9. (B17) The *kosmos* is one. It began to come to be right up at the middle, and from the middle <it came to be> in an upward direction in the same way as it did in a downward direction, and the things above the middle are symmetrical with those below. For, in the lower <regions> the lowest part is like the highest part <in the upper regions>, and similarly for the rest. For both <the higher and the lower> have the same relationship to the middle, unless they have been moved to another location.

(Stobaeus, *Selections* 1.15.7; based on Huffman's translation)

10. (B16) Some *logoi* are stronger than we are.

(Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* II.8 1225a30; Huffman's translation)

11. (B20) [Philolaus correctly called] the number 7 motherless. [For it alone is of a nature neither to generate nor to be generated.]

(John the Lydian, *On the Months* 2.12)

12. (B13) The head <is the location> of intellect, the heart of soul and sensation, the navel of the taking root and growth of the first <part>, the genital organs of the depositing of seed and of generation. The brain contains the principle of man, the heart <contains the principle> of animals, the navel that of plants, and the genital organs that of them all. For they all both flourish and grow from seed.

(Pseudo-Iamblichus, *Theological Arithmetic* 25.12)

13. (58B8) The Pythagoreans similarly posited two principles, but added something peculiar to themselves, not that the limited and the unlimited are distinct natures like fire or earth or something similar, but that the unlimited itself and the one itself are the substance of what they are predicated of. This is why they call number the substance of all things.

(Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.5 987a13–19)

14. (58B4) In numbers they [Pythagoreans] thought they observed many resemblances to the things that are and that come to be . . . such and such an attribute of numbers being justice, another being soul and intellect, another being decisive moment, and similarly for virtually all other things . . . since all other things seemed to be made in the likeness of numbers in their entire nature.

(Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.5 985b28–33)

13. The Sophists

From the time of Homer onward, Greek writers were concerned with questions about the best way of life for a human being and just what virtues or excellences a good person needed to cultivate. Herodotus and other early historians had also provided information about other cultures and their social and political systems and compared these with the Greeks. Yet it was primarily in the fifth century BCE that theories about moral, political, and social questions began to be developed. It was primarily the Sophists who raised and discussed these issues, although as we have seen, some of the Presocratic philosophers were also participants in these debates. Most of the Sophists were professional teachers and rhetoricians, but some active politicians in Athens came to be considered Sophists, and although they did not form a single school or group, there were enough similarities in their activities and viewpoints for them to be considered together. The word "sophist" has its roots in *sophos* meaning "wise," and, in its earliest uses, someone who was a *sophistēs* was a master in his craft or an expert. In general, the Sophists can be considered as practitioners and teachers of wisdom. This obviously raises the question "What is wisdom?" and the Sophists aimed to answer that question, as well as questions about the other excellences or virtues needed by a successful citizen of a Greek city-state,

or polis. Traveling throughout Greece, teaching, giving rhetorical displays, and competing with one another for paying students and audiences, the Sophists were a major part of social and intellectual life, for the questions they raised were fundamental to life in a Greek polis.

Our information about the Sophists comes mainly from Plato, who was not an impartial witness. Like Socrates, his intellectual hero, Plato was suspicious of Sophistic teaching and claims to knowledge, and was scandalized by the fact that the Sophists charged for their teaching and would take on any pupil who could afford the price. Many of Plato's dialogues show Socrates demonstrating that one Sophist or another fails to understand his own views or the nature of the wisdom that the Sophist purports to teach. In his writings, Plato explicitly contrasts Socrates, the independent lover of wisdom (the *philosophos*) with the mere expert technician (the *sophistēs*) who pleases crowds rather than searching seriously for the truth. We should be wary of accepting Plato's views uncritically, and we should treat his evidence about the Sophists—in such dialogues as *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, and the two named after Hippias—with great care.

The Sophists included here are representative of the movement and its methods; there are short claims illustrating views about knowledge and some longer speeches. The texts given here show that a sharp distinction between the philosophers and the Sophists may be untenable.

13.1. Protagoras

PROTAGORAS WAS PERHAPS the most famous of the early Sophists. He was born in Abdera (home of Democritus as well) around 490 BCE and died about 420. He was often in Athens and part of the circle around Pericles (one wonders if he knew Anaxagoras), but he was also very well known in the western Greek cities of Sicily and Southern Italy. Plato's dialogue *Protagoras* presents an unforgettable (if perhaps not entirely trustworthy) picture of the excitement that Protagoras could generate.

