

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04665-8 - Plato's Anti-Hedonism and the Protagoras

J. Clerk Shaw

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PLATO'S ANTI-HEDONISM AND THE *PROTAGORAS*

Plato often rejects hedonism, but in the *Protagoras*, Plato's Socrates seems to endorse hedonism. In this book, Clerk Shaw removes this apparent tension by arguing that the *Protagoras* as a whole actually reflects Plato's anti-hedonism. He shows that Plato places hedonism at the core of a complex of popular mistakes about value and especially about virtue: that injustice can be prudent; that wisdom is weak; that courage is the capacity to persevere through fear; and that virtue cannot be taught. The masses reproduce this system of values through shame and fear of punishment. The *Protagoras* and other dialogues depict sophists and orators who have internalized popular morality through shame, but who are also ashamed to state their views openly. Shaw's reading not only reconciles the *Protagoras* with Plato's other dialogues, but harmonizes it with them and even illuminates Plato's wider anti-hedonism.

CLERK SHAW is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. His articles have appeared in journals including *Classical Philology* and *Polis*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04665-8 - Plato's Anti-Hedonism and the Protagoras

J. Clerk Shaw

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04665-8 - Plato's Anti-Hedonism and the Protagoras
J. Clerk Shaw
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PLATO'S ANTI-HEDONISM AND THE *PROTAGORAS*

J. CLERK SHAW



Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-04665-8 - Plato's Anti-Hedonism and the Protagoras
 J. Clerk Shaw
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107046658

© J. Clerk Shaw 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Shaw, J. Clerk, 1977–

Plato's anti-hedonism and the Protagoras / J. Clerk Shaw.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-107-04665-8 (hardback)

1. Plato. Protagoras. 2. Hedonism. I. Title.

B382.S53 2015

170—dc23

2014037525

ISBN 978-1-107-04665-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	vii
Introduction	i
1. Against hedonist interpretations of the <i>Protagoras</i>	ii
2. Courage, madness, and spirit at 349d–51b	41
3. Drama and dialectic in Plato's <i>Protagoras</i>	73
4. Drama and dialectic in Plato's <i>Gorgias</i> , revisited	102
5. Shame, internalization, and the many	123
6. Hedonism, hedonic error, and ethical error	143
7. Hedonist misconceptions of virtue	171
8. Popular hostility to sophists and philosophers	191
<i>Bibliography</i>	205
<i>General index</i>	210
<i>Index locorum</i>	213

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04665-8 - Plato's Anti-Hedonism and the Protagoras

J. Clerk Shaw

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

I owe special thanks to friends and mentors who shaped every stage of this project: especially Eric Brown, but also Julia Annas, Emily Austin, Rachana Kamtekar, and Rachel Singpurwalla. In each case, for various reasons, I doubt this book would exist without them. Thanks also to audiences who heard parts of the book presented at the American Philosophical Association, the Arizona Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, the College of Charleston, the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, the Tahoe Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A teaching-free semester and a Chancellor's Grant for Faculty Research from the University of Tennessee provided crucial time for developing the project. Thanks to referees for Cambridge University Press and to my colleagues at the University of Tennessee for feedback on the book; I also tested many of its ideas on students in my classes. Finally, I am truly grateful to my family, especially my parents George and Paula, my sister Katy, and my spouse Ginger, for their love and support during this project and throughout my life.

Abbreviations

Plato (Pl.)

<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
<i>Ch.</i>	<i>Charmides</i>
<i>Cr.</i>	<i>Crito</i>
<i>Crat.</i>	<i>Cratylus</i>
[<i>Def.</i>]	<i>Definitions</i>
[<i>Ep.</i>]	<i>Letters</i>
<i>Eu.</i>	<i>Euthyphro</i>
<i>Euthyd.</i>	<i>Euthydemus</i>
<i>G.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>H. Ma.</i>	<i>Greater Hippias</i>
<i>L.</i>	<i>Laws</i>
<i>La.</i>	<i>Laches</i>
<i>Lys.</i>	<i>Lysis</i>
<i>M.</i>	<i>Meno</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	<i>Philebus</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Statesman</i>
<i>Pr.</i>	<i>Protagoras</i>
<i>R.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Sophist</i>
<i>Symp.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
<i>Tht.</i>	<i>Theaetetus</i>
<i>Ti.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
[<i>II Alc.</i>]	<i>Second Alcibiades</i>

Aristotle (Ar.)

<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>Prior Analytics</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Eudemian Ethics</i>

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04665-8 - Plato's Anti-Hedonism and the Protagoras
J. Clerk Shaw
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	<i>List of abbreviations</i>
<i>EN</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Meta.</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topics</i>