

Aretē: Excellence or Virtue

Reading 4 – The Nature of *Aretē* – General & Specific Notions of *Aretē*

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"Virtue is a kind of health and beauty and good condition of the soul." — Plato

"Virtue is a weapon that cannot be taken away." — Antisthenes

"Happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue." — Aristotle

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Reading 4

The Nature of *Aretē* – General & Specific Notions of *Aretē*

Reading 4

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This reading comes from the Cave's

Aretē: Excellence or Virtue—What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Aretē.

As the title indicates, this reading, after a brief introduction, presents what various Greeks thought and said about the nature of *aretē* (excellence or virtue).

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS have revealed two basic points regarding what the ancient Greeks generally believed about *aretē*. One, *aretē* is the goal of life; it is the objective we humans pursue, the end or good for which we live—or, rather, at our best it should be so. Two, as "the perfection of anything in general," excellence or virtue in the *aretē* spectrum can exist anywhere and in anything, ranging from non-living

things, such as land or soil, to living things, including various animals, humans, and the gods (or God).

In this chapter we explore what the Greeks thought and said about the nature of excellence or virtue. We do so in terms of both a general definition (generally speaking, *aretē* is *such-and-such*) and specific instances of *aretē*, such as the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice.

■ ■ ■

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Before getting to general definitions of aretē, let's take in Pindar's more poetic approach.

Pindar Excellence increases, rising like a tree to bursting rain, when lifted up among wise and just men to the heavens above.¹

General definitions. The Greeks did not produce a general definition of aretē until the appearance of philosophy when they began to look for the common source and general nature of things. It was only then, so far as we know, that someone thought to ask about the nature of aretē itself—that one reality, according to Plato, in which every other individual aretē participates.²

What follows here, then, in the first set of selections, are the later definitions of aretē from philosophy. After observing these, we will peruse various specific excellences or virtues from Homer onward.³

Among the definitions hailing from the philosophers, we see that aretē is the general perfection or fulfilment of a thing. Another philosopher states that virtue is “the means by which a thing performs its function well.” Another that it is a habit or disposition, the ongoing observance of a mean that falls between two extremes. Or it is strength, capacity, health, harmony, beauty. Finally, it is “a good condition of the soul”—a point that highlights the much more internal focus of the philosophers (on the soul) versus that of earlier and other Greeks (whose focus was much more external, on the body and more physical or tangible things—though certainly excellence of mind and feeling were highly valued). Note that with the shift to the philosophers, we give aretē as “virtue” instead of “excellence,” even though we could have just as well stuck with excellence.

Diogenes Laertius (presenting the view of the philosopher Pythagoras) Virtue is harmony and health and all that is good and the god.⁴

Plato (Socrates is speaking) In the first place, virtue signifies ease of motion, and secondly, that the flow of the good soul is always unimpeded.⁵

Plato (Socrates is speaking) It appears, then, that virtue is a kind of health and beauty and good condition of the soul.⁶

Plato (Socrates is speaking) Virtue is the means by which a thing performs its function well.⁷

Antisthenes the Cynic Virtue is a weapon that cannot be taken away.⁸

Diogenes Laertius (giving the Cynic philosopher Antisthenes' position) Virtue is something you do—it is a matter of deeds. It doesn't require a stockpile of arguments or much learning.⁹

(Pseudo) Diogenes the Cynic To Anniceris: Virtue alone is that by which the soul can be strengthened and delivered from its afflictions.¹⁰

Aristotle [Moral] virtue is a habit or disposition involving deliberate choice, consisting in the observance of a mean relative to us, as determined by reason, that is, as a wise and sensible man would determine it. Virtue is a mean that falls between two vices, that which is excessive and that which is deficient.¹¹

Diogenes Laertius (reporting the early Stoic position) Virtue is in one sense the perfection of anything in general, say of a statue. Virtue may be non-intellectual, such as health, or intellectual, such as practical wisdom.¹²

Diogenes Laertius (reporting the early Stoic position) Virtue . . . is the state of the soul that tends to make the whole of life harmonious.¹³

Epictetus (in conversation with a young man) “What about a human being, then? What makes a human being beautiful?”

“Is it not the presence of a human being's virtue, his excellence?”

