Roman* (reprint 1943); L. Giangrande, *Eranos* 60 (1962) 132–159.

[11] Bibl. in my essay on Ctesias, *Quarto Contributo* (1969) 181–212.

[12] Bibl. in W. R. Connor, *Theopompus and Fifth-Century Athens* (1968).

heroes. But these things are less easily documented than wars and political reforms. If biographers wanted to keep their public, they had to resort to fiction. Socratic philosophy and Isocratean rhetoric joined hands in encouraging the introduction of fiction into biography.

I purposely refrain from probing into this matter more deeply, and turn from biography to autobiography.

IV

The first name we meet in connection with fourth-century autobiography is again that of Xenophon. His *Anabasis* is for us the prototype of commentaries on a campaign written by one of the leading generals. He may have been preceded by his colleague Sophaenetus of Stymphalus, whose *Anabasis* is quoted by Stephanus Byzantius: but our ignorance of Sophaenetus is complete. E. Schwartz and F. Jacoby think of Sophaenetus' *Anabasis* as possibly a later forgery.[13] A satisfactory analysis of Xenophon's work in historiographical terms does not appear to exist. His *Anabasis* is under the influence of fifth-century travel literature in its geographical sections: we have seen that travel literature inevitably had an autobiographical character. In the matter of military campaigns Xenophon has learned something from Thucydides and perhaps also from Ctesias. But he describes military campaigns with a strongly subjective approach and a clearly apologetic tone: he had his enemies. To redress the balance he writes in the third person.[14] He apparently also uses the device of attributing his book to a non-existent Themistogenes. The *Anabasis* became a model both for its autobiographical character and for the effort to disguise it. The memorialistic literature of later times, to begin with

[13] E. Schwartz in A. von Mess, *RhM* 61 (1906) 372 n. 3; F. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 108–109, vol. II D, p. 349. Bux in *RE* III A 1008–1013 is unconvincing.

[14] The admirable excursus by E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (1923, reprint 1956) 313–331, on the first and third persons in historical accounts has not been replaced. A new comprehensive survey of the texts would be desirable.

Caesar, owes much to this double, partly contradictory, approach.

A very different kind of autobiographical production is the apologetic speech before a court of law. The famous model was the speech by Antiphon which Thucydides admired so much. It is all lost but for a fragment in a Geneva papyrus. What an authentic apology of this kind could be like is shown by Demosthenes' *De corona*, admittedly a later development of this genre: it was produced eighty years after Antiphon's speech in 330 B.C. Demosthenes chose the occasion for a complete apology for his anti-Macedonian policy. Part of the speech is inevitably nothing more than a personal attack by Demosthenes on his rival and accuser Aeschines. The rest is an attempt to make the audience realize under what conditions he, Demosthenes, had acted. Demosthenes never allows himself or his audience to forget that they have been defeated. But by placing his decisions in the proper context, he presents them as the only ones compatible with the honour of Athens and of himself. As he explains, it was inconceivable that Athens "should sink to such cowardice as by a spontaneous, voluntary act to surrender her liberty to Philip . . . The only remaining and the necessary policy was to resist with justice all his unjust designs" (69). Thus Demosthenes provides fragments of his autobiography against the background of the Athenian resistance to Macedon. He searches his own past. He has to defend himself and therefore the results of his search are predetermined. Yet one feels that his question—whether an alternative conduct was morally possible—is not a rhetorical one. The fascination of the *De corona* lies in its basic sincerity. The speech is autobiographical not only because it deals with episodes of Demosthenes' life but because it is unified by a strange, powerful, tantalizing examination of the whole of his past.

The real apologetic speech was bound to produce the artificial apology, the speech written not for a trial but for home reading in defense either of somebody else or of oneself. Neither Plato's nor Xenophon's Apologies of Socrates were

ever uttered. Though presented as having been composed and pronounced by Socrates, they were in fact written by his pupils long after Socrates' death. They are biographical sketches disguised as autobiographical sketches. They show Socrates aware of what either Plato or Xenophon knew. We shall never know the exact relation of these two documents to Socrates' true speeches. Of course Plato's picture does not agree with that of Xenophon and is incomparably more profound; but both pictures have their limits fixed by the true terms of the indictment against Socrates. The fiction is anchored to truth: the pseudo-autobiography must be true biography to a certain extent.

