THE ROLE OF *PARRHĒSIA* IN ISOCRATES

EL PAPEL DE LA *PARRHĒSIA* EN ISÓCRATES

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ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to provide an in-depth examination of the manifold usages of *parrhēsia*, "outspokenness", in Isocrates' works and the role of this notion in his political thought. The analysis of the occurrences of the term *parrhēsia* and its cognate verb *parrhēsiazomai* reveals that we can identify three different meanings of the concept of outspokenness in the Isocratean corpus: a positive sense, the awareness of its drawbacks, that leads at times to temporary hesitation in speaking frankly, and a negative meaning, which appears to be innovative. It is thus possible to suggest that the Athenian orator carries out a sort of splitting of the notion itself into a positive *parrhēsia* and a negative *parrhēsia* which are opposed to and incompatible with one another. This dichotomy bears witness to the crucial role that Isocrates' use of *parrhēsia* played not only within his own corpus, but also, more broadly, in the development of the notion of speaking frankly in Greek political thought.

RESUMEN:

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo proporcionar un examen en profundidad de los usos múltiples de la *parrhēsia*, "franqueza", en las obras de Isócrates y el papel de esta noción en su pensamiento político. El análisis de las apariciones del término *parrhēsia* y su verbo cognado *parrhēsiazomai* revela que podemos identificar tres significados diferentes del concepto de franqueza en el corpus de Isócrates: un sentido positivo, la conciencia de sus inconvenientes, que conduce a veces a vacilaciones temporales al hablar francamente, y un significado negativo, lo que parece ser innovador. Por lo tanto, es posible sugerir que el orador ateniense lleva a cabo una especie de desdoblamiento de la noción misma en una *parrhēsia* positiva y una *parrhēsia* negativa que se opone y son incompatibles entre sí. Esta dicotomía es testigo que el uso de *parrhēsía* en Isócrates desempeñó un papel crucial no sólo dentro de su propio cuerpo, sino también, más en general, en el desarrollo de la idea de hablar con franqueza en el pensamiento político griego.

KEY-WORDS: Isocrates, *parrhēsia*, *isēgoria*, *isonomia.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Isócrates, *parrhēsia*, *isēgoria*, *isonomia.*

I. Introduction.

Speaking freely and openly was a recurring theme and a central notion in Athenian political thought. Indeed, one of the first references to the idea of free speech clearly appears in Aeschylus' *Persians* (472 BC) when the Chorus of Persian elders mourns for Xerxes'

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defeat at Salamis, regarding it as the end of the Persian empire: this downfall will entail, the elders lament, free speech (*eleuthera bazein*), because people will be no more compelled to speak guardedly[2]. Thus, here the ability to speak openly is portrayed as a crucial feature or, more specifically, a consequence of freedom from slavery of tyranny. Indeed, as Rosenbloom highlights, even though "the root of the word appears only three times", *eleutheria* "is a keyword of the play", as the tragedy stresses the Greeks' fight against Xerxes' attempt "to unite Europe and Asia physically and politically under a yoke of slavery"[3], which is also a "yoke of silence"[4]. The implicit contrast is represented, of course, by the Athenians, who in the play are chief in the resistance to Xerxes' attack. The Chorus' lamentation shows that speaking freely and openly as opposed to speaking with caution is considered as antithetical to Athenian political ideology since it characterises a tyrannical regime like Persia.

From a linguistic point of view, the idea of speaking openly was primarily expressed by two key-words which are often associated with democratic vocabulary: *isēgoria* and *parrhēsia*[5]. It is, however, important to note that, although they tend to "slide into one another"[6], there are some fundamental semantic differences between these two notions, since *isēgoria* focusses mainly on the idea of "*equality* of speech, usually in a political context", whereas *parrhēsia* appears to be "more closely connected with ideas of freedom, that can be used equally of social and political discourse"[7]. So, even though they are closely related to one another, they should not be regarded merely as synonyms. Moreover, the two terms differ not only in their meaning, but also in their origin, as *isēgoria* seems to precede *parrhēsia*. This suggests that the notion of equality was given greater importance than that of openness until the last decades of the fifth century, when, as we shall see, the term *parrhēsia* progressively began to take root in Athenian political vocabulary. Remarkably, *isēgoria* ("equality of speech") was born initially as an aristocratic notion, not a democratic one. Indeed, as Momigliano suggests, "it meant equality of rights in the matter of freedom of speech and could easily apply to a restricted number of aristocrats", as the name of Cleisthenes' opponent, Isagoras, clearly shows[8]. Likewise, Raaflaub underlines that Isagoras represented "a "political name", significantly given to a member of one of the most important aristocratic families in Athens precisely around the time when the value it expressed had assumed new importance". Further, Raaflaub argues that, after the Peisistratid tyranny had deprived the aristocrats of their "equality in the sense of participation in power, rule, and leadership–and thus also in the right of speaking among the leaders and in front of the community", they felt compelled to reaffirm such prerogative and coin a specific term to define it[9].

Then, in the late fifth century *isēgoria* came to be strictly associated with democratic terminology. Indeed, Herodotus, who is the first Greek author known to us to employ the term *dēmokratia*[10], suggests a very close link between equality of speech and democracy. After

[2] Aesch. *Pers*. 584-596.
[3] Rosenbloom 2006, 70.
[4] Rosenbloom 2006, 81 who also stresses the fact that, after the defeat at Salamis, the Persian elders themselves will "speak freely to Xerxes upon his return (918-1001)". On the metaphor of the yoke see also Garvie 2009, 248. On the Chorus' emphasis on the political consequences of the defeat see Podlecki 1991, 87-89. On the character of Xerxes as "the fully developed prototype of a tyrant" see Raaflaub 2004, 90, who underlines that the fact that the Chorus regards free speech as one of the main drawbacks resulting from the fall of the Persian empire provides us with "the earliest extant indication that the opposite of the unfree condition imposed by tyranny includes elements of freedom".
[5] It is worth noting that there were also other terms that were employed to express freedom of speech, such as the verb *eleutherostomeō* and the cognate adjective *eleutherostomos*, as well as the phrase *eleutherōs legein*. However, Spina 1986, 27 highlights that the use of these terms was very limited and thus not comparable to that of *isēgoria* and *parrhēsia*.
[6] Saxonhouse 2006, 94.
[7] Carter 2004, 201.
[8] Momigliano 1973-1974, 259. On the contrary, Griffith 1967, 115 believes that "the word makes sense only when it is used of a democracy, for freedom of speech among an *élite* can be taken for granted".
[9] Raaflaub 1996, 144; see also Raaflaub 2004, 45.
[10] Hdt. 6, 43; 6, 131.