“Very well, then, young man. If you want to be beautiful, then strive hard to be excellent with the virtue that characterizes a human being.”¹⁴

As the next selections reveal, most Greek philosophers and some orators held that aretē was the key to happiness, to human flourishing.¹⁵ Keep in mind that we could have just as well given “excellence” in place of “virtue.”

Diogenes Laertius Plato held that the goal of life is to become god-like, and that virtue is sufficient in itself for happiness.¹⁶

Plato (Socrates is speaking) He who lives well is blessed and happy.¹⁷

Diogenes Laertius (giving the Cynic position) Virtue is sufficient for happiness.¹⁸

Isocrates Nothing in the world can contribute so powerfully to material gain, to good reputation, to right action, in a word, to happiness, as virtue and the qualities of virtue.¹⁹

Aristotle Happiness is an activity of the soul that accords with perfect virtue.²⁰

Diogenes Laertius (reporting the early Stoic position) The Stoics hold that virtue is sufficient in itself for happiness.²¹

Diogenes Laertius (expounding the early Stoic view) The virtues are goods that have both the nature of ends and means. Inasmuch as they produce happiness, they are means to good things. On the other hand, inasmuch as the virtues are the fulfillment of happiness, being a portion of happiness itself, they are ends.²²

Epictetus Virtue promises happiness and tranquility and a life that flows well.²³

Epicurus (explaining in his Letter to Menoeceus) The virtues have become one with living pleasantly. Living pleasantly is inseparable from the virtues. . . . We

say that pleasure is the beginning point and goal of living happily.²⁴

Rather than a single reality, ancient Greeks commonly held that aretē was many—that there were many excellences or virtues. In general, to be excellent or virtuous was to be the best in anything (recall that aretē is related to aristos, the Greek for “best”)—whether in fighting or rowing or planning or some other activity. More specifically, among the many excellences, we see preeminence, bodily form, stature, speed, strength, beauty, athletic skill, battle excellence (skill in battle), bravery, courage, daring, loyalty, magnificence, grace, dialectic, patient endurance, simplicity, self-control, discipline, piety, skillful knowledge, scientific knowledge, intelligence, and what came to be called the four cardinal (meaning “hinge”) virtues of wisdom (whether practical or theoretical), courage (or fortitude), moderation (or temperance), and justice.²⁵ The next selections present some of these many excellences or virtues (aretai).

Theognis of Megara There is every vice among men and every excellence and every plan of life.²⁶

Homer (Idomeneus is speaking) Idomeneus, the leader of the Cretans, answered Meriones, “I know that you are an excellent man. You don’t have to tell me. For if by the ships we were now choosing the best of all men for an ambush, you’d want to go first. Let me tell you, Meriones, that it is under circumstances like an ambush that the excellence of a man is discerned, and there that the cowardly man or the brave man reveals himself. For while the coward’s skin changes from this color to another—and he can’t sit without trembling or restrain the spirit in his chest, but he keeps shifting his weight from one knee to the other as his great heart rapidly beats, and he frightfully pictures the fates of death taking him, and his teeth begin to chatter—the good man’s skin doesn’t change, nor is he excessively alarmed when he’s chosen first to participate in an ambush of men. Rather he prays to mix quickly in the deadly battle. No, Meriones—in such a situation no man would find fault with your prowess and the strength of your hands. If you were struck by

an arrow or spear, you would not be hit from behind upon your neck or your back. But the weapon would hit you upon the chest or your belly as you were pressing forward to take your place in the front ranks.”²⁷

Homer Hector struck one man alone, Periphetes of Mycenae, the dear son of Copeus, the man who used to deliver messages from lord Eurystheus to mighty Heracles. And from him, from a father far more inferior than he was, was begotten a much better son, superior in every excellence, both in the excellence of his feet and in battle excellence, and in mind, he was among the first of the men of Mycenae.²⁸