Isocrates had Plato's pseudo-autobiography of Socrates in mind when he wrote his speech "About the Exchange" (*περὶ ἀντιδόσεως*, *Antidosis*) in about 354 B.C. But as an apologetic autobiography it is nevertheless authentic enough. Isocrates recounts his career as an educator and defends himself. Plato's *Apology*, a fictional speech and fictional autobiography of Socrates, is therefore the model for Isocrates' fictional speech, though the latter is authentic autobiography.

Isocrates' desire to play the part of Socrates in the fictional trial for which he wrote "About the Exchange" is indisputable. He thinks or imagines that, like Socrates, he has been accused of having corrupted Athenian youth by his educational methods: the accusation of tax evasion, for which he had really been impeached some time before, had only been a pretext. The ludicrous side of Isocrates' playing Socrates is so obvious that it is unnecessary to dwell on it. Isocrates was by now a very old man, and his sense of humour had not improved with the years. But he was still capable of new things, and what he did in this speech was new. He presented his life as an educator and as a writer of political speeches in an original way. He inserted an anthology of his other speeches into this speech. Furthermore, he was able to connect his educational activity very closely with Athenian politics in a way that no Socratic could have done, because Socrates had been prevented by his *daemon* from taking an active part in

Athenian politics. The speech as an apology for one's own literary activity within the context of public life was to inspire later autobiographical self-defenses. Libanius' so-called autobiography is the best known direct imitation of Isocrates' "About the Exchange,"[15] but Isocrates was in Cicero's mind when he wrote his *Brutus*.

The Socratics produced not only famous apologetic speeches which amounted to biography, though purporting to be autobiography: they also produced apologetic letters. The question we have to ask immediately is whether Plato's *Letter 7*, the greatest autobiographical letter of antiquity, is a real autobiography or a biographical letter disguised as autobiographical. Did a pupil of Plato write Plato's *Letter 7* just as Plato wrote Socrates' *Apology*? The question, needless to say, has been discussed ad nauseam. The latest study by Ludwig Edelstein is the most powerful plea I know of for the nonauthenticity of the letter.[16] The theory of nonauthenticity does not make an essential difference to the date of composition. Edelstein dates what he takes to be a forgery between 345 and 335 B.C., which represents a maximum of twenty years later than the date we would assign to the letter if it were authentic. The real question is the one I have mentioned: whether the letter is true autobiography or biography disguised as autobiography.

Two arguments make me inclined to take the letter as authentic, though I realize that, in strict logic, they are not decisive. The first argument is that Plato had authentic models for his fictional *Apology* of Socrates, but we do not

[15] On Isocrates, H. Peter, *Wahrheit und Kunst: Geschichtschreibung und Plagiat im Klassischen Altertum* (1911) 144–151 is worth remembering: the whole book is relevant. On Libanius, A. F. Norman, *Libanius' Autobiography (Oration I)*, 1965; cf. also the German translation with commentary of Libanius 1–5 by P. Wolf (1967).

[16] *Plato's Seventh Letter* (1966), partly based on H. Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (1945): cf. the review by M. Isnardi Parente, *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 22 (1967) 90–94. K. von Fritz, *Platon in Sizilien* (1968), which appeared after my lectures had been delivered, defends the authenticity of the letter. Among earlier studies notice H. Gomperz, *Platons Selbstbiographie* (1928); G. Pasquali, *Le lettere di Platone* (1938); A. Maddalena, *Platone: Lettere* (1948).