recounting the Athenian victory against the Chalcidians and the Boeotians in 506/5 BC (that is, just after Cleisthenes' reforms)[11], he describes *isēgoria* as "a good thing in all respects" (*pantachēi chrēma spoudaion*). In order to support this statement Herodotus underlines the strict link existing between foreign policy and the internal political situation, arguing that when the Athenians were ruled by tyrants (*tyranneuomenoi*) they were not better at war than their neighbours, but after they had got rid of tyranny, they became by far the best. Such a transformation, Herodotus concludes, demonstrates that when they were oppressed the Athenians played the coward deliberately, while "once they were set free" (*eleutherōthentōn*), everyone was eager to achieve for himself[12]. So, in this passage, where Herodotus couples it with *eleutheria* suggesting a contrast with tyranny and establishing a clear connection between equality of speech and freedom, *isēgoria* appears to be a synonym or, more precisely, a synecdoche for *dēmokratia*[13].

Like *isēgoria*, *parrhēsia*, the other term most frequently used to express the concept of speaking openly, was strictly related to democratic language. Indeed, it denoted the possibility of "saying all", and, thus, "outspokenness"[14]. According to Raaflaub, the reason why the term was coined lies most probably in the fact that "despite its versatility and high value, *isēgoria* was unable to express certain aspects that assumed importance in the period when *parrhēsia* emerged", that is "just before and at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War" when "political polarization reached a new height". He thus argues that:

> "A marked change in political conditions and awareness (…) made it necessary, in certain political situations, to assess the citizen's right of speech primarily from the perspective of "freedom" rather than, as before, of "equality". That a noun was now needed, and a completely new term was coined to express this specific aspect, suggests, in any case, that it had greatly risen in significance. Conversely, that it was possible for so long to do without such a noun clearly indicates that the concept of equality retained its priority until the final stage in the evolution of democracy"[15].

The importance gained by *parrhēsia* toward the end of the fifth century is manifest in Euripides' tragedies, starting from *Hippolytus* (428 BC). Indeed, in this play, Phaedra justifies her decision to kill herself by saying that she does not want to bring shame upon her husband and children, and claiming that the awareness of wicked acts committed by a parent enslaves even a "bold-hearted" (*thrasusplagchnos*) man. Rather, she wishes that her sons

[11] Hdt. 5, 77.

[12] Hdt. 5, 78. According to Loraux 1979, 9, we can find here "la plus belle profession de foi démocratique qu'un Grec ait jamais pu rêver". On this passage see also Saxonhouse 2006, 30. The Herodotean passage has raised questions among scholars about the date when *isēgoria* was officially introduced in Athens as the right of every citizen to address the Assembly: on this issue see Griffith 1967, Woodhead 1967, Lewis 1971, Nakategawa 1988.

[13] See Griffith 1967, 115. See also Monoson 1994, 178-179, Nenci 1994, 274, and Carter 2004, 199-200, who highlights that *isēgoria* "could be political in meaning as well as context, in that it could be used synonymously with democracy", as it is the case in Hdt. 5, 78, while *parrhēsia* "is the word writers in a non-political context are more likely to choose", since it constitutes "more a by-product of democracy than democracy itself". On the contrary, Asheri 1988, LVI-LVII does not believe that in the Herodotean passage *isēgoria* corresponds to democracy. Concerning a possible explanation for the use of *isēgoria* instead of *dēmokratia* (or *isonomia*), Griffith 1967, 116 thinks that Herodotus wrongly assumed that *isēgoria* had been introduced by the reforms of Cleisthenes either because he was misinformed or because he himself was at fault, and that he employed it, rather than *dēmokratia* or *isonomia*, since he was struck by the *isēgoria* practised in Periclean Athens while he was there. Griffith 1967, 131 also adds that Herodotus was impressed by *isēgoria* especially because it "was still an unusual freedom not shared as yet by the generality of Greek democracies". Instead, Vannicelli 2014, 130 suggests, more plausibly, that Herodotus is cautious in employing *dēmokratia* here since it was not a watchword of Cleisthenes in 508/7 BC; on the contrary, the Greek historian uses the term in 6, 131, 1, when mentioning Cleisthenes' reforms, because in that context, Vannicelli argues, the widening of the time horizon (achieved thanks to the reference to Pericles) allowed him to make use of the word *dēmokratia* comfortably.

[14] I have chosen to translate *parrhēsia* as "outspokenness" since I feel that this is the translation which best reflects the etymology of the Greek word, which derives from *pan* and *rhēma*. The most widespread English translations are "freedom of speech" and "free speech". However, Saxonhouse 2006, 86, despite accepting these two translations, underlines the fact that both phrases tie the term "too strongly to the passive language of rights rather than the active expressions of one's true beliefs".

[15] Raaflaub 2004, 224. See also Saxonhouse 2006, 94.

will live in Athens as "free men" (*eleutheroi*), enjoying *parrhēsia* and "being flourishing" (*thallontes*)[16]. This passage thus highlights the deep connection existing between outspokenness and freedom in Athenian political thought, in the sense that *parrhēsia* and *eleutheria* appear to be closely interrelated in the life of a democratic *polis* like Athens. *Parrhēsia* came indeed to represent a cornerstone of democracy and the mark of Athenian citizenship. The essential role that it assumed in fifth-century Athens is exemplified also through the words that Ion addresses to Xuthus in the homonymous Euripidean tragedy. After finding out that Xuthus is his father, Ion's main concern consists in unveiling the identity of his mother; should he fail to do so, his life would become "insupportable" (*abiōtos*). He then clarifies why finding his mother is so crucial to him: only if she is Athenian he will be able to enjoy *parrhēsia*, otherwise his mouth will be enslaved as it happens to foreigners coming to Athens, who are citizens only in words and, thus, are not granted *parrhēsia*[17].

