

Xenophon's Image of Socrates in the *Memorabilia*

Modern scholars have had a low scholarly opinion of the historicity and the intellectual level of Xenophon's Socrates. The first decade of the second half of this century found the author of the *Memorabilia* almost impenetrable: 'Es ist nicht klar, was man mit ihm anfangen soll' ('It is not clear what should be done with him'),¹ and explained the unsatisfactory nature of his Socrates in terms of his biography: 'His (Xenophon's) prolonged absence from Athens during some of what may be considered perhaps the most crucial years in the life of Socrates made it impossible for him to gather any first-hand information about Socrates'.² More recent opinion also preserves earlier views about the literary and historical failure of the work: 'Xenophon quite closely resembles a familiar British figure—the retired general, staunch Tory and Anglican, firm defender of the Establishment in Church and State, and at the same time a reflective man with ambitions to write edifying literature (American Xenophons do not seem to be so common).'³ To this (the Socratic) controversy Xenophon, in idleness in distant Scillus, resolved to make his own contribution, with an apology of the master which did not get beyond the two books later collected as the first two of the *Memorabilia* books, which, in all probability, remained outside the controversy and

¹ O.Gigon *Kommentar zum Ersten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien* Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft Heft 5 (Basel 1953) 1.

² A.-H.Chroust *Socrates, Man and Myth. The Two Socratic Apologies of Xenophon* (London 1957) 3.

³ T.H. Irwin on L. Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Writings*, in *Phil.Rev.* 83 (1974) 409-13.

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were put into circulation with the book of *Memoirs*, which was composed later and repeated or plagiarized the memoirs of others'.⁴ 'Unfortunately the disciple's devotion is not matched by his talent, and his attempt to defend his Master actually has the effect of dragging Socrates down to the level of his own mediocrity.'⁵ And this estimate has continued into the nineties: 'We may fall back on the general grounds on which Plato's testimony has the greater credibility: he had come to know Socrates intimately over a period of years before his master's death and then had spent many years deepening and clarifying that knowledge by writing philosophy as a Socratic. Xenophon's acquaintance with Socrates is of unknown duration and probably no better than casual. And in Plato we have a witness who could be counted on to understand the philosopher in Socrates as only a philosopher could, while the best we could expect from Xenophon is what we could learn about Socrates from a gifted litterateur. Suppose we had two accounts of Bertrand Russell's philosophy, one from G.E. Moore, the other from H.G.Wells. Would we hesitate for a moment between the two?'.⁶

Some voices have been raised in reasoned protest against these views however,⁷ and it seems likely that the pendulum may shortly swing the other way.⁸ This paper restricts itself to explaining just one of the features of the *Memorabilia* that have

⁴ M.Montuori *Socrates. An Approach* (Amsterdam 1988) 23.

⁵ Montuori (n. 4) 60.

⁶ G. Vlastos *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge 1991) 298. Wells was never one of the three great pupils of the great man: D.L.2.48-59.

⁷ D.Morrison, 'On Professor Vlastos' Xenophon', *Anc. Phil.* 7 (1987) 9-22, argues in opposition, but made no impact on Vlastos (n.6).

⁸ There are some small signs in Paul Vander Waerdt (ed.) *The Socratic Movement* (Ithaca and London 1994), with contributions on Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and *Memorabilia* by Thomas Pangle (127-50), David O'Connor (151-80), Donald Morrison (181-208) and John Stevens (209-37).

led to the traditional opinion of the author and his work, which is his apparent repetition of subject matter. I will argue that the repetition of the belief and practice and teaching of Socrates regarding the worship of the gods, which Xenophon presents at 1.1, 1.3.1-4, 1.4, 4.3 and again at 4.6.2-4, can be seen as the deliberate presentation of a progressively more complex image of Socrates. This means that no single episode represents a complete image nor should any be treated as definitive, and that the progression of the whole should be grasped before any premature judgements are made on the basis of an isolated passage. The investigation and the conclusions reached in the paper about this part of the Socratic image also apply to other areas of his beliefs, practice and teaching, but these will not be dealt with here.⁹ The reasons for his gradual revelation of the deeper teachings of Socrates could be that it was expedient to lead an hostile audience only gradually to recognise the more controversial depths of a man put to death for his lack of traditional religion and corruption of the young, or more positively that it was effective to establish his virtue through amplification, which was a part of the technical arsenal of rhetoric and relied on ever more impressive restatements of the point at issue.¹⁰

⁹ Though it is always inviting disaster to say so in print, my book on the *Memorabilia*, with the provisional title of *The Framing of Socrates* may soon be forthcoming.