Homer Achilles raced against Polydorus, the son of Priam. Polydorus’ father had always refused him permission to fight because he was the youngest of his sons and the one he loved best. He was also the fastest of his sons and could beat any other man with his feet. So it was that right then, when Polydorus was foolishly showing off the excellence of his feet by darting through the foremost fighters, godlike Achilles struck him in the middle of the back as he was racing past him. He struck him upon the golden fastenings of his belt, where the breastplate overlapped. The point of the spear punched through his stomach, exiting his body through his belly button. Immediately, Polydorus fell to his knees, groaning, and a cloud of darkness passed over him as he collapsed, holding his own guts in his hands.²⁹

Homer (Achilles is speaking) Achilles said, “Hector . . . remember every excellence—for now you need to be a spearman and a daring warrior.”³⁰

Homer Then thoughtful Penelope answered him, saying, “Eurymachus, the immortals destroyed my excellences—those of beautiful form and stature—when the Argives, including my husband, Odysseus, embarked for Ilium.”³¹

Homer (Agamemnon is speaking) Then the soul of the son of Atreus, Agamemnon, addressed the suitor

Amphimedon, saying, “Happy son of Laertes, much-able Odysseus! You acquired for yourself an excellent wife, one of great worth. How good was the heart in blameless Penelope, the daughter of Icarius! How faithful in mind to Odysseus, her wedded husband! The glory of her excellence will never fade, but the immortals will make among men on earth a graceful song for thoughtful Penelope. She didn’t plot evil works like the daughter of Tyndareus [Clytemnestra].”³²

Hesiod (relating different “best” things) Zeus gave human beings Justice, which is by far the best thing that has come to be. *And*, To be well-ordered is best for mortal human beings; mismanagement and disorder are the worst. *And*, Keep watch over the measure. Due measure is the best in all things.³³

Simonides of Ceos (said in praise of those men who died at the battle of Thermopylae and of Leonidas’ battle excellence) Of those men who died at Thermopylae—glorious is the good fortune, and beautiful the destiny! Their tomb is an altar. For weeping they have remembrance, for their lot, praise. Mold nor all-conquering time will waste away such a funeral offering. This shrine of brave men chose the honor of Greece as their household. Leonidas himself, the king of Sparta, bears witness to this, he who left behind a great adornment of battle excellence and everlasting glory.³⁴

Simonides of Ceos (on the excellence won by those who fought for liberty and died nobly) If the greatest part of excellence is to die nobly, then Fortune apportioned it to us more than others, for we struggled eagerly to bestow liberty upon Greece, and so we lie here announcing a never-fading eulogy.³⁵

Pindar Our mortal existence drives us toward four excellences.³⁶

Bacchylides of Ceos To have a good portion from the gods is the best thing for human beings. . . . Different men have different honors. And among men there

are countless excellences. Still, one stands out from the rest—it is when a man is governed by just thoughts in everything he must do.³⁷

Panyassis “Friend—come on and drink! This is now an excellence, when someone drinks the most wine during a feast . . . It is equally one for a man to be quick during a dinner banquet as during a battle.”³⁸

Isocrates I speak, not of excellence as that word is used in the arts or in many other activities, but of the virtue that, in the souls of noble and good men, is engendered along with piety and justice.³⁹

Plato (Meno is speaking with Socrates) There are other virtues aside from justice. . . . It seems to me that courage is a virtue, as well as moderation, and wisdom, and magnificence of character, and a great many others.⁴⁰

Diogenes Laertius (reporting Plato’s view) Of perfect virtue there are four kinds or forms: practical wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation. Of these, practical wisdom is the cause of right conduct, and justice is responsible for straight dealing in partnerships and commercial transactions. Courage is the cause that makes a man not give way but stand his ground in alarms and perils. Moderation causes mastery over desires, so that we are never enslaved by pleasure but live in an orderly manner.⁴¹

Demosthenes For of all virtue, I say, and I repeat it, the beginning is intelligence or understanding, and the fulfillment is courage.⁴²

Demosthenes All men would agree with me, I believe, that it is of the utmost importance for young men of your age to possess beauty relative to appearance, moderation relative to the soul, and manliness relative to both, and consistently to possess grace relative to speech.⁴³

Munich Anthology To the lad who had turned red, Philoxenus said, “Be courageous—for this is the color of excellence.”⁴⁴

Aristotle So then, there are two kinds of virtue—intellectual or thinking virtue and moral or ethical virtue.⁴⁵