Likewise, *parrhēsia* gained more and more importance during the fourth century, when the two terms *isēgoria* and *parrhēsia* continued to coexist side by side but there was an even clearer shift from the former to the latter, in the sense that *parrhēsia* tended to be employed much more often and to overshadow (though not replace) *isēgoria*. The increasing prominence that *parrhēsia* acquired in the fourth century is manifest if we consider the number of occurrences of these two words in fourth-century oratory. Isocrates and Aeschines, for instance, use the noun *parrhēsia* and its cognate verb *parrhēsiazomai* several times, whereas they both employ *isēgoria* only once in their works[18]. Indeed, the Athenians treasured *parrhēsia* and were convinced that individual self-expression had to be subordinated to common welfare. They even named a trireme *Parrhēsia*[19] and were thus very proud of this practice which they regarded not only as a right, but also, and most importantly, as a duty to be performed in the interest of the *polis*[20].

This is the reason why there were legal restrictions on who could be granted *parrhēsia* which affected even Athenian citizens[21] and which represented "a punishment for those who had defied the moral standards of the community, for those who lacked any sense of shame"[22]. Hence, the fact that the denial of *parrhēsia* was imposed as a form of punishment seems to confirm the high value that the Athenians placed on this practice. However, *parrhēsia* was a *vox media* in the sense that it indicated "a practice commonly associated with democracy, which may be evaluated as either a good or bad thing depending on the views of the speaker"[23]. This means that the word, and thus the notion itself, is characterised by an intrinsic tension. Consequently, *parrhēsia* does have, as we shall see, also a negative side, insofar as saying whatever comes into one's mind without reserve could give rise to unbridled and insulting speech. The complexity and problematization of the notion of *parrhēsia* in Athenian political thought is manifest in Isocrates' manifold and varying usages of such a concept. This study will thus focus on providing an in-depth examination of the three main senses that *parrhēsia* takes on in Isocrates and on showing their interconnections, their significance inside the Isocratean corpus itself and, more broadly, within fourth-century political thought.

[16] Eur. *Hipp*. 419-425. On this passage see Barrett 1964, 236. See also Camerotto 2012, 55. More in general, on the close relationship between *parrhēsia* and *eleutheria* see Monoson 1994, 176-177.
[17] Eur. *Ion* 668-675, where the importance of *parrhēsia*, which is used twice, is clearly stressed. See Burnett 1970, 73, Scarpat 1964, 30-32 and Spina 1986, 83. See also Carter 2004, 215 who argues that the comparison between lack of freedom of speech and slavery that we find here does not "make free speech a right in the same sense as freedom from slavery, merely a privilege that derives from one's citizen status". Similarly, in Eur. *Phoen.* 385-394 the main downside of exile which Polynices complains about during his stichomythia with Jocasta is precisely the fact that he has no *parrhēsia* and that his lot is thus comparable to that of a slave.
[18] Isoc. 6, 97 (see below) and Aeschin. 1, 173 respectively.
[19] IG II^2 1624.81. See Saxonhouse 2006, 90.
[20] See, for instance, Henderson 1998, 256 who points out that *parrhēsia* was "ideologically and procedurally essential in maintaining the integrity of the democratic system, so much so that it could be considered not merely a citizen's right but his moral obligation".
[21] See, for instance, Aeschin. 1, 28-32. See also Aeschin. 1, 3; 1, 14; Dem. 22, 29.
[22] Saxonhouse 2006, 96. See also Monoson 1994, 181.
[23] Sluiter and Rosen 2004, 4.

II. Positive use of *parrhēsia*.

We shall start our analysis by concentrating, first of all, on the several instances in which Isocrates employs the notion of *parrhēsia* in a positive way regarding it both as a civic value and a moral quality which good monarchs can and should acquire and which characterises the orators like himself who, in contrast to flatterers, speak the truth in the interest of their audience. Indeed, such a positive meaning is particularly evident, for example, in the two occurrences of *parrhēsia* that we find in *To Nicocles*. In this speech, which along with *Nicocles* and *Evagoras*, belongs to the so called Cyprian orations, Isocrates addresses the young king of Salamis, who most probably had also been one of his pupils[24], shortly after his father Evagoras' death in 374, with the aim of offering him "the most beautiful and the most useful gift" (*kallistē dōrea kai chrēsimōtatē*), that is, defining what pursuits Nicocles should yearn for and which ones he should avoid in order to govern his kingdom in the best possible way. Indeed, at the very beginning of the speech Isocrates does mention *parrhēsia* among the positive elements which contribute to the education of individuals and are likely to make them better men[25]. The didactic function of *parrhēsia* becomes even more essential when it comes to kings, because, according to Isocrates, they are unable to gain this feature automatically and on their own, since they are "unadmonished" (*anouthetētoi*) and the great majority of people do not associate with them, while those who do have dealings with them only aim to gain their "favour" (*charis*)[26]. Later in the speech, focusing on Nicocles' entourage, Isocrates urges the king of Salamis to become friend only with those who are worthy of his nature. More specifically, Nicocles must not give his friendship to those with whom he spends his time most pleasantly, but to those with whom he can best administer the city. Further, Nicocles should subject his associates to "accurate examinations" (*akribeis dokimasiai*), since he will be regarded as being similar to them by all who are not close to him. Then, Isocrates warns the Cyprian king against flatterers. Indeed, he advises Nicocles to distinguish "those who flatter with skill" (*hoi technēi kolakeuontes*) from "those who serve with goodwill" (*hoi met' eunoias therapeuontes*), and to trust not those who praise everything he says and does, but those who rebuke him when he makes a mistake. Thus, Nicocles, Isocrates argues, must grant *parrhēsia* "to those who think well" (*tois eu phronousin*), so that they can examine along with him the matters about which he is doubtful[27].

