

Appendix A: Excerpts Dealing with Cunning and Persuasion

Detienne and Vernant on *Mêtis*

In the first place, the intelligent ability referred to as *mêtis* comes into play on widely varying levels but in all of them the emphasis is always laid on practical effectiveness, on the pursuit of success in a particular sphere of activity: it may involve multiple skills useful in life, the mastery of the artisan in his craft, magic tricks, the use of philtres and herbs, the cunning stratagems of war, frauds, deceits, resourcefulness of every kind.

Mêtis is itself a power of cunning and deceit. It operates through disguise. In order to dupe its victim it assumes a form which masks, instead of revealing, its true being. In *mêtis* appearance and reality no longer correspond to one another but stand in contrast, producing an effect of illusion, *apate* [deceit or trickery] which beguiles the adversary into error and leaves him as bemused by his defeat as by the spells of a magician.

Such is the ‘duplicity,’ of *mêtis* which, giving itself out to be other than it is, is like those misleading objects, the powers of deception which Homer refers to as *dolos*: the Trojan Horse, the bed of love with its magic bonds, the fishing bait are all traps which conceal their inner deceit beneath a reassuring or seductive exterior.

Sun Tzu on Strategy

V.19 Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something that the enemy may snatch at it.

XI.68 At first, then, exhibit the coyness of a maiden, until the enemy gives you an opening; afterwards emulate the rapidity of a running hare, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose you.

Drew Conley, speaking at Hampton Park Baptist Church, 1/6/02 & 1/27/02

We live in a time when it has become the accepted wisdom to use strategies in this spiritual battle that are nothing more than human resources and ideas. You see it particularly in the church growth industry. . . . We see all these strategies that apply business and psychology principles. It’s not that there is not a place for those things. It’s that they are insufficient for this battle [described in Eph. 6:11-12]. All we’ll end up with is human results and what we need are the mighty weapons of God. . . .

How much of the church of God today is trying to fight heaven’s battles with fleshly weapons! You have but to go into a typical Christian bookstore and look at the advice for church growth and look at the advice that’s given for evangelizing our communities and evangelizing our world and you’ll find mixed in with the armor of God a great deal of secular wisdom. And you come away with the feeling, “If only I

could be a better businessman, if only we could have a more attractive sanctuary, if only we could have a different kind of music, if only we could just couch things the right way to appeal to our world, somehow we'd be winning the battle." The reality is that while it's good to practice good business practices and while it's good certainly to vacuum your carpets and do that which is attractive and worthy of the Lord, these are not the kind of weapons that will win the warfare. The weapons that we need are spiritual. The armor that we need is the armor of God—for secular means and methods are utterly insufficient to produce true spiritual victories. . . . Throw away your formulas. Throw away your techniques and take something that works—the armor of God. . . .

It ["wiles" in Ephesians 6:11] is a word that we get "method" from and it refers to scheming and craftiness. It's used of a wild animal stalking its prey and then suddenly without warning pouncing upon it. Satan is wily. He uses strategies and he's been a long time at practicing them. . . . It's his very nature to lie and be deceptive. In 2 Corinthians 11-14-15 we're taught that he masquerades as an Angel of Light. That's why these teachers and preachers that seem to be so powerful in their rhetoric and they have so many throngs of people who want to hear them and want to see them do miracles—that's why they have such success. It's not that God is with them. It's that they are these angels of light—they're messengers of light. Satan himself can do that. He uses these men. . . .

We're told in the Old Testament that God desires truth in the inward parts [Ps 51:6] and so a heart filled with the truth of God's word will recoil from make-believe Christianity. It will live a life that is characterized as truth. . . . A Christian warrior who is stable and firm and able to stand is one who has taken the truth of God into his heart until it has become his life. . . .

Who are those that are most vulnerable in the battle according to the Scriptures? Well, they are the simple ones. For instance in Romans 16:18, "Those who by good words and fair speeches deceive" whom? "The hearts of the simple." And yet we know from Psalm 119 that if we will immerse ourselves in God's Word and let it change our lives we will be wiser even than our teachers. We're no longer simple. It will make us wise. . . .

If you had to characterize your life it would be characterized by a life that is full of integrity and truth. You are what you are. You're transparent. You're the same in the public arena as you are in the private one. You're the same in your private thoughts as you are in what you say on the outside. Everywhere that people scratch in your life they find that you are true through and through. There's nothing that contradicts. There's nothing that seems hypocritical or inconsistent. . . . How can I hope to be Christ-like? How can I hope to avoid spiritual attack? I must gird myself with truth till it becomes a part of me, till I am a person of integrity, of transparency, of truth. That will keep me from being unstable. . . .

Subtlety in the Scriptures

Genesis 3:1

¹ Now the serpent was more subtil [Hebrew word *arum*; the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT, has *phronimos* here; see below] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Proverbs 1:1-6

¹ The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; ² To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; ³ To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; ⁴ To give subtilty [noun form of *arum*; see below] to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. ⁵ A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: ⁶ To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

arum (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

This adjective is negative when rendered “crafty” (see Job 5:12; 15:5). The most memorable use of *arum* in this negative nuance is, of course, Gen 3:1, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild creature which the Lord God had made.” His “malevolent brilliance” (D. Kidner, *Genesis*, Chicago: Inter Varsity, p. 67) is contrasted by paronomasia to the naked innocence of Adam and Eve in Gen 2:25 (*arum* “craftiness,” vs. *arummim* “nakedness;” see U. Cassuto, *Genesis*, I, p. 143). Given this seminal passage, the comment of our Lord to his disciples is even more surprising: “Be shrewd [*phronimos*] as serpents, and innocent as doves” (Matt 10:16, NASB).

