Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background : A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). S.v. "Vice and Virtue Lists," by J.D. Charles.¹

VICE AND VIRTUE LISTS

The recording of ethical lists in the Hellenistic world extends formally from the Homeric era yet comes into full bloom among Socratic and post-Socratic moral philosophers, notably the Stoa. Because of interaction between Stoic and Christian discourse in the first century, vice and virtue lists serve a practical rhetorical function as a conventional method of moral instruction in both. This is true even when the two life views diverge radically in terms of the means and the end of the moral life. In the hands of the writers of the NT, the ethical catalog constitutes an important part of early Christian paraenesis.

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1. The Ethical Catalog in Antiquity.

The grouping of ethical values into lists surfaces in diverse cultures of antiquity, from Iran and India to Egypt and Mediterranean cultures. To the extent that religion as practiced by ancient civilizations is characterized by the striving and performing of its adherents, the function of the ethical list can be seen as a natural extension. Enumerating behavior or dispositions to be emulated or avoided can serve a wide array of purposes—both polemical and nonpolemical, prescriptive and descriptive. Ethical lists in the Hellenistic world during the Homeric era occur in diverse literary and nonliterary contexts, as the work of Vögtle has demonstrated. Numerous inscriptions, frequently at gravesites (*see* Burial) and memorials, list virtues in honor of military generals, officeholders, doctors and judges. In Hesiod, one encounters lists of transgressions of the children against parents and transgressions against the gods (Hesiod *Theog.* 77–79, 240–64). Aristophanes utilizes the ethical catalog as part of a satire in a parody of the Eleusinian mysteries (Aristophanes *Batr.* 5.145). And Seneca employs ethical catalogs to describe, with considerable flair, his disgust with the banal trivialities of the theater as well as how fellow Romans indulge in the discovery of new vices (Seneca *Brev. Vit.* 10.4).

2. The Ethical Catalog as a Pedagogical Device in the Hellenistic World.

During the Socratic era, pre-Socratic traces of paraenetic listing blossom both in the hands of academic philosophers and on a popular level among moralists of the day. Philosophical reflection on the theoretical basis for *aretē* ("virtue") moves in the direction of its concrete and practical expression. The ethical list has an epideictic function; that is, as a form of speech it is intended to instill praise or shame (*see* Honor and Shame) in the listener or reader. The ethical

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Brev. Vit. De Brevitate Vitae

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list, by which the ethical life is organized, accented and stereotyped, standardizes a type of attitude or behavior and thus becomes a common feature in the paraenetic tradition.

2.1. Socratic-Platonic Schematization of Virtue. Although the virtues andreia ("courage"), phronēsis/sophia ("wisdom"), sōphrosynē ("prudence") and dikaiosynē ("justice") individually play a central role in the ethical teaching of Socrates, schematization first presses to the fore in Plato, who is the first to designate four "cardinal" aretai. (Formal presentation of the cardinal virtues appears initially in Plato's *Republic*, even when similar formulations of the moral ideal predate this by more than a century—for example, in Aeschylus [Sept. c. Theb. 610]). Xenophon writes profusely on ethical topics—among these, order of the home, healthy relationships, the treatment of slaves, political and military obligations—and yet is not enamored of the fourfold schema. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle distinguishes between ethical, political and social virtues on the one hand and intellectual virtues on the other. For the most part Aristotle resists the fourfold schema that had arisen largely out of the Pythagorean love of the number four, considered to be symbolic of life's completeness.

2.2. Stoic Schematization of Vice and Virtue. The prototypal use of ethical catalogs begins with Zeno (340–265 B.C.), founder of the Stoa, and is expanded under the Stoic teachers who follow. The early masters, notably Chrysippus (280–210 B.C.), tend to use "virtue" and

"knowledge" ($epist\bar{e}m\bar{e}$) interchangeably, a practice that is significant for the Stoic understanding of ethical discourse. Stoic definitions of the cardinal virtues illustrate this conceptualization: justice is knowledge of what is due or right; temperance is knowledge of what to choose or not to choose; prudence is knowledge of what to do or not do in a given situation; and courage is knowledge of what should and should not be feared.