Significantly, here Isocrates urges Nicocles to give *parrhēsia* not to everybody, but only to people who have good judgement. It is important to stress this point since it shows that, in Isocrates' view, citizenship is not a sufficient requirement to enjoy *parrhēsia*: what really matters in order to be granted outspokenness is the speaker's moral virtue. In other words, *parrhēsia* represents the hallmark of citizenship and of a well-governed society, but being a citizen does not automatically mean that one can be allowed to speak with *parrhēsia*, since, in order to do so, he must demonstrate that he possesses the moral characteristics which make him worthy of enjoying outspokenness, and thus likely to benefit the whole *polis* when airing his opinion. Indeed, whereas in Euripides' *Ion* citizenship by itself, as we have seen, seems to guarantee the possibility of employing *parrhēsia*, in Isocrates speaking frankly preserves a manifest political connotation, but, at the same time, it does assume a highly moral status. In this respect, it is worth noting that hints of such moral value seem to be already present in the above-mentioned passage from Euripides' *Hippolytus*, where having parents who are Athenian citizens is not enough to be granted *parrhēsia*, since the key-factor is that they both have to be honourable parents. Thus, as Foucault highlights, besides citizenship, "a good reputation for oneself and one's family" is the *conditio sine qua non* to be allowed to speak freely and openly in Athens. This means that *parrhēsia*, as

[24] See, for instance, Mathieu 1925, 110 and Usher 1999, 309.
[25] Isoc. 2, 2-3.
[26] Isoc. 2, 4.
[27] Isoc. 2, 27-28. On the crucial role of Nicocles' entourage as counsellors on specific issues see also Isoc. 2, 6.

depicted in the Euripidean passage, "requires both moral and social qualifications which come from a noble birth and a respectful reputation"[28]. So, I agree with Luigi Spina when he points out that it is possible to grasp an ethical nuance in Euripides[29]. Yet, it is in Isocrates that we can find for the first time, in my view, a consistent and manifest emphasis on the moral connotation of *parrhēsia*.

Moreover, *parrhēsia* comes to represent the opposite of flattery, and it is in this sense in particular that it plays a crucial role in Isocrates' self-characterisation as a trustworthy orator who speaks only in the best interest of Athens. Therefore, it is no coincidence that in the Isocratean corpus almost all the other occurrences of the noun *parrhēsia* and the verb *parrhēsiazomai* conveying a positive meaning refer to Isocrates himself. For instance, in the *Panathenaicus*, focusing on proving that Athens has been of greater service to the Greeks than Sparta, Isocrates acknowledges that his "condition" (*pathos*) has become contrary to what he had previously said in the speech, since he has shifted from want of perception, wandering, forgetfulness and mildness to discussing matters he had not planned to address, more boldness than he normally has as well as a lack of control over some of his statements due to the multitude of things to mention. He then declares that "speaking with outspokenness" (*to parrhēsiazesthai*) has suddenly come upon him and he has thus opened his mouth (*leluka to stoma*)[30]. So, Isocrates appears to depict *parrhēsia* not only as an intrinsic feature of his speeches, but also as a sort of natural instinct, an irrepressible impulse that urges him to be bold in taking the floor.

III. Hesitation and awareness of negative outcomes.

If, on the one hand, Isocrates seems to refer to *parrhēsia* as a constant and inescapable characteristic of his discourses, there are, on the other hand, some passages where he is hesitant to speak frankly and shows some concern about the possible consequences or the opportuneness of doing so, even though, as we shall see, such hesitation is short-lived. In *Antidosis* 43, for example, he questions whether telling the truth is going to be profitable for him, since it is difficult to guess at his fellow citizens' thoughts. Yet, despite this initial perplexity, he makes the decision to speak with outspokenness (*parrhēsiasomai*)[31]. Isocrates' doubts may plausibly be based on the awareness of potential bad outcomes resulting from *parrhēsia*. Indeed, since speaking with outspokenness often implies voicing criticism and swimming against the tide, it can result in negative consequences for the frank speaker, who must be bold enough to make use of *parrhēsia* despite knowing the dangers he will incur in telling the truth. As Sara Monoson puts it:

> "Just as important as this truth claim was the suggestion that the speaker willingly embraces considerable risks by speaking–risks to his reputation, financial well-being, and personal safety. When one spoke out in the Assembly, one risked being disliked, shouted down, humiliated, fined, or brought up on any one of the variety of charges, some of which could carry stiff penalties. The climate of personal risk was, in fact, emphasized by the orators. The presence of the risks made more credible the orator' s claim to be saying

[28] Foucault 2001, 31. See also Carter 2004, 215, who interprets the "loss of *parrhêsia*" mentioned in the passage not as "actual slavery" but as "loss of self-confidence", arguing that: "Having two citizen parents does not give you *parrhêsia* in the sense that you inherit a legal entitlement to free speech; it merely gives you the status (provided that neither parent has done anything dreadful) of someone able to speak their mind with confidence)".

[29] Spina 1986, 82, who underlines that here political and moral values are both present, and argues that Phaedra's words highlight "quell'aspetto della polarità *nomos-physis* che coinvolge anche la semantica di *parrhēsia*, già in questa prima testimonianza". On the contrary, Scarpat 1964, 32 assigns to the Euripidean passage a merely political value.

[30] Isoc. 12, 95-96; both Carter 2004, 213 and Saxonhouse 2006, 89 point out that the phrase *leluka to stoma* employed by Isocrates seems to recall the image of the tongue in fetters that we find in Aesch. *Pers*. 591-592. Furthermore, Carter 2004, 201 stresses the fact that here the verb *parrhēsiazesthai* implies "freedom, specifically freedom from fear of causing offense".

[31] On this passage see Too 2008, 118.

> what he thinks is true and right, that is, what he thinks is in the best interest of the polis in contrast to what might benefit him personally"[32].