R. L. Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999, c1980). Page 698.

Practical Wisdom in the Scriptures

Matthew 10:16

¹⁶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise [*phronimos*, see below] as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Matthew 25:1-13

¹ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ² And five of them were wise [*phronimos*; see below], and five were foolish. ³ They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ⁴ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ⁷ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom

came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 7:24-25

²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise [*phronimos*; see below] man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Luke 16:1-13

¹ And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. ² And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. ³ Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. ⁴ I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. ⁵ So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? ⁶ And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. ⁷ Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. ⁸ And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely [*phronimos*; see below]: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser [*phronimos*; see below] than the children of light. ⁹ And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. ¹⁰ He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. ¹¹ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 24:45-47

⁴⁵ Who then is a faithful and wise [*phronimos*; see below] servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁷ Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

Phronimos. (The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)

In the Synoptic tradition *phronimos* occurs only in parables or parabolic sayings. Mt. 7:24 compares the doer of the Word to the wise builder who builds his house on a rock. The motif of *phronimos* is secondary. The point is that the wise servant throws himself into the situation in which he is set, taking directions from his master (Mt. 24:45 and par.). Similarly the Christian who sets Christ wholly before him is wise. In

the parable of the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1 ff.) wisdom is preparedness, for everything depends on the actual encounter with the Lord. In the parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:8) wisdom has the sense of cunning. Cleverly resolute action is imposed by the hopelessness of the situation and the resultant urgency. In acting as he does, even the worldly man can be a model for the children of light, *phronimos* in these parables applies to those who have grasped the eschatological position of man. This helps us to see why the term is present in the parable tradition. The metaphor which speaks of the wisdom of serpents (Mt. 10:16) and the simplicity of doves might well be proverbial. But by association with *phronimotatos* in Gn. 3:1 it acquires a biblical significance which is underlined by the reading with *ho ophis* [the serpent] in the singular.

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976). Vol. 9, Page 234.

Persuasion and Rhetoric in the Scriptures

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

¹ And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom [*sophia*, the word for spiritual wisdom], declaring unto you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing [*peitho* meaning persuasive; see below] words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Peitho. (The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)

Peithos or *Peitho* occurs in the NT only at 1 C. 2:4. The very different readings in the transmission of this verse may finally be reduced to two possibilities. . . . As far as the interpretation of the sentence is concerned, it makes no difference which reading we accept. In either case Paul is stating that his preaching does not derive its power to convince from the rhetorical art of human wisdom. The antithesis is: "in the demonstration of the Spirit and power."

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976). Vol. 6, Page 8-9.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵ Casting down imaginations [*logismos*, related to *logos*], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; ⁶ And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-5

³ For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: ⁴ But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as

pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

Ephesians 6:11-12

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Esther 4:14-17

¹⁴ For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? ¹⁵ Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, ¹⁶ Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. ¹⁷ So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

James 3:13-18

¹³ Who is a wise [*sophos*, from *sophia*] man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. ¹⁶ For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Colossians 4:5-6

⁵ Walk in wisdom [*sophia*] toward them that are without, redeeming the time [*kairos*]. ⁶ Let your speech [*logos*] be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Ephesians 5:15-16

¹⁵ See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise [*sophos*, from *sophia*], ¹⁶ Redeeming the time [*kairos*], because the days are evil.

**It is lawful for a Christian teacher to use the art of rhetoric?
Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, Book IV, Chapter 2**

[This debate about using human persuasion in evangelism was particularly important to Augustine, who accepted Christ late in the 4th century. He had been a professional public speaking teacher and after his conversion, he grappled with the problem of how to use persuasive strategies, called rhetoric, to communicate truth.]

Now, the art of rhetoric being available for the enforcing either of truth or falsehood, who will dare to say that truth in the person of its defenders is to take its stand unarmed against falsehood? For example, that those who are trying to persuade men of what is false are to know how to introduce their subject, so as to put the hearer into a friendly, or attentive, or teachable frame of mind, while the defenders of the truth shall be ignorant of that art? That the former are to tell their falsehoods briefly, clearly, and plausibly, while the latter shall tell the truth in such a way that it is tedious to listen to, hard to understand, and, in fine, not easy to believe it? That the former are to oppose the truth and defend falsehood with sophistical arguments, while the latter shall be unable either to defend what is true, or to refute what is false? That the former, while imbuing the minds of their hearers with erroneous opinions, are by their power of speech to awe, to melt, to enliven, and to rouse them, while the latter shall in defense of the truth be sluggish, and frigid, and somnolent? Who is such a fool as to think this wisdom? Since, then, the faculty of eloquence is available for both sides, and is of very great service in the enforcing either of wrong or right, why do not good men study to engage it on the side of truth, when bad men use it to obtain the triumph of wicked and worthless causes, and to further injustice and error?

Human Effort in the Scriptures

Ecclesiastes 8:15

¹⁵ Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 9:10-18

¹⁰ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

¹¹ I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. ¹² For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so *are* the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

¹³ This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it *seemed* great unto me: ¹⁴ *There was* a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: ¹⁵ Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. ¹⁶ Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard. ¹⁷ The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. ¹⁸ Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

¹ Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. ² Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. ³ If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. ⁴ He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. ⁵ As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. ⁶ In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good.