Stoic moral doctrine mirrors both a return to and an expansion of the tetradic schema that characterized Socratic and Platonic ethical teaching. Organization serves an important recall function in Stoic pedagogy. Proceeding from the four cardinal virtues, Stoic teaching derives multiple subsets of virtues. Chrysippus, for example, divides the *aretai* into two groups of cardinal (*prōtai*) and subordinate (*hypotetagmenai*) virtues, with a lengthy list of subordinates thereto attached. One of the most comprehensive catalogs of virtues comes from the Stoic Andronicus, who compiled the writings of his master Chrysippus and whose list contains no fewer than twenty *aretai* (*SVF* 3.64). All in all, the tetradic schema of organizing vice and virtue for didactic purposes occurs more frequently in earlier Stoic lists, with later teachers typically dividing cardinal traits into subsets. We encounter in Andronicus a bewildering array of variety and detail—he lists twenty-seven kinds of *epithymia* ("lust"), twenty-seven kinds of *lypē* ("sorrow"), thirteen kinds of *phobos* ("fear") and five kinds of *hēdonē* ("pleasure") (*SVF* 3.397, 401, 409, 414), although his list pales by comparison with that of Philo, who identifies 147 vices to personify the "friends" of the *philēdonos*, the hedonist (Philo *Sacr*. 32).

The ethical list, which concretizes the moral struggle of the Stoic life view, is not merely confined to philosophical discourse. It appears as well in the poets—relatively frequently in

c. circa, about (with dates); column

Sacr. De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini

Virgil (e.g., *Aen.* 6.732) and Horace (*Ep.* 1.1.33–40), for example—and in popular literature. The more popularized form of vice and virtue lists, while sharing a common vocabulary with Stoic philosophers, loses the tighter schematization that had characterized the scholastics. Those preaching moral uplift to the masses expand the form of the ethical catalog to include new concepts, particularly additional vices. These lists are far from the convoluted philosophical constructs that were advanced by the academic philosophers. People, upon hearing and reflecting, saw themselves in these lists—whether by vice or by virtue. Practical needs of the masses encouraged the use of ethical lists in a popular format.

As a rule, Stoic ethical catalogs do not possess a rigid hierarchy of virtues so as to suggest a moral progression leading to an ethical climax. All virtues stand in close connection to each other; all constitute a natural unity. No particular order or arrangement of virtues or vices came to typify popular usage, although paronomasia is frequently achieved through the word order. Stoic ethical lists were not intended to be all-inclusive, and the presence or absence of particular features in a list reflects the values of the author (Malherbe).

To the Stoic mind, where there exists an antithesis of one virtue, the same necessarily applies to others. For example, the health of one's soul suggests the possibility of psychological sickness. Similarly, the experience of wisdom points to folly; contentment, anxiety; brotherly kindness, enmity; and so on. Just as a virtue can be standardized, so can the corresponding vice.

The *Sitz im Leben* of the dualistic schema is generally agreed to be the propaganda of the moral philosophers. Accordingly, those heeding their advice were considered wise; those casting it aside, foolish. This dualism allows easy incorporation into Hellenistic-Jewish as well as NT literature. In many respects, a conversion to Judeo-Christian faith is conceived of in terms not unlike a conversion to the wisdom of philosophy. Consequently, the ethical list has a useful role in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian postconversion paraenesis. The consensus of classical scholarship is that NT ethical catalogs in form and function derive from Hellenistic usage. Notwithstanding the views of D. Schroeder, who believes the NT catalogs mirror Israel's ethical dualism in the Day-of-the-Lord expectation and Deuteronomic blessings and curses, and more recently R. P. Martin, early Christian appropriation of Stoic categories in the NT is abundant, commensurate with and reflective of Stoic-Christian interaction in the first century (Zeller; Charles 1997).

An impressive array of literature provides a window into the world of ethical discourse roughly contemporary with the early Christians. By its hortatory character, molded against the backdrop of Greco-Roman culture, this served as ethical "propaganda through the living word with personal [i.e., practical] effects" (Wendland, 84). Exemplary writings that make abundant use of the ethical catalog are those of Philo (c. 20 B.C.-A.D. 50), Seneca (c. 4 B.C.-A.D. 65), Epictetus (c. A.D. 50–130), Musonius Rufus (c. A.D. 65–80), Dio Chrysostom (c. A.D. 40–120), Plutarch (A.D. 50–120) Philostratus (late second century A.D.) and Diogenes Laertius (third century A.D.).