¹⁰ Longinus the rhetorician, *On the Sublime* 11-12, recognises amplification or αὔξησις as an essentially rhetorical strategy: 'Whenever the subject matter and the issues from section to section admit of several false starts and halting places, then one great phrase after another is wheeled onto the stage with increasing force. This may be done either by the development of a commonplace, or by exaggeration, or by laying stress on events or arguments, or by careful husbandry of the facts or feelings. There are ten thousand kinds of amplification... to give a rough definition, amplification consists in accumulating all the aspects and topics inherent in the subject and thus strengthening the argument by dwelling upon it'. His references to fresh starts and halting places has relevance to the issue of repetition in the *Memorabilia*. Xenophon halts at the end of the defence to make a fresh start at the beginning of the collection of conversations, and again at the end of the first transitional passage to make a fresh start on the answer to the critics' objections, and the content of the defence is repeated and amplified in the transition, and now here again in the main section. The repetitions

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The *Memorabilia* can be seen as a series of restatements regarding the charges of the trial. The first part consists of a refutative defence of Socrates against the charges of his trial, but in ways that take the charges well beyond Plato's *Apology* and deal not only with his divine sign and his belief and practice regarding the gods (1.1) but also with his corruption of his associates through the encouragement and endorsement of various types of vice (1.2). Most are aware that Xenophon follows this with the beginning of a more positive assertion of his 'helpfulness' or 'usefulness' or 'use' to all kinds of people in a range of areas of human interest (1.3 onwards), but the continuing emphasis in this more positive section on those parts of his instruction which concern the charges of irreligion and corruption of the young is perhaps less well appreciated. There is then the appearance of a third beginning with the reference to critics of Socrates who consider that his teaching is incomplete, and Xenophon's answer to it (1.4 onwards). This section also begins with the gods and control of the appetites, which is a major part of the corruption of the young in the defence (1.4-5).

These various beginnings (1.1, 1.3, 1.4) have contributed to a tradition which maintains that the work was composed in two or three parts, separates off the 'defence' from the 'memories' about Socrates to which the original title alludes (*ἀπομνημονεύματα*), and finds internal divisions even within these sections.¹¹ I see this bipartite or tripartite impression as one of the results of the neglect or misunderstanding of the technique of amplification. It happens that the three sections which have been at various times alleged to be fresh compositional beginnings all begin by re-stating

highlight the usefulness of Socrates in a variety of modes and take the opposition ever deeper into the issue.

¹¹ The school of compositional division has persisted from H. von Arnim *Xenophons Memorabilien und Apologie des Sokrates* Historisk-Filologiske Meddelelser 8 (Copenhagen 1923) through to V. Longo *ANER OPHELIMOS Il problema della composizione dei 'Memorabili di Socrate' attraverso lo 'Scritto di difesa'* (Genoa 1959). H. Erbse, 'Die Architektonik im Aufbau von Xenophons Memorabilien', *Hermes* 89 (1961) 257-87, finds the unity of the work in the literary form.

Socrates' attitude to the gods, they complement each other and contribute to an amplification of the image, binding the apparently separate sections rather than separating them. There are other continuities besides from the defence, not least the theme of the 'helpfulness' or 'usefulness' or 'use' of Socrates and his teaching, which comes to dominate the image to the exclusion of almost anything else, and inside which the orderly amplification of the subjects of both religion and the improvement of the young (as opposed to their corruption—they were 'helped' rather than 'harmed' by Socrates) is framed.¹² The continuity from 1.3-4 can also be established through a complete understanding of the context of the criticism that introduces 1.4 (see below).