Aristotle The virtues by which the soul achieves truth in terms of assent and denial are five in number. These are art or skillful knowledge, science or scientific knowledge, prudence or practical wisdom, wisdom or theoretical wisdom, and intelligence.⁴⁶

Diogenes Laertius (reporting the Stoic position) Of the virtues, some are primary, and some are arranged under these primary virtues. There are four primary virtues: practical wisdom, moderation, courage, and justice.⁴⁷

Diogenes Laertius The Stoics hold that dialectic itself is necessary and a virtue, and that it encompasses the other virtues.⁴⁸

Diodorus Siculus Pythagoras delivered many other discourses designed to inculcate the zealous imitation of a moderate life and courage and patient endurance and the other virtues.⁴⁹

Diodorus Siculus Lysis, the Pythagorean, came to Thebes in Boeotia and became the teacher of Epaminondas. And with respect to excellence, he developed him into a perfect man. . . . And Epaminondas, because of the incitements toward patient endurance and simplicity and every other excellence that he received from the Pythagorean philosophy, became the foremost man not only of Thebes but of all who lived in his time.⁵⁰

Diodorus Siculus All excellences are combined in Epaminondas. For in strength of body and eloquence of speech, in splendor of soul, contempt for money, and fairness, and, most of all, in courage and understanding in the art of war, he surpassed them all by far.⁵¹

St. Paul Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is holy, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever

is agreeable, whatever is spoken of well—if there is any virtue and any praise, think about these things.⁵²

St. Peter Earnestly make every effort to add virtue to your faith. And to virtue, add knowledge. And to knowledge, self-control. And to self-control, patient endurance. And to patient endurance, piety. And to piety, brotherly love. And to brotherly love, unconditional love.⁵³

Dio Chrysostom Nearly everyone praises and calls “divine” and “holy” such things as courage and justice and practical wisdom and, in short, every virtue.⁵⁴

Philostratus the Athenian (regarding the religious figure Apollonius of Tyana, a Neopythagorean philosopher) The conversations that Apollonius held in Olympia were about the most useful and profitable topics, such as wisdom and courage and moderation. In a word, they were conversations upon all the virtues. He discussed these from the platform of the temple, and he astonished everyone not only by the insight he showed but also by his forms of expression.⁵⁵

Philostratus the Athenian As they made their way into Mesopotamia, the tax-gatherer who presided over the bridge . . . asked them what they were taking out of the country with them. Apollonius replied, “I am taking with me moderation, justice, virtue, self-control, courage, and discipline.”⁵⁶

Philostratus the Athenian (Thespion is speaking to Apollonius of Tyana) “Practical wisdom is something more than a lack of foolishness, just as courage is something more than not running away from the ranks. Likewise, moderation is something more than the avoidance of adultery. And no one reserves his praise for a man who has simply shown himself to be not bad. Just because a thing is equally far from honor and punishment doesn’t make that thing virtue.”⁵⁷

Athenaeus of Naucratis Now, formerly music was an exhortation to courage. Accordingly, the poet Al-

caeus, one of the greatest musicians that ever lived, sets down courage before skill in music and poetry, being himself a man skilled in war even beyond duty. . . . The ancients considered courage the greatest of all civil excellences, and they attributed the greatest importance to that quality—even to the exclusion of others.⁵⁸

Athenaeus of Naucratis The physician Dioscorides, with respect to the laws praised in Homer, says, “The poet—seeing that moderation was the most desirable excellence for young men, the first of all excellences, and the one that was becoming to everyone, and the excellence that was, as it were, the guide to all other excellences—wishing to implant moderation from the very beginning in everyone . . . appointed a simple and independent mode of life to everyone.”⁵⁹

Julian the emperor Socrates never praised Xerxes or any other king of Persia or Lydia or Macedonia, and not even a Greek general, except for only a very few—those whom he knew to delight in virtue, and to cherish courage with moderation, and to love wisdom with justice.⁶⁰

Procopius For in courage and every sort of virtue, [the accountant] John was well endowed, and to those who associated with him, he showed himself to be gentle and fair to a degree that was quite unsurpassed. So it was, then, that he fulfilled his destiny.⁶¹

In the last few selections, we observe that there were some who were skeptical regarding the virtues. At least they were skeptical of the “system of virtues” as it was developed by the philosophers—the system that was meant to bridle human passions and desires.