3. The Ethical Catalog in Hellenistic Jewish Literature.

e.g. exempli gratia, for example

Ep. Epistulae

i.e. id est, that is

While vice and virtue lists in the narrower sense do not appear in the OT, the tradition of ethical catalogs finds a secure place in the literature of Hellenistic Judaism. Not infrequently these are vice catalogs that are in some way related to sins delineated in the Decalogue. Because Judaism of the intertestamental period is situated in Hellenistic culture, touch points with Stoic philosophy are frequently detected. In reading this literature one senses both polemical and nonpolemical interaction between Jewish and Stoic worldviews.

3.1. *Philo.* A. Vögtle's description of Philo reflects an individual who is at home in both worlds: "By the sheer number and length of virtue and vice lists, Philo seems to have achieved the measure of the Stoic popular philosophers" (107). This impression is confirmed by a survey of Philonic literature (e.g., Philo *Sacr.* 20–27; *Leg. All.* 1.19.56; 2.23.24; *Spec. Leg.* 3.63). Philo is particularly fond of the classical fourfold schema, frequently alluding to the four cardinal passions—lust, sorrow, greed and fear (e.g., Philo *Praem. Poen.* 419; *Exsecr.* 159–60). The number four is so important to him that the four headwaters of the river flowing through Eden (Gen 2:8–14) point to four cardinal virtues (Philo *Leg. All.* 1.19.56; 2.23.24).

While Philo is anchored to the ethical teaching of the OT, he always manages to return to the Stoic emphasis on struggling against vice. From the standpoint of faith, Philo views obedience as important because it produces virtue, just as disobedience and unbelief have a downward ethical trajectory. Stoic categories and OT ethics are able to stand side by side. Philo exemplifies the extent of Stoic influence during the last two centuries B.C. and through the first century A.D. He demonstrates graphically how religious truth could be clothed in relevant literary and philosophical categories of the day, even when Philonic allegorizing may seem to have overextended itself in its attempts to reconcile Hellenistic moral philosophy and the OT.

3.2. *The Wisdom of Solomon.* The Wisdom of Solomon is another relevant example of Hellenistic influence on Judaism. In this work the reader encounters the four cardinal virtues, whose tutor is said to be the wisdom of God (Wis 8:4, 7). Correlatively, serving false gods is the equivalent of ignorance (agnoia) and must be countered with the gnosis of God (Wis 14:22). In Wisdom of Solomon 14:25–26 a lengthy list of vices proceeds characterizes the life that is absent the knowledge of God; it manifests "blood and murder, theft and fraud, depravity, faithlessness, disorder, perjury, suppressing the good, ingratitude, soulish defilement, sexual confusion, marital disorder, adultery and licentiousness." Stoic influence in Wisdom can also be seen in the admonitions toward reflection (e.g., Wis 4:11; 12:10). The author is not concerned, however, to correct the sins he catalogs; rather, he is content merely to list the depths of depravity to which Gentiles have descended.

Although ethical lists appear in the writings of the Qumran community, Qumran ethical teaching is molded primarily by the dualism of the righteous and unrighteous, light and darkness—characteristic Qumran theology—and less by Hellenistic literary-rhetorical patterns of vice and virtue (cf. however Wibbing and Kamlah). The *Rule of the Community* commends

OT Old Testament

Leg. Legum Allegoriae

Spec. Leg. De Specialibus Legibus

Praem. Poen. De Praemiis et Poenis

cf. confer, compare

humility, patience, charity, goodness, understanding, intelligence, wisdom and a spirit of discernment (1QS 4:3–6) while condemning greed, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and ill temper, folly and insolence, lustful deeds and lewdness, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart (1QS 4:9–11).

4. The Ethical Catalog in the New Testament.

4.1. *The Logic and Language of Virtue and Vice.* The use of the ethical catalog by NT writers derives from its function in Hellenistic and Jewish literature. As with Judaism, the theological motivation behind its usage is the dualism in which the righteous and unrighteous are typified. In the NT, both strands—Hellenistic form and Jewish theological assumptions—merge in the Christian paraenetic tradition (Charles 1997).