1. (80A5) [Protagoras on what he teaches and the value of his teachings.] My boy, if you associate with me, the result will be that the very day you begin you will return home a better person, and the same will happen the next day too. Each day you will make constant progress toward being better. . . . [Protagoras teaches a young man] Good counsel concerning his personal affairs, so that he may best manage his own household, and also concerning the city's affairs, so that as far as the city's affairs go he may be most powerful in acting and in speaking.

(Plato, *Protagoras* 318a, 318e–319a)

2. (80B3) Teaching requires nature and training. . . . Learning must begin at an early age.

(*Anecdota Parisiensia* I 171, 31)

3. (80B10) Art (*tekhnē*) without practice and practice without art are nothing.

(Stobaeus, *Selections* 3.29.80)

4. (80B11) Education is not implanted in the soul unless one reaches a greater depth.

(Pseudo-Plutarch, *On Training* 178.25)

5. (80B4) Concerning the gods I am unable to know either that they are or that they are not or what their appearance is like. For many are the things that hinder knowledge: the obscurity of the matter and the shortness of human life.

(Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 14.3.7)

6. (80B7) [It is not true that geometry studies perceptible magnitudes . . .] For perceptible lines are not the kind of things the geometer talks about, since no perceptible thing is straight or curved in that way, nor is a circle tangent to a

ruler at a point, but the way Protagoras used to say in refuting the geometers.
(Aristotle, *Metaphysics* III.2 997b34–998a4)

7. Protagoras says of mathematics, the subject matter is unknowable and the terminology distasteful.
(Philodemus of Gadara, *On Poetry* P.Herc. 1676, col. 1.12–13; not in DK)

8. (80B1) A person is the measure of all things—of things that are, that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not.
(Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.60)

9. (80A1) He was the first to use in dialectic the argument of Antisthenes that attempts to prove that contradiction is impossible.
(Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 9.53)

10. (80A1) Protagoras was the first to declare that there are two mutually opposed arguments on any subject.
(Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 9.51)

11. (80A21) Protagoras made the weaker and stronger argument and taught his students to blame and praise the same person.
(Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. *Abdera*)

12. (80A21) [Aristotle on Protagoras' method.] This is making the weaker argument stronger. And people were rightly annoyed at Protagoras' promise.
(Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.24 1402a24–26)

What follows is an extract from the anonymous *Dissoi Logoi* (*Twofold Arguments* or *Contrasting Arguments*), a sample collection of arguments for and against various claims, such as for and against Good and Bad, Truth and Falsity, Just and Unjust, and so on. It gives a sample of the sorts of arguments Protagoras or another Sophist might give.

13. (90, 4) (1) Twofold arguments are also stated concerning the false and the true, of which one declares that true *logos* [speech, statement] and false *logos* are different from one another, and others that they are the same. (2) And I say the following. First, that true and false *logos* are expressed in the same words. Second, when a *logos* is spoken, if events have occurred the way the *logos* is spoken, the *logos* is true, but if they have not occurred, the same *logos* is false. (3) Suppose it accuses someone of sacrilege. If the deed took place, the *logos* is true, but if it did not take place, it is false. And the *logos* of the defendant is the same. And the courts judge the same *logos* to be both false and true. (4) Next, if we are seated one next to the other, and we [each] say "I am an initiate of the mysteries," we will all say the same thing, but only I will be truthful, since in fact I am <the only> one <who is>. (5) Now it is obvious that the same *logos* is false whenever falsehood is present to it and true whenever truth is, in the same way a person is the same individual as a boy and as a youth and as an adult and as an old man. (6) It is also stated that false *logos* and true *logos* are different from one another, differing in name just as they differ in fact. For if anyone asks those who say that the same *logos* is both false and true which of the two [namely, false and true] the *logos* that they are stating is, then if it is false, clearly they [the true *logos* and the false *logos*] are two [and therefore not the same]. But if it is true, this same *logos* is also false. And if anyone has ever spoken or borne witness of things that are true, it follows that these same things are false. And if he knows any man to be true, also he knows the same man to be false. (7) As a result of the argument they say these things because if the thing occurred the *logos* is true, but if it did not then it is false. Therefore it is not their name that differs, but the fact of the matter. (8) Moreover, if anyone should ask the jurors what they are judging (since they are not present at the events), (9) these people too agree that the *logos* with which falsehood is mixed is false, and that with which truth is mixed is true. This is the entire difference.
(*Dissoi Logoi* 90.4)