So, boldness, awareness of potential negative outcomes and willingness to speak openly regardless of the drawbacks that could derive from doing so represent the crucial features which characterise Isocrates' own use of *parrhēsia*. For instance, in the *encomium* of Evagoras, he claims that he is speaking not only concisely, with no reserve and no fear of arousing "envy" (*phthonos*), but also with *parrhēsia* when he states that no one, neither mortal, nor demigod nor immortal, has obtained kingship "more fairly" (*kallion*), "more splendidly" (*lamproteron*) and "more piously" (*eusebesteron*) than Nicocles' father. Furthermore, he adds that he has spoken "boldly" (*thraseōs*) about the king of Salamis not because he is eager to exaggerate, but "because of the truth of the matter" (*dia tēn tou pragmatos alētheian*)[33].

Here the connection existing, in Isocrates' view, among outspokenness, truth and boldness becomes very clear: speaking with frankness implies telling the truth, but it also requires to be bold, in the sense that the outspoken speaker has to accept the dangers which are associated with the exercise of his *parrhēsia*, such as, in this specific case, the possibility of giving rise to *phthonos* in his audience. In addition, in the *Antidosis*, he underlines that speaking frankly requires special patience from the audience:

> "But, if going through in detail I appear to make speeches which are much different from those you are accustomed to, I expect you not to be displeased but to judge kindly, considering that those who contend in court about matters which are dissimilar to the others must make use of such speeches. So, bearing the manner of my speeches and my outspokenness, and allowing me to use up the time assigned to the speeches in defence, give your vote as to each of you it seems fair and conformable to law"[34].

In short, Isocrates seems to be very much aware of the fact that speaking freely and openly is likely to provoke bad outcomes, that is, some negative reactions in the addressees of his speeches, but he is willing to take that risk. Indeed, his hesitation appears to be only momentary and his doubts are always overcome and eventually he chooses to speak with *parrhēsia*. Moreover, it is important to note that *parrhēsia* itself preserves a positive meaning. Rather, the awareness of negative outcomes and the decision to speak regardless of the damages he could face in doing so are the very features that, in his view, mark him out as a good orator, who is useful to Athens because he does not flatter his audience, but speaks the truth in their best interest, even if it is not what they want to hear. Thus, outspokenness plays a crucial role in Isocrates' self-characterisation, as he seems to possess all the key features which, according to Foucault[35], characterise the *parrhēsia*stēs ("outspoken person"): he speaks the truth freely and as directly as possible, takes a risk in doing so and is well aware of potential bad outcomes, but considers speaking frankly as an unavoidable duty.

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[32] Monoson 1994, 182; see also Monoson 1994, 175, who stresses the constant and strict association of *parrhēsia* with both "criticism and truth telling", highlighting the "claim on the part of the speaker to be capable of assessing a situation and pronouncing judgment on it", that is, the "intellectual autonomy" implied in speaking with *parrhēsia*. Further, Monoson 1994, 178 underlines that the risks associated with *parrhēsia* "were not thought to undermine or even conflict with the right of free speech; rather, they affirmed that the speaker could be held accountable for the advice ventured" and, at the same time, "illuminate what made it so valuable an idea for the democrats. The free democratic citizen presupposed by the ethic of parrhesia was daring and responsible, self-confident and eager to enter the fray, the very antithesis of the slavish subject of a tyranny".

[33] Isoc. 9, 39.

[34] Isoc. 15, 179; on this passage see Too 2008, 182. A similar concern can be found in Demosthenes, who, like Isocrates, urges his fellow citizens to be patient if he speaks the truth "with outspokenness" (*meta parrhēsias*) in Dem. 3, 3; 10, 53-54; indeed, Monoson 1994, 182 highlights that "Demosthenes often explicitly identifies his efforts to criticize a common Athenian viewpoint with the ideal of speaking with parrhesia and contrasts his speech with flattering, deceitful, or self-promoting oratory". For other Isocratean instances of apparent hesitation in using *parrhēsia* see Isoc. 1, 34; 5, 72; 15, 10. Signs of a somewhat similar kind of hesitation and awareness of potential negative outcomes for speakers who employ *parrhēsia* can be found in Eur. *El*. 1049-1059; *Bacch*. 664-671; on the role of these two Euripidean passages see Camerotto 2012, 57.

[35] Foucault 2001, 13-20.

It is worth highlighting that Demosthenes and Aeschines often claim that they are speaking the truth with *parrhēsia* in the interest of Athens, despite being conscious of the dangers that this entails, and they both underline the intrinsic relationship existing between *parrhēsia* and *alētheia*[36]. Concerning the risks related to *parrhēsia*, Aeschines, for instance, condemns the physical punishments (including glossotomy) with consequent death which Nicodemus of Aphidna had to face at the hands of Aristarchus after speaking with outspokenness (*eparrhēsiazeto*)[37]. In addition, while Aeschines complains that his fellow-citizens are making use not of *parrhēsia* but of an uncertain and obscure language[38], Demosthenes does at times condemn the degeneration in the current use of *parrhēsia*. For example, he criticises the extension of *parrhēsia* to aliens and slaves in Athens[39], a complaint that calls to mind that of the Old Oligarch who claims that the Athenians have, for economic reasons, set up "equality of speech" (*isēgoria*) between slaves and free men as well as between metics and citizens[40]. Yet, *parrhēsia* itself remains, in Demosthenes' view, a good practice even though it is now misused and granted to people who are not worthy of enjoying it.