Ethical catalogs appearing in the NT take on two syntactical arrangements, as identified by A. Vögtle and S. Wibbing. They can be polysyndetic, such as the list in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, where members are bound together rhetorically through the repetition of conjunctions in close succession ("Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolators nor adulterers nor prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor greedy persons nor drunkards nor revilers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God"); and they can be asyndetic, such as in Galatians 5:22–23a, where no connective particle is used ("But the fruit of the Spirit consists of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, humility and self-control"). The lists distributed throughout the NT are fairly evenly divided between polysyndetic and asyndetic forms. D.E. Aune detects a third category, "amplified" lists, which are more discursive in form, and cites 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7 as an example.

Thirteen virtue lists appear in the NT, all but two of which are found in epistles: 2 Corinthians 6:6–8; Galatians 5:22–23; Ephesians 4:32; 5:9; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:12; 1 Timothy 4:12; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:10; James 3:17; 1 Peter 3:8; and 2 Peter 1:5–7. This listing excludes 1 Corinthians 13, which concerns the theological virtues and contains particular features of the ethical catalog. Twenty-three vice lists are found in the NT, all but two of which also occur in epistles: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21–22; Romans 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Corinthians 6:9–10; 12:20–21; Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 4:31; 5:3–5; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 Timothy 1:9–10; 2 Timothy 3:2–5; Titus 3:3; James 3:15; 1 Peter 2:1; 4:3, 15; Revelation 9:21; 21:8; 22:15 (*see DPL* and *DLNTD*, Virtues and Vices).

The Pastoral Epistles contain the densest usage of ethical lists in the NT, all of which suggest a social location of the audience not unlike that of 2 Peter, in which the foundations of morality are being called into question. S. C. Mott calls attention to the fact that adverb forms of three of the four Platonic cardinal virtues—prudence ($s\bar{o}phrosyn\bar{e}$), uprightness ($dikaiosyn\bar{e}$) and piety

(eusebeia) appear together in Titus 2:12 with the verb *paideuein* ("educate" or "train"). Seen thusly, the ethical end of salvation, at the least, manifests the goal of virtue posited by Hellenistic moral philosophy (see also the vocabulary of 2 Tim 3:16: *pros paideian tēn en dikaiosynē*, "training in righteousness"). N. J. McEleney identifies in the Pastorals the presence of five basic elements as part of a literary strategy: references to the law, a background of pagan idolatry,

1QS Serek hayyaad or Rule of the Community, Manual of Discipline

DPL Dictionary of Paul and His Letters

DLNTD Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments

moral dualism, transfer of Hellenistic conceptions of vice and virtue to the Christian context and eschatololgical punishment.

4.2. New Testament Vice Lists. Despite the variety found in the ethical catalogs of the NT, there appears to be an "early Christian paraenetic formula" that characterizes numerous NT vice lists. Those sharing this schema have the function of reminding the readers of what characterized their former life; thus Paul to the Corinthians: "And this is what some of you used to be" (1 Cor 6:11a; cf. Rom 13:13; Tit 3:3; 1 Pet 4:3). Furthermore, idolatry (*eidōlolatria*) and sexual impurity (*epithymia, porneia, akatharsia* or *aselgeia*) appear together frequently in NT vice lists (e.g., 1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 21:8; 22:15). This may well correspond to the twin stereotypes of pleasure (*hēdonē*) and lust (*epithymia*) that frequently appear in pagan lists. There is reason to believe, as B. S. Easton (4–5) suggests, that the Hellenistic Jewish literary form of denouncing Gentile practice via lists of grossly depraved deeds was adopted by the NT writers, for whom it served a useful purpose.

A regularly appearing feature in the Christian paraenetic tradition is the formula *apotithēmi* ("put off") plus a list of vices. This pattern occurs in Romans 13:13; Ephesians 4:22 (again in 4:25); Colossians 3:8 and 1 Peter 2:1.

