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*Deliberation as an Exercise of Practical Reason in Ancient Greece: Aristotle and the Sophists*

The presentation distinguishes between the different meanings of the practice of 'deliberation' in Ancient Greek philosophy and rhetoric. Following Josiah Ober's analysis in his 2022 book *The Greeks and the Rational. The Discovery of Practical Reason*, we may differentiate between two major meanings of practical reason, which is considered the major theoretical framework for 'deliberation' understood as practice in moral philosophy as well as rhetorical discourse. Practical reason is generally about 'motivation for action'. The first meaning of practical reason and thus of the practice of 'deliberation' is as 'instrumental' ('means to end') reason. This understanding of practical reason as instrumental reason opens the door for the reading of 'deliberation' in relation to various subjects, all of which are present in ancient rhetorical speeches, from political strategy to economics, and from moral pragmatic reasoning to judicial matters. The second major understanding of practical reasoning, and of its incumbent notion of 'deliberation', is as 'practical (moral) reason', and thus as a 'means to an end' (but moral) reason. This notion of practical reason and of its consequent deliberative practice is specific to philosophy (as in the case of Aristotle) and it involves the 'rational authority of morality'. In the Aristotelian reading, morality is always the best suitable (practical, instrumental) 'practice' for a means to an end rationality. In other words, morality is always the most practical, the most instrumental 'tool' suitable to attaining ends in terms of rationality. The discussion of practical reason and its different understandings in Ancient Greek philosophy, sophistry and rhetoric is highly productive, as it unfolds the basic elements of modern rational choice theories, relevant in interpretations regarding the the process of choice in various circumstances, such as economic, political, and judicial decision-making, moral choice, and others.