IV. Pejorative use of *parrhēsia*.

Most occurrences of *parrhēsia* in the Isocratean corpus, as we have seen, convey a positive meaning, including the instances in which the Athenian orator shows initial hesitation and awareness of bad outcomes, as it is the case also for Demosthenes and Aeschines. However, we shall now focus our attention on some passages where Isocrates, unlike Demosthenes and Aeschines, strikingly employs the notion of *parrhēsia* with a manifestly negative sense. Before examining Isocrates' usages, it is worth stressing, nonetheless, that a similar pejorative tinge of the term seems to be already present in Euripides' *Orestes* (408 BC) in the passage where the messenger, who has come to report what the Argive assembly has decided, describes the debate that has taken place, a debate during which different speakers have expressed their opinion. In particular, he uses very harsh words to depict the speech of the anonymous speaker who has taken the floor just after Talthybius and Diomedes suggesting to put both Orestes and Electra to death by stoning[41]. In giving an account of the speech made by the third speaker, the messenger brands the anonymous personage, whose opinion will prevail at the end of the debate[42], as *athuroglōssos*, a term which indicates "someone who is an endless babbler, who cannot keep quiet, and is prone to say whatever comes to mind"[43], so that he has "no regard for the value of *logos*, for rational discourse as a means of gaining access to truth"[44]. It is not surprising, then, that the *parrhēsia* which the anonymous speaker has made use of in his speech acquires, in the messenger's report, a negative meaning. Indeed, in this case *parrhēsia* seems to cross over to saying all without caring for the truth and the interest of the *polis*, and, thus, to license and arrogance deriving from lack of *mathēsis* and leading to misfortunes. Further, in this passage

[36] See, for instance, Dem. 4, 51; 8, 21; 8, 24; 8, 32; Aeschin. 1, 177; 2, 70.
[37] Aeschin. 1, 172. On this passage and, more broadly, on the relationship between glossotomy and *parrhēsia* see Spina 1986, 61-66.
[38] Aeschin. 2, 104.
[39] Dem. 9, 3.
[40] Xen. [*Ath*. *pol*.] 1, 12, where the term *isēgoria* occurs twice: on the role of *isēgoria* in this passage see Gray 2007, 193-194 as well as Marr and Rhodes 2008, 79.
[41] Eur. *Or*. 902-913.
[42] See Eur. *Or*. 944-945.
[43] Foucault 2001, 63.
[44] Foucault 2001, 64. See also Carter 2004, 218 who employs this passage to support his argument that the Athenians agreed on the following statement: "All citizens have *isêgoria*, but they must not exercise this with too much *parrhêsia*"; hence, the anonymous speaker's main fault, Carter concludes, consists in exercising *isēgoria* in the Argive assembly "with 'untutored' *parrhêsia*. He does not appear to know the etiquette: perhaps this is why the messenger who relates this scene appears to doubt his citizenship".

parrhēsia is explicitly associated with *thorubos*, the confused noise and hubbub of a crowded assembly causing intimidation and disorder[45].

Nevertheless, the verse in which *parrhēsia* occurs is often regarded as an interpolation[46], and, even if it were genuine, this would be the only Euripidean instance in which the term is manifestly viewed in a negative light. Moreover, the adjective *amathēs*, which here characterises *parrhēsia*, does contribute, at least partially, to the pejorative sense that *parrhēsia* takes on in this passage. Similarly, in Plato *Phaedrus* 240e, where Socrates refers to the "immoderate and barefaced outspokenness" (*parrhēsia katakorēs kai anapeptamenē*) used by the lover to address his beloved when he is drunk, the presence of adjectives conveying a pejorative connotation plays an important role in the negative sense attributed to *parrhēsia*[47]. In addition, as Monoson points out, "Plato's texts mingle a repudiation of democratic politics with a subtle affirmation of the celebrated democratic ideal of parrhesia"[48].

To sum up, even though Isocrates is not the only Greek author to employ *parrhēsia* with a pejorative meaning, the wide range of Isocratean occurrences in which the term conveys a clear negative sense as well as the noteworthy coexistence of both negative and positive instances have no parallel in Athenian political language and mark a turning point in the history of this notion. One of the earliest occurrences of the use of *parrhēsia* in a pejorative sense within the Isocratean corpus can be found in *On the Team of Horses*, one of Isocrates' six forensic speeches, which was most probably written in 397-95. Here Alcibiades the Younger stresses that he has passed over his father's achievements as general because almost everyone remembers them, but he complains that the Athenians revile the rest of Alcibiades' life "too licentiously and boldly" (*lian aselgōs kai thraseōs*) and "using such outspokenness" (*toiautēi parrhēsiāi chrōmenoi*) that they would have feared to employ if he were alive. Indeed, he claims, they have come to such a degree of "folly" (*anoia*) that they believe they will gain good repute in speaking ill of him. Significantly, in this speech *parrhēsia* is related not only to madness, but also to the "outrageous discourses" (*hubristikoi logoi*) given by "the worst of men" (*hoi phaulotatoi tōn anthrōpōn*)[49]. The negative meaning of *parrhēsiā* recurs also in the *Panathenaicus*:

> "After he said that, I accepted it, not because it put an end to any of the charges, but because it kept hidden the sharpest aspect of the things then pronounced, not without education but with intelligence, and because what has been spoken in self-defence about the other issues was more moderate than what was then said with outspokenness"[50].

Indeed, in this passage the participle *parrhēsiasamenon*, indicating the outspokenness employed by Isocrates' former student, clearly acquires a pejorative tinge and *parrhēsiā* seems to be in contrast, at least partly, with *sōphrosunē*. Still, in *Panathenaicus* 96, the verb *parrhēsiazomai*, as we have seen in section II, conveys a positive meaning. So, *prima facie*, Isocrates could seem to be inconsistent in his use of *parrhēsia*, since within the same speech he attributes to the notion of speaking with

[45] On the relationship between *thorubos* and freedom of speech see Spina 1986, 66-68, who devotes particular attention to the Euripidean passage, and Balot 2014, 62-63. More generally, on *thorubos* in the Athenian assembly see Tacon 2001, 173-192.
[46] See West 1987, 245-246, who highlights doubts concerning the authenticity of these lines, stating that "907-13 at least are evidently interpolated". Willink 1986, 232 goes further than West and deletes lines 904-913 altogether, despite admitting that: "The status of 904 and 905 is indeed more arguable than that of 906 and 907-13"; in particular, concerning line 905, Willink argues that it is "rendered suspected by its context (between 904 and 906-13)", even though he acknowledges that the negative meaning of *parrhēsia* is "not in itself impossible in a late fifth-century tragedy" and could be "symptomatic of the reaction against democratic values in the closing years of the Peloponnesian War". See also Wright 2008, 113; 149 n. 51.
[47] See Sluiter and Rosen 2004, 4-5; see also Spina 1986, 94.
[48] Monoson 1994, 185.
[49] Isoc. 16, 22-23.
[50] Isoc. 12, 218.

outspokenness a positive sense in one section and a pejorative meaning in another one[51]. However, as we shall see, there is a possible explanation to what might appear at first reading a clear incongruity.