4.3. New Testament Virtue Lists. Fewer conventional formulas accompany virtue lists than vice lists in the NT. This may derive from the fact that for Christian writers righteousness rather than moral goodness per se is essential. The NT's most noteworthy listing of virtues, which has not been listed as an ethical catalog per se, is the recording of beatitudes in Matthew 5, with which none of the other NT lists share any affinity. On the whole, NT virtue lists both bear similarity to and diverge from their pagan counterparts. For example, the qualities of an elder listed in 1 Timothy 3 are reminiscent of qualities necessary of a military general; in the same vein, the lists in Philippians 4:8; Titus 1:7–8; 3:1–2 and 1 Timothy 3:2–3 diverge little from pagan usage (Easton, 11). The opposite, however, can be said of the virtue lists in Galatians 5:22–23 and 1 Timothy 6:1.

4.4. The Form and Function of New Testament Ethical Lists. Vice and virtue lists in the NT function paraenetically in different contexts. They may be used for the purpose of antithesis (e.g., Gal 5:19–23 and Jas 3:13–18), contrast (e.g., Tit 3:1–7), instruction (e.g., 2 Pet 1:5–7) or polemics (e.g., 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:3–5; 2 Tim 3:2–5). Although these lists resist any attempts at being reduced to a single *Urkatalog* or set pattern, the rhetorical effectiveness of ethical catalogs lies in the fact that content is emphasized by means of repetition or cadence. Occasionally, though not necessarily, alliteration or assonance and inclusio enhance their descriptions. A unified structure is hard to detect, and rhetorical motivation is not always apparent, with the notable exceptions of Philippians 4:8 and 2 Peter 1:5–7. The latter, unlike other catalogs of virtue in the NT, depicts a natural progression that is rooted initially in faith and finds its climax in Christian love. The reader may assume that the progression and climax of virtues in 2 Peter 1 is mirroring a concrete situation in which there has been a fundamental ethical breakdown (Charles 1997, 44–98, 128–58). In order to address this crisis, the writer is utilizing a standard hortatory device to underscore the necessity of the moral life as proof of one's profession both to the Christian community and to the world (2 Pet 1:10; 3:11).

Given the considerable variety with which virtue catalogs appear in Jewish and early Christian literature, the repetition of particular virtues in NT and subapostolic lists may point to an additional function. The inclusion of *pistis* ("faith"), *agapē* ("love") and *hypomonē*;

("endurance") in 2 Peter 1:5; Revelation 2:19; *Barnabas* 2.2ff. and *1 Clement* 62.2 are evidence to Vögtle that virtue catalogs may have acquired in the apostolic paraenetic tradition a catechetical function (54; see also *1 Clem.* 64; *Herm. Man.* 8.9; Ign. *Eph.* 14.1). That Christian catechesis may have been preserved in such a format is not implausible; a catalogical format is faintly suggested by confessions of faith such as are found in 1 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 2:11–13. Irrespective of their precise function, for the writers of the NT virtues are no artificial mechanism. Rather, they are a natural expression of one's organic union with Christ, indeed the fruit of divine grace.

See also Philo; Philosophy; Plato, Platonism; Stoicism; Wisdom of Solomon.

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Herm Hermeneia

LEC Library of Early Christianity

ANRW Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin, 1972-)

JSNTSup Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

SHC Studies in Hellenistic Civilization

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

NovT Novum Testamentum

ed. edition; editor(s), edited by

Stoa (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1933); R. B. Todd, "Stoics and Their Cosmology in the First and Second Centuries A.D.," ANRW 2.36.3 (1989) 1365–78; H. Trüb, Kataloge in der griechischen Dichtung (Zurich: Buchdruckerei Winterthur, 1952); A. Vögtle, Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament (NTAbh 16 4/5; Münster: Aschendorff, 1936); H. Wendland, Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum (HNT 1.2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1907); S. Wibbing, Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament und ihre Traditionsgeschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Qumrantexte (BZNW 25 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1959); D. Zeller, Charis bei Philon und Paulus (SBS 142; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990); O. Zöckler, Die Tugendlehre des Christentums (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1904).

J. D. Charles

NTAbh Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen

HNT Handbuch zum Neuen Testament

BZNW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

SBS Stuttgart Bibelstudien