Xenophon first defends Socrates against the charge of believing in and worshipping not the gods of the city but novel deities

¹² The announcement of the helpfulness (ὠφέλιμος, ὠφελία) of Socrates, which dominates every single vignette from 1.3, is foreshadowed in the defence in his teaching (that his associates should honour what they value, and they value what is helpful to them) and in the argument that he was himself so helpful to the city and so valuable that he should have been honoured rather than sentenced to death. He first develops the equation as the content of Socrates' teaching in the area of personal relationships in his defence against the charge of corruption of the young (1.2.49ff.), and he then applies it to Socrates himself in order to prove him worthy of honour rather than execution because of his value and helpfulness to others (1.2.62-4). He next announces a programme of authorial memories to demonstrate this helpfulness (1.3.1) and proceeds to show Socrates helpfully applying his teaching on helpfulness in a wide variety of contexts to a wide variety of interlocutors from that point on throughout the rest of the text. The key word 'helpful' along with its associates announces its arrival in a cluster when Socrates teaches the original equation (1.2.51, 52 twice, 54 twice, 55 twice, 57, 59, 61). It leads the programmatic statement of intention to prove his helpfulness (1.3.1) and appears from then on in almost every episode in the work: 1.4.4, 5; 1.5.3; 1.6.9, 14; 1.7.2; 2.1.25, 28; 2.3.7, 19 (twice); 2.4.1; 2.6.4, 16, 24 (twice), 15, 37; 2.7.7, 8, 9, 10 (thrice), 12, 22, 23; 3.1.1; 3.3.15; 3.4.11; 3.5.16, 22, 23; 3.6.2, 3, 14, 15; 3.7.5, 9; 3.8.1; 4.1.1 (5 times); 4.2.11, 32; 4.3.6, 7, 8, 11, 17; 4.4.1; 4.5.6, 7, 10; 4.6.8 (6 times); 4.7.4, 6, 8, 10; 4.8.11 (twice). It is missing only from the occasional short vignette (2.2, 2.5, 3.2, 3.13-14). The word χρήσιμος sometimes substitutes, mainly for objects that are helpful: 2.1.30; 2.3.1; 2.4.5; 2.7.5 (5 times); 2.7.7 (thrice); 2.9.4; 2.10.2, 3; 3.1.7; 3.5.28; 3.8.8, 9; 3.9.15; 3.12.3, 5, 7; 4.1.3; 4.3.6, 7, 8; 4.5.2; 4.6.9 (thrice); 4.6.10 (twice).

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(καινὰ δαιμόνια) (1.1.1). He uses a variety of customary rhetorical arguments. The first, which is recurrent throughout this part of the defence, is that Socrates was always in the open air and visible in his activities, sacrificing openly at home and on the public altars and using divination, yet no-one saw him commit irregularities, but all saw him worship (1.1.2,10,17). He was indeed perfectly normal in his religious practices, particularly in respect of the divine sign (δαιμόνιον), which in Xenophon's opinion led most of all to the charge of irreligion (1.1.2); it was no more irregular than the signs that other people interpret ('he introduced nothing more novel: καινότερον than the others' 1.1.3), except that Socrates called his sign a god, whereas the majority referred to their birds or whatever, by which they nevertheless meant the god (1.1.4). His confidence in the guidance of the divine sign is moreover proof that he believed in the gods (1.1.5). He indeed divided human affairs into what was within the grasp of human knowledge and had predictable outcomes and what was not and needed divine guidance, recommending divination for the latter and human effort for the former (1.1.6-8). Xenophon redefines the charge of religious 'strangeness' in the process of this argument as failure to recognise the difference between the human and the divine, and he turns the charge of 'strangeness' back on those who consult the gods about everything or about nothing, regardless of which category they fall into, or those physics professors who investigate the heavens rather than humanity and reach no more agreement than madmen:

1.1.9: τοὺς δὲ μηδὲν τῶν τοιούτων οἰομένους εἶναι δαιμόνιον ἀλλὰ πάντα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης γνώμης δαιμονᾶν ἔφη

1.1.12: τὰ μὲν ἀνθρώπινα παρέντες, τὰ δαιμόνια δὲ σκοποῦντες.

