

---

Theses

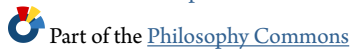
---

2006

A Philosophical Inquiry into the Development of the Notion of Kalos Kagathos  
from Homer to Aristotle

Geoffrey Coad  
*University of Notre Dame Australia*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses>



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material  
by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.

---

Publication Details

Coad, G. (2006). A Philosophical Inquiry into the Development of the Notion of Kalos Kagathos from Homer to Aristotle (Master of  
Philosophy (MPhil)). University of Notre Dame Australia. <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/13>

This dissertation/thesis is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has  
been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of  
ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact  
[researchonline@nd.edu.au](mailto:researchonline@nd.edu.au).



**A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE NOTION OF KALOS KAGATHOS  
FROM HOMER TO ARISTOTLE**

**Dissertation submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy**

**Geoffrey John Coad**

**School of Philosophy and Theology**

**University of Notre Dame, Australia**

**December 2006**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Declaration	v
Acknowledgements	vi
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: The Fish Hook and Some Other Examples</b>	<b>6</b>
The Sun – The Source of Beauty	7
Some Instances of Lack of Beauty: Adolf Hitler and Sharp Practices in Court	9
The Kitchen Knife and the Samurai Sword	10
<b>CHAPTER 2: Homer</b>	<b>17</b>
An Historical Analysis of the Phrase <i>Kalos Kagathos</i>	17
Herman Wankel	17
Felix Bourriott	18
Walter Donlan	19
An Analysis of the Terms <i>Agathos</i> , <i>Arete</i> and Other Related Terms of Value in Homer	19
Homer’s Purpose in Writing the <i>Iliad</i>	22
Alasdair MacIntyre	23
E. R. Dodds	24
A.W. H. Adkins	27
Eric Vogelin	27
The Scenery of Homer’s <i>Iliad</i>	28
The Elopement	30
The Quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles	32
Paris’ Cowardice	33
Phoenix’s Advice to Achilles	34
Odysseus’ Treatment of Thersites	35
The Gods	36
Odysseus’ Return to Ithaca	38
<b>CHAPTER 3: Hesiod</b>	<b>41</b>
An Analysis of the Terms <i>Arete</i> , <i>Panaristos</i> , <i>Dike</i> and Other Related Terms of Value in Hesiod	42
The Use of <i>Agathos</i> by Theognis	47
<i>Dike</i> (Justice)	48
Cornford on <i>Dike</i> and the <i>Tao</i>	52
<b>CHAPTER 4: Solon</b>	<b>55</b>
Solon’s Political Contribution to the Marriage of the Beautiful and the Good.	55
Solon’s Concept of Justice	55
Some Conclusions	59

<b>CHAPTER 5: Plato</b>	61
Relationship between Plato’s Notion of Perception and Aesthetics	61
The Role of the Good in the Suprasensible and Sensible World	62
Dialectic – A Means to Understanding the Good	63
<i>Kalos Kagathos</i> Personalised	65
<b>CHAPTER 6: Aristotle</b>	67
Communal Concerns	68
The Breathalyser and the Artificial Lake	69
Aristotle on the Kitchen Knife	71
The Middle Way	72
Balancing the Emotions	73
<i>Katharsis</i> in Tragedy	73
<i>Eudaimonia</i> : The Marriage of the Beautiful and the Good	75
Aristotle’s Theory of Causation	75
<b>CONCLUSION: Summing up the Kitchen Knife</b>	78
<b>Endnotes</b>	82
<b>Bibliography</b>	89

## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis, I shall attempt to show that the Greeks believed in the ideal of a marriage between the beautiful and the good. This important philosophical ideal rests upon the premise that beauty depends upon function, behaviour and the intention of the agent. It is the anti-modernist position. This notion known to the ancient Greeks as *kalos kagathos*, which dates back to the times of Homer, seems to have been forgotten in our times. This study will trace the development of this ideal from Homer to Aristotle. This world view differs from the one we have come to understand under modernism. First, I will cite some examples of how the beauty of anything can be measured by the amount of human goods it contributes to. Following this I shall discuss the marriage of the beautiful and the good within the context of Homeric and Hesiodic literature, and the influence of Solon in the marriage of the beautiful and the good in bringing about increased political stability in the Greece of his times. Finally, I shall comment on the contributions of Plato and Aristotle to the development of this Greek ideal.

## **DECLARATION**

I acknowledge that all the work presented here is my own work. It does not include material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree at any educational establishment. Neither does it include material that has been previously submitted for any of the coursework which I have already completed. To the best of my knowledge, the dissertation contains no previously published material, or any material published by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of the work.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks and much gratitude are given to my supervisors, Dr Richard Hamilton and Dr Brian Mooney of the School of Philosophy and Theology, University of Notre Dame, for their guidance, enthusiasm, support and most helpful suggestions during this study. I would also like to thank Dr Anthony Imbrosciano and Mr Philip Mathews for the excellent courses they ran, and Mr Phillip Matthews, Dr Giuseppe Naimo, and Dr Judith Maitland for their helpful discussions about aspects of this thesis, all of which I found most helpful in gathering the knowledge and expertise to prepare this dissertation. I would also like to thank the staff at St. Theresa's Library at the University of Notre Dame and the staff at the Reid Library at the University of Western Australia. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my secretary Natasha Bradshaw for her tireless efforts in assisting with the countless revisions of the drafts of this thesis.