IV.1. *Parrhēsia* versus *isēgoria*.

The same seeming contradiction can be found also in *Archidamus*, where *parrhēsia* is used both in a positive and in a negative sense. Indeed, in section 72 Archidamus proudly declares that he will not hesitate "to speak with outspokenness" (*parrhēsiasasthai*), highlighting that, even though what he is going to say might be difficult to propose, it is certainly finer to be made known to the Greeks as well as more suitable to the Spartans than what others recommend. On the contrary, later in the speech *parrhēsia* seems to be opposed to *isēgoria* and to take on a pejorative meaning as the king of Sparta complains that the Spartans in the past did not uphold "the equal rights of speech of free men" (*hai tōn eleutherōn isēgoriai*), whereas now they openly bear even "the outspokenness of the slaves" (*hē tōn doulōn parrhēsia*)[52]. Remarkably, this passage, which represents the only occurrence of *isēgoria* in the Isocratean corpus, couples it with *eleutheria*. It is important to stress this link because it recalls the strong connection between the two terms that, as we have seen in section I, clearly emerges in Herodotus 5, 78.

Further, in a like manner, Demosthenes in *Against Meidias* connects the two words claiming that the man who by fear debars any citizen from obtaining reparation for his wrongs is taking away from the Athenians their equality of speech and their freedom[53]. Similarly, in *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* Demosthenes refers to *isēgoria* and *eleutheria* as fundamental qualities characterising democratic governments as opposed to oligarchies. Indeed, he underlines the fact that when Athens wages war against oligarchies, unlike when she engages wars with other democracies, she is fighting for her own "constitution" (*politeia*) and "freedom" (*eleutheria*). Therefore, it is more useful to fight all the Greeks under democracies than to have them as friends under oligarchies. For it is easy, Demosthenes argues, to make peace with men who are free, while with those who are under an oligarchy it is not even possible to establish a sound friendship, since the few will never be well-disposed toward the many as well as those who seek to rule to those who have chosen to live "with equality of speech" (*met' isēgorias*)[54].

So, bearing in mind the Spartan setting of the Isocratean speech, we can reach a twofold conclusion. On the one hand, in linking *isēgoria* specifically to *eleutheria*, Isocrates proves to be consistent with the traditional use of the term that we find in Herodotus and then also in Demosthenes. On the other hand, he manifestly distinguishes *isēgoria* from *parrhēsia*[55]. His usage of *parrhēsia* is thus extremely innovative, since, instead of associating it with the notion of freedom, he links it to the idea of slavery. In this way he turns upside down the coupling between *parrhēsia* and *eleutheria*, that, as we have seen, characterises the use of *parrhēsia* in the fifth century. In doing so, Isocrates carries out a striking overturning which constitutes a complete innovation within the framework of Athenian political thought.

IV.2. *Parrhēsia* versus *isonomia*.

The negative sense that *parrhēsia* can take on in the Isocratean corpus is even clearer in *Areopagiticus* 20. Here Isocrates claims that those who administered the city at the time of Solon and Cleisthenes did not establish a "constitution" (*politeia*) that in name only was the freest and mildest, nor one that "educated" (*epaideuse*) the citizens to regard "intemperance" (*akolasia*) as "democracy" (*dēmokratia*), "transgression of law" (*paranomia*) as "freedom" (*eleutheria*), "outspokenness" (*parrhēsia*) as "equality under the law"

[51] For a similar ambivalence in the meaning of *parrhēsia* within the same speech see Isoc. 11, 1 where the term has a positive sense, and Isoc. 11, 40 where *parrhēsia* takes on a negative meaning (see Livingstone 2001, 179).
[52] Isoc. 6, 97.
[53] Dem. 21, 124.
[54] Dem. 15, 17-18.
[55] On the distinction between isēgoria and *parrhēsia* in this passage see Carter 2004, 202.

(*isonomia*), "power to do everything one wants" (*exousia tou panta poiein*) as "prosperity" (*eudaimonia*), but rather a constitution that by hating and punishing such men made all the citizens "better" (*beltious*) and "wiser" (*sōphronesteroi*).

Interestingly, in this passage Isocrates refers to *parrhēsia* as one of the negative qualities which characterise contemporary democracy and opposes it to *isonomia*. It is worth highlighting the opposition between *parrhēsia* and *isonomia* which comes to light here especially because, at first sight, this use of *parrhēsia* appears to be once again problematic if we compare it not only with all the positive occurrences we have analysed so far, but also with what Isocrates says in *On the Peace* 14, where he complains that, even though Athens is a democracy, there is no *parrhēsia* except for the most foolish speakers in the assembly and the comic poets in the theatre. Therefore, in this passage *parrhēsia* appears to be a characteristic inseparably linked to democracy and itself positive, even though it is currently enjoyed by people who do not deserve it. The distinction between two different kinds of outspokenness, one positive and the other one negative, thus becomes crucial in understanding the complex role of *parrhēsia* within Isocrates' political thought. The existence of two different types of *parrhēsia* has been underlined in general terms by Foucault. However, I would argue that we can reach a conclusion diametrically opposed to the one expressed by the French scholar: in Isocrates' eyes what is incompatible with "true democracy" is not "real *parrhesia*" (namely, *parrhēsia* in its critical and positive meaning), as Foucault believes[56], but *parrhēsia* in its pejorative sense, that is, the kind of *parrhēsia* which, according to *On the Peace* 14, is predominant in fourth-century Athens.