Xenophon goes on to make his defence against the corruption of the young (1.2). He then shows the positive 'helpfulness' of Socrates in a second treatment of his attitude to worship. The narrative now describes how Socrates prescribed how people should worship the gods of the city he was previously alleged not to worship or believe in, and it amplifies some of his practices

dealt with in the first treatment. The rhetoric now presumes that the defence is done, the purely negative view swept aside (1.3.1):

Ὡς δὲ δὴ καὶ ὠφελεῖν ἐδόκει μοι τοὺς συνόντας τὰ μὲν ἔργῳ δεικνύων ἑαυτὸν οἷος ἦν, τὰ δὲ καὶ διαλεγόμενος, τούτων δὴ γράψω ὅποσα ἂν διαμνημονεύσω.

This announcement of a programme of authorial memories is to be considered the start of a new section, but the question is what kind of new start? The possibility of a compositional break is belied by the gradual development of the theme of 'helpfulness' over the later part of the defence against the corruption of his associates. It can rather be seen as the first wave of amplification of the content of the defence. The first aspect of the amplification is that Xenophon now abandons refutation and begins to establish something more positive in the same area of the activity of worship in which the charge was made. Aristotle confirms these as two modes of proof, the refutative and the expository argument.¹³ The second aspect of the amplification concerns the content of Socrates' belief and his instruction. He repeats the idea that Socrates was always visible in his practices (1.3.1), and then amplifies the areas of his religious activity by sub-dividing them into 1. general principle (1.3.1), 2. prayer (1.3.2), 3. sacrifice (1.3.3), and 4. divination (1.3.4).

The general principle that Socrates laid down for religious worship is based on the response of the priestess from Delphi who when asked how to worship in any particular way to achieve any particular end answers: 'according to the law of the city' (νόμῳ πόλεως). This assertion continues to defend him against the charge of not honouring or believing in the gods of the city οὓς μὲν ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζων), but makes him more impressively the actual author of the doctrine that people should worship as the city requires, which turns the charge on its head. Xenophon also amplifies his presentation by sub-dividing his material into Socrates' own practice, the advice he gave to others

¹³ Arist. *Rhet.* 1396b: ἐλεκτικὰ δεικτικά.

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and his opinion of those who did not follow his advice. This was merely implicit in the defence, in references to his approval/disapproval of certain courses of action consequent on divination (1.1.4), and to his own practice and approval of the pursuit of human knowledge and condemnation of those who investigated physical rather than human affairs as something approaching insanity (μωραίνοντας ἀπεδείκνυε 1.1.11, τοῖς μαινομένοις ὁμοίως διακεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀλλήλους 13) because they reached no agreement and held completely conflicting views. Thus, Xenophon says of the principle from Delphi that Socrates 'did this himself and advised it to others and thought those who worshipped otherwise meddlesome and empty' (περιεργούς και ματαίους), and he will say of prayer how he prayed and what he thought of others who did differently, and of divination how he observed the signs and condemned the folly of those who did not (μωρίαν κατηγορεῖ) etc.

His belief that the gods know what is best in the area of unforeseen outcomes, which was also an important part of the defence, is amplified in the area of prayer, for Socrates prayed only for 'good things' and left the rest up to the gods on the grounds that they best knew the outcomes, and thought that those who prayed for specifics were just gambling on the future. This amplification takes the illustration of the principle made in the defence for granted, that there is no way of knowing how some things will turn out, whether a field you sow will be yours to harvest, whether the house you build will be yours to live in, and so on (1.1.8). The reader is expected to remember what has passed.

His belief regarding sacrifice introduces a new feature not found in the defence, which was the endorsement of the Hesiodic principle of sacrificing 'according to ability', making no difference between small or great offerings, on the grounds that it would not be good for the gods to delight more in the sacrifices of rich criminals than those of good men, who were poor, nor would this make life for men worth living. He endorsed this principle of giving according to ability in relations with men as well as gods. This is the first allusion to the poverty of Socrates, which is developed in the subsequent amplification of his improvement of

the young and his other associates by not encouraging their material desires.