know of any autobiographical letter comparable to Plato's *Seventh Letter* before Plato. I am reluctant to admit that forgery preceded reality in the matter of autobiographical letters. The letter seems to me an exceptional creation by an exceptional man, namely Plato. The second argument is that in terms of political history the *Seventh Letter* does not make much sense after Timoleon's success in Syracuse. Edelstein thinks that, when the author of *Letter 7* expressed his fears about the decline of the Greek population in Sicily, he knew of Timoleon's repopulation policy. But the dramatic appeal of *Letter 7* and the even more dramatic one on the same subject in *Letter 8* are intelligible only if prior to Timoleon. They explain why Timoleon had to act. It is even conceivable that Timoleon was inspired to act by Plato. I am much more hesitant about the philosophic sections of the letter. I must believe a great Platonic scholar like Edelstein—and of course his predecessors—when he tells me that Plato says something very un-Platonic in the *Seventh Letter*. And yet I am not convinced that for a letter to be un-Platonic is evidence of its not having been written by Plato. We have no other comparable letter by Plato and we cannot say how he would have written about his philosophical ideas in a context which was not one of philosophic research, but of personal self-defense and of practical policy. We may remind ourselves that K. Latte persuaded many scholars by his observation that Sallust's letters are not authentic because they are so Sallustian.[17] May we not suspect that the converse is also true, that Plato's *Letter 7* is authentic because it is so un-Platonic? Besides, old philosophers tend to prepare surprises for their students by saying new and unexpected, even embarrassing, things. Old Kant, old Bergson, old Croce are examples. Connoisseurs of Croce asked themselves more than once in Croce's last period whether what he wrote was true Croce. Like Giorgio Pasquali, I am struck by the series of depressing admissions which *Letter 7* contains. Plato admits to having been much

[17] *Journ. Rom. Studies* 27 (1937) 300.

nearer to Dionysius than to Dio. He recognizes his inability to defend Dio's material interests. He admits that in the meeting at Olympia in 360 he virtually refused to support Dio. This is a dignified and total acknowledgement of failure which is hard to conceive from the pen of a disciple of Plato, whereas it is entirely in keeping with Plato's courage to face his own failures.

Thus I believe that Plato's *Letter 7* is autobiography and not biography: it is by Plato and not by some younger contemporary interested in Plato. In any case it is a remarkable attempt to combine reflections on eternal problems and personal experiences. We have neither the letters (if letters they were) of Empedocles to Pausanias nor those of Alcmaeon of Croton (Diogenes Laertius 8.60 and 83), and we know too little about the epistolography of the Hellenistic period. Autobiographical letters of the fourth century such as the letters of Timonidas of Leucas to Speusippus on the expedition of Dio (Plutarch *Dio* 35) probably covered only political events without touching on intellectual experiences. We cannot, therefore, see the exact place of Plato's letter in the history of ancient autobiographical production. But one vaguely feels the Platonic precedent in Epicurus, Seneca, and perhaps St. Paul. The letter as a conveyor of basic experiences of one's own life was created in the fourth century B.C., at least as far as the Greeks were concerned; and Plato seems to have played a conspicuous part in the creation.[18]

V

The importance that biographical and autobiographical experiments assumed in the fourth century is confirmed by the interplay of biography and historiography in Theopompus' *Philippica*. Even the title shows that Theopompus abandoned the Thucydidean scheme he had followed in the

[18] To my knowledge the survey by J. Sykutris, "Epistolographie," in *RE* Suppl. 5, 186–220, is still unsurpassed. On St. Paul, P. Wendland, *Die urchristlichen Literaturformen* (2nd–3rd ed. 1912) 342–346.

Hellenica and organized his account of contemporary events around a person: Philip of Macedon. The surviving fragments of the work, however insufficient, show what part Philip's virtues and vices played in Theopompus' history. Theopompus declared that Philip was a great man, the greatest man of Europe. Yet Philip had damaged himself and his cause by private vices. The emphasis on biography implied attention to psychology and gave a strong moral tone to historiography.[19] As Dionysius of Halicarnassus observed, judges in Hades must conduct their trials in the style of Theopompus (*Letter to Pompey* 6).