V. Positive *parrhēsia* versus negative *parrhēsia*.

An additional reading key to help us understand more fully the manifold and varying uses of *parrhēsia* within Isocrates' political vocabulary is provided by *To Antipater* (340-339 BC). In this letter to the regent of Macedonia, where *parrhēsia* plays a fundamental role, there are two occurrences of the verb *parrhēsiazomai* as well as one of the noun itself, and Isocrates seems to mention two opposite types of outspokenness. Indeed, Isocrates praises his pupil Diodotus for possessing, among various qualities, "the greatest outspokenness" (*pleistē parrhēsia*), not "the one that is not befitting" (*hē ou prosēken*), but that which is the most important sign of "goodwill" (*eunoia*) toward friends and which noteworthy rulers honour as being useful. Conversely, weaker rulers dislike this kind of outspokenness since it forces them to do something they have not chosen to do. So, they are not aware, Isocrates argues, that men who dare "contradict" (*antilegein*) them "about what is advantageous" (*peri tou sumpherontos*) are the only ones able to provide them with "the greatest power" (*pleistē exousia*) to do what they want.

Isocrates, therefore, clearly enhances the role of *parrhēsiastai* ("those who speak with outspokenness"), and opposes them to "those who always choose deliberately so as to please" (*hoi aei pros hēdonēn legein proairoumenoi*): it is because of the latter that not only monarchies (which bring on many inevitable dangers), but even constitutional governments (which usually enjoy greater security) cannot last, whereas "because of those who speak with outspokenness in favour of what is best" (*dia tous epi tōi beltistōi parrhēsiazomenous*) many things are preserved even of those which were likely to be destroyed. Thus, Isocrates argues, all monarchs should hold in greater esteem "those who display the truth" (*hoi tēn alētheian apophainomenoi*) than men who only speak to gratify in all they say, but, in reality, say nothing worthy of gratitude. Yet, the former are valued less by some leaders, as Diodotus himself has experienced among some rulers in Asia: even though he made himself "useful" (*chrēsimos*) not only in giving advice, but also in taking risks, "because of his speaking with outspokenness" (*dia to parrhēsiazesthai*) to them about their own interests, he was deprived of honours as well as hope, and his good services were obscured by the

[56] Foucault 2001, 80-83.

flatteries of everyday men. So, owing to this previous experience, Isocrates claims, Diodotus hesitated to present himself to Antipater[57].

Remarkably, as we have highlighted, in *To Antipater* 4 Isocrates manifestly refers in the same sentence to the existence of two different kinds of *parrhēsia*, one inappropriate and thus negative, expressed through the relative clause, the other one positive, opposed to flattery and praised throughout the letter. Therefore, *To Antipater* acquires particular importance for our understanding of Isocrates' complex usages of this notion not only because it presents all the three different Isocratean usages of *parrhēsia* that we can find throughout the corpus, but also, and most importantly, because it suggests that Isocrates, exploiting the semantic wealth which has always characterised the history of *parrhēsia*, identifies two different, or rather opposite, kinds of *parrhēsia*. As a result of this polarisation, he carries out a sort of splitting of the notion itself into a positive *parrhēsia* and a negative *parrhēsia* which are opposed to and incompatible with one another.

VI. Conclusion.

To summarise, the idea of speaking frankly and openly goes back to the roots of democratic thinking and Isocrates represents, in my opinion, a turning point in the history of one of the main terms that expressed such notion, that is *parrhēsia*. First of all, it is worth noting that in the Isocratean corpus the use of *parrhēsia* is characterised by a combination of the standard political connotation and a moral value which is emphasised to an unprecedented level. Secondly, we can identify three different usages of *parrhēsia* in Isocrates' work: a positive meaning, the awareness of negative outcomes and, finally, a pejorative sense which fulfils a particularly remarkable and innovative role in the development of the idea of outspokenness in Greek political thought. Significantly, the second use has to be considered as part of the first one since, in Isocrates' view, only *parrhēsia* in its positive sense involves risk-taking. In addition, these three stages coexist, with no clear temporal break, in the corpus. Indeed, the pejorative sense emerges as early as the forensic speech *On the Team of Horses*, so it cannot be regarded simply as a later development in Isocrates' political vocabulary.

I would also like to highlight that his complex and varying usage of this term seems to have no precedent in the fifth century and no parallel in the fourth. Indeed, whereas Scarpat argues that *parrhēsia* in Euripides has only a political value[58], I believe that Spina is right in pointing out that marks of the manifold connotations which the notion can take on are already present *in nuce* in some of the works of the tragic poet[59]. Yet, even though in the Euripidean passages that we have taken into consideration it is possible to notice different shades of meaning concerning the use of *parrhēsia*, it is within the Isocratean corpus that the problematization of *parrhēsia* reaches its peak, and, that, consequently, we find a striking semantic variety in the use of the term. Furthermore, while there are some instances of both the first and second kind of meaning in Demosthenes and Aeschines, neither of them appears to refer to *parrhēsia* in a negative sense and, more generally, no fourth-century Greek author seems to employ the term with the same semantic variety and intricacy that we find in the Isocratean corpus. Moreover, as we have seen, the positive sense and the negative meaning are at times present in the same work and, in one case (namely, To Antipater 4), even in the same passage. I would suggest that a plausible explanation to this alleged inconsistency in the use of *parrhēsia* lies in the fact that Isocrates implements a splitting of the notion of *parrhēsia* at semantic level, contrasting a positive *parrhēsia*, which consists in speaking the truth facing all the dangers that may result (and is, of course, the one that he claims he employs in his speeches), with a negative *parrhēsia*, which represents

[57] Isoc. *Ep.* 4, 4-8; see Landauer 2011, 190.
[58] See Scarpat 1964, 36-37.
[59] See Spina 1986, 83-84.

the opposite polarity and is regarded as an aspect, or rather a consequence, of the deterioration of contemporary democracy constantly denounced by the Athenian orator.

Therefore, Isocrates is not in a contradictory manner conveying both a positive and negative meaning to the same concept, but he is consciously distinguishing two deeply different kinds of *parrhēsia*, even though he does not dwell explicitly on such a distinction. Indeed, bringing together the threads of our analysis we can reach the conclusion that, exploiting and taking to its extreme consequences the intrinsic tension which characterises the concept, Isocrates carries out a sort of splitting of the notion of *parrhēsia* at semantic level. Such polarisation reveals, in my opinion, that Isocrates' complex and manifold usages of *parrhēsia* can be regarded as a watershed in the history and development of this notion within Athenian political thought.

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