Athenaeus of Naucratis Aristoxenus the musician, in his *Life of Archytas*, says that ambassadors were sent by Dionysius the younger to the city of the Tarentines. Among them was Polyarchus, who was surnamed “the Luxurious,” a man wholly devoted to pleasures of the body, not only in deed but in word also.

Polyarchus was a friend of the Pythagorean Archytas and not wholly unversed in philosophy. And so, he used to come with him into the sacred precincts and walk with him and with his friends, listening to his lectures and arguments.

And once, when there was difficulty about the desires together with a consideration of the bodily pleasures, Polyarchus said, “I have often considered the matter, men, and it has seemed to me that this system of the virtues is altogether a long way removed from nature. For nature, when it utters its own voice, orders one to follow pleasure, and it says that this is the conduct of a sensible and wise man. But that to oppose nature and to bring one’s desires into a state of slavery is neither what a sensible nor a fortunate man would do—nor one who has any accurate understanding of what the constitution of hu-

man nature really is.”⁶²

Athenaeus of Naucratis Sotion says that in that play, a slave named Xanthias was represented as exhorting all his fellow slaves to a life of luxury, saying, “Why do you talk such stuff? Why do you run around to the Lyceum and the Academy . . . hunting in vain for all the nonsense of the sophists? There’s no good in it! Let us drink—drink, O Sicon! Let us amuse ourselves while time lets us gratify our souls! Enjoy yourself, Manes! Nothing has more pleasure than the stomach. That’s your father!—your mother! As for the excellences and embassies and military commands, they are but noisy boasts and empty dreams. Fate will come to chill you at its destined time. Take all that you can get to eat and drink. Pericles, Codrus, Cimon—they are but dust!”⁶³

So ends Reading 4. **See you in Reading 5,**
“Aretē as the Means by Which—Competitive, Cooperative & Deifying Excellence.”

NOTES

¹ Pindar, *Nemean* 8.40-41.

² For a typical conversation illustrating how this idea may have developed, one between Socrates and Meno, see the first part of 7 “Plato & Socrates.”

³ For now, we give only the briefest idea of what each philosopher held. For a fuller treatment, see Part 2, where a whole chapter is devoted to each major philosopher or school of philosophy.

⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8.33.

⁵ Plato, *Cratylus* 415c-d.

⁶ Plato, *Republic* 4.444d-e.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.353c. Faithful to Plato’s intention (evident in Socrates’ position), we have modified the line by transforming Socrates’ question into a positive statement. The question: “I am asking about whether a thing that has a function performs it well by means of its own virtue . . .”

⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.12. Diogenes Laertius tells us that the teaching was recorded by Diocles of Magnesia (second or first century BC), who was an ancient historian and writer of biography and summaries. He concentrated on the views, sayings, and lives of the earliest philosophers.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.11.

¹⁰ (Pseudo) Diogenes of Sinope, *Letter* 27 To Anniceris.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.6.15-16 (1107a).

¹² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.90. Note that for the early Stoics, the aretē spectrum (as we have termed it) extended from the non-intellectual or non-contemplative (*atheōrētos*) to the intellectual or contemplative (*theōrēmatikos*) as compared to our more general expanse from the non-living to the living.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.89.

¹⁴ Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.1.

¹⁵ For the ideas of the Greek philosophers, as well as earlier conceptions of happiness, see *Happiness: What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Happiness* (Sugar Land: The Classics Cave, 2021).

¹⁶ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 3.78.