Within the general structure of his work Theopompus inserted long excursuses with many biographical details. This applies especially to the end of book 10 dedicated to Athenian demagogues. What Theopompus had to say about Athenian politicians was a gift to later biographers. We can still notice one palpable case of imitation: Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch talk about the princely style of Cimon in almost the same terms. Neither of them quotes Theopompus, but we have a verbatim report from Theopompus' book 10 in Athenaeus 12.533a–c which leaves no doubt as to the source of their accounts. Theopompus paved the way for Hellenistic biographers also in the sense that he examined in his digressions the lives of many men of the same kind. He has yet another excursus on religious prophets. He anticipates the typological interest of Hellenistic biographers.

Ephorus would provide confirmation of what we have said about Theopompus, though on a minor scale. Histories of Alexander and of the Diadochi are clear developments of historiography centred on individuals. It would, however, be wrong to conclude that even for a short period biography was indistinguishable from history. History went on being concerned with political events, even when they were guided and dominated by one man: biographical experiments turned on the personal life of the individual.

[19] For a different, valuable interpretation of Theopompus, W. R. Connor, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 8 (1967) 133–154.

When Aristotle said in the *Poetics* (chap. 9, 1451b10) that the business of history is the particular, *τί 'Αλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν*, what Alcibiades did or suffered, he may well have had in mind these biographical developments of the historiography of the fourth century. As Professor Homeyer acutely suggested,[20] he may have had in mind particularly the excursus on Alcibiades in book 10 of Theopompus' *Philippica*. But this passage of the *Poetics* does not imply an approach to history in a strictly biographical sense —as if historiography were biography. It is one thing to say that history means what Alcibiades did or suffered; it is another thing to say that the business of the historian is to write the biography of Alcibiades. Even Thucydides, the least biographical of historians, could be analysed in terms of the actions he attributed to Cleon or to Nicias or to Alcibiades, though admittedly it would be a partial analysis. No one, however, could interpret Thucydides' history as being based on biography. I cannot read into Aristotle's words more than a criterion for differentiating history from tragedy. I would not conclude from his words that Aristotle did not make a distinction between history and biography.[21]

The real question is rather whether Aristotle had any clear idea of biography. This can pertinently be asked when we turn to Peripatetic biography. Before Aristotle, I would say that there were experiments of a biographical and autobiographical kind which normally were kept outside political historiography as transmitted to the fourth century in the models of Herodotus and Thucydides.

[20] *Klio* 41 (1963) 146.

[21] Cf. the discussion by R. Weil, *Aristote et l'histoire* (1960) 163–178. The Isocratean encomium was fashionable about 330–320 B.C., if it is true that Theodectes wrote about Alexander of Epirus and Philiscus about the contemporary Lycurgus (Olympiodorus, *in Plat. Gorg.* 515 c) according to this model.

IV From Aristotle to the Romans

I

The intellectual atmosphere of Athens changed after the Macedonian victory of 338 B.C. Macedonian rule meant the end both of Platonic mythmaking and of Isocratean rhetoric. There was no more experimentation on the borders between reality and fiction. The inventiveness which had characterized so much of Greek intellectual life in the first part of the fourth century was replaced by a new attitude of analysis and stock-taking. Plato was replaced by Aristotle, Isocrates by Demetrius of Phalerum. The world was becoming bigger every day owing to Alexander's conquests and the adventures of his immediate successors. But the intellectuals who had been left behind by Alexander were not in a mood of uncontrolled elation. Menander became the representative of Athenian society in the generation after Alexander: his characters, and Theophrastus' characters, are Greek, rather provincially so. Aristotle himself never recognized the empire built by his pupil as a form of political community worth studying. His search for facts to serve his philosophy was hellenocentric, sober, punctuated by that indefinable touch of irony and sadness which is the mark of Aristotelian genius. He had no use for the experiments in artistic, intuitive biography which had been a speciality of Plato and other Socratics. But it was not immediately obvious whether he and his pupils would replace the discarded forms of biography by new ones.

The Development of Greek Biography

EXPANDED EDITION

Arnaldo Momigliano

Harvard University Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England 1993