Today

- A Brief history of Greece
- Rhetoric in 5th century Athens
- The Sophists
- Encomium of Helen
• Mycenean Age (1300-800 BCE)
• Archaic Age (800-500 BCE)
• Classical Period (500-400 BCE)
What makes 5th century Athens so ripe for the development of rhetoric?

1. There was a tradition of persuasion in Greek writing
   - Logos: word, thought, the content of language, the thinking which language expressed, often implied logical reasoning
   - Peitho: persuasion
What makes 5th century Athens so ripe for the development of rhetoric?

2. Speech offered social mobility as never before
   - Hellenistic society was moving from an aristocracy to a democracy
   - Greece saw a growth in the middle class
   - Speech gained power in the assembly and money in the courts
What makes 5th century Athens so ripe for the development of rhetoric?

3. Greece had a culture of competition
What makes 5th century Athens so ripe for the development of rhetoric?

4. There was a significant rise in writing and the analysis of language
• Gorgias (485-380)
• Socrates (469-399)
• Isocrates (436-338)
• Plato (429-347)
• Aristotle (384-322)
Who were the sophists?

- They were foreigners
- They were cosmopolitan
- They often held flexible views about truth
- They focused on legal/political effectiveness
- They often claimed to teach arête
- They taught for money
Aristophanes writes in the *Clouds*:

Bold, hasty, and wise, a concocter of lies,
A rattler to speak, a dodger, a sneak
A regular claw at the tables of law,
A shuffler complete, well worn in deceit
A supple, unprincipled, troublesome cheat;
A hang-dog accurst, a bore with the worst,
In the tricks of the jury-courts thoroughly versed
Who were the sophists?

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Know your Sophists--Gorgias

• Concept of kairos attributed to him

• Had a deep belief in the magical/hypnotic effects of speech

• Used antithesis like it was going out of style
Encomium of Helen
Encomium of Helen

Helen went with Paris for one of 4 reasons
- It was the will of the gods
- She was taken by force
- She was persuaded by speech
- She was overcome by love
Encomium of Helen

Basic Structure

– Intro (Prooemium)

– Narration of the facts (prothesis)

– Proof (pistis)

– Conclusion (Epilogue)