- ¹⁷ Plato, *Republic* 1.354a. By living “well” (the Greek is *eu*) we should understand excellently or virtuously, as Plato makes clear in the remainder of the dialogue.
- ¹⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 6.11.
- ¹⁹ Isocrates, *On the Peace* 8.32.
- ²⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.13.1 (1102a).
- ²¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.127.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 7.96-97.
- ²³ Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4. In the original text, the remark, presented here as a positive statement, appears as part of a conditional. Nevertheless, it is clear that Epictetus believes the “if” is positively true.
- ²⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.132; 128. For Epicurus, virtue is connected to happiness through pleasure.
- ²⁵ Cardinal because every other virtue hinges upon them or is related to them.
- ²⁶ Theognis of Megara 623-624.
- ²⁷ Homer, *Iliad* 13.275-291.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.638-643.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.408-418.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.260-261; 268-269. The phrase “every excellence” also appears in Homer, *Odyssey* 4.725, 4.815, and 18.205, but with no accompanying hint of *which* excellences (as in the *Iliad* 22.268-269, where we see a spearman’s and warrior’s excellence, including daringness [from *tharsaleos*]). In the lines from the *Odyssey*, Penelope longs for Odysseus’ “every excellence.”
- ³¹ Homer, *Odyssey* 18.250-253. See also 19.124-126 for the same.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 24.191-199.
- ³³ Hesiod, *Works and Days* 279-280; 471-472; 694. Recall that “best” is *aristos*, a word related to aretē. In a sense, “best” means “the most excellent.”
- ³⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 11.11.6.
- ³⁵ Simonides, in *Palatine Anthology* 7.251. Said either about those who died at Thermopylae or of the Athenians who perished at Plataea. For this explanation, see *Greek Lyric: Stesichorus, Simonides, and Others*, ed. and trans. David A. Campbell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 527.
- ³⁶ Pindar, *Nemean* 3.74-75. Unfortunately, Pindar doesn’t name the four excellences; however, commentators speculate that they may relate to various stages of life or to what will be known as the four cardinal virtues.
- ³⁷ Bacchylides of Ceos, *Ode* 14.1-2; 6-11. Again, “best” is *aristos*, a word related to aretē.
- ³⁸ Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.18. The speech comes from a fragment of Panyassis’ epic, the *Heraclea*, which is about Heracles.
- ³⁹ Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* 12.183.
- ⁴⁰ Plato, *Meno* 73e-74a.
- ⁴¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 3.90-91.
- ⁴² Demosthenes, *Funeral Speech* 60.17.
- ⁴³ Demosthenes, *Erotic Essay* 61.8-9.
- ⁴⁴ Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.31. Presumably, the lad had turned red with shame—the color those with aretē turn when something shameful occurs.
- ⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1.1 (1103a). The Greek for “intellectual or thinking” is *dianoētikos* and for “moral or ethical” is *ēthikos*. The “or” should not be read as *either one or the other*, for instance, moral *or* ethical; rather, the two terms are, in this case, equivalent—that is, one can translate *ēthikos* with both words. So it goes with “intellectual or thinking” and *dianoētikos*.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.3.1 (1139b).
- ⁴⁷ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.92; 93.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.46. For the Stoic understanding of dialectic, see *ibid.*, 7.42-44.
- ⁴⁹ Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 10.9.9.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.11.2.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15.88.3.
- ⁵² Philippians 4.8. Though a selection from early Christian (Greek) literature, the passage is valuable in that it repeats many qualities or virtues that had long been considered virtues by the Greeks.
- ⁵³ 2 Peter 1.5-7. Again, though Christian, the selection is valuable in that it repeats many qualities or virtues that had long been considered virtues by the Greeks.

READING 4 ▪ THE NATURE OF ARETĒ – GENERAL & SPECIFIC NOTIONS OF ARETĒ

⁵⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *On Virtue* 52 (or 69) 1.

⁵⁵ Philostratus the Athenian, *Life of Apollonius* 4.31.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.20. For other examples of specific virtues relative to Apollonius of Tyana, see *ibid.*, 1.13, 2.5, and 5.35.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.21.

⁵⁸ Athenaeus of Naucratis, *Deipnosophists* 14.23.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.15.

⁶⁰ *The Heroic Deeds of the Emperor Constantius, or on Kingship, Oration II* 79.

⁶¹ Procopius, *History of the Wars* 4.4.20. Earlier, Procopius notes that John “was in charge of the expenditures of the general Belisarius’ household. . . . He was an Armenian by birth, a man gifted with intelligence and courage to the highest degree” (3.17.1-2).

⁶² Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 12.64. Compare his remarks to those of the businessman Callicles (in Plato’s *Gorgias*), who declares that excellence (and thus happiness) is the power and ability to satisfy any and every desire.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8.15.

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