His practice regarding divination, already well known from the defence, is amplified by the image of the one who ignores divination as like one who follows a blind guide who does not see or know the way, but nevertheless leads along it. The amplification of 'he did thus, he advised thus and thought those who did not take his advice foolish' is reasserted, and a reason is given for ignoring divination: the fear of disrepute among men, which he himself is said here to have scorned. The division between the human and the divine sphere of knowledge continues to be strongly marked.

The amplification is gradual, with the main tendency toward the positive activity and advice, and some areas more developed than others. The view of the relations between the gods and men in this section amplifies and exemplifies the doctrine expressed in the defence that what is useful is considered valuable and is therefore honoured. The gods advise men about unclear outcomes, and are valuable to them in this respect and they delight accordingly in the sacrifices they receive as 'honours' for this (*κεχαρισμένα*). Socrates will argue in later amplifications that the gods are the greatest benefactors of mankind because they are 'helpful' or 'useful' to mankind in that they have designed him to live in the world (1.4) and have designed the world in which he lives for his own use (4.3). They are so valuable and their works so useful that man can never repay them in full, but can at least not fall short of his means and honour them 'according to his ability'. The relationship between gods and men is like that between the rich man and his poorer friend, which is developed at length in several later episodes in his section on friendship (2.4-10). The idea of 'cultivating' (*θεραπεύειν*) the gods in the same way as men recurs (1.4.18, 4.3.9).

Xenophon goes on to amplify the charge of corruption of the young through the encouragement of their appetites, ending with his famous attempt to educate the young Xenophon himself and his friend Critoboulus. The programme of authorial memories is

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then interrupted by the criticism Xenophon imagines will be made of the incomplete process of education which Socrates practised in his *elenchus* (1.4.1):

'If some people think that Socrates, as some write and speak about him from inference, was excellent at turning men to virtue, but was not able to take them there, let them consider not only the questioning refutations that he carried out against those who thought they knew everything in order to check them, but also what he said in daily talks with his associates, and then let them test whether he was capable of improving his associates'.

This has also been seen as the beginning of a new section, originally written separately from what precedes. The full explanation of the criticism is beyond the scope of this paper, but arises in the first instance from the immediately preceding instruction of Xenophon and Critoboulus, which convicted them of error in their evident desire for carnal love, but advised them only to run a mile or go abroad when they came across beautiful boys they wanted to kiss (1.3.8-15). This was incomplete and unsatisfactory. It would have been more helpful to explain how they might control their appetites, as Socrates evidently was able to control his, and still remain in Athens. The accusation of incomplete teaching is also attested in the *Cleitophon* and the incomplete part of the process is also expressed there in terms of the need for a more 'helpful' statement or explanation of the 'works' (that is, the functions and achievements, the purposes) of qualities such as virtue and the rest.¹⁴ Cleitophon found Socrates excellent at that vital and 'most helpful' (408c) part of philosophy which he calls 'protreptic', which calls men to virtue, but he suffered a disappointment when he began asking for further information (408c). He wanted to know 'what follows on protreptic' (408d) and what are the 'works' of virtue (410a)—for example, what the body is and what specific care it needs, in order to follow up the exhortation to care for it. Yet he could

¹⁴ R. B. Rutherford *The Art of Plato* (London 1995) 98-101 describes this dialogue, of which Plato may or may not be the author.

make neither Socrates nor his pupils give him the answers to his questions. They were all too ready to talk about the 'benefits' ($\omega\phi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$) of what they prescribed, but they 'fled' giving him what he wanted to know about the 'works' (410a). Cleitophon concludes (410b) that they were either unable or unwilling to serve him.

These 'works' ($\epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha$) of the gods as well as their 'benefits' will be key words in the ensuing episode, which is Xenophon's first answer to the criticism. He now raises a fresh wave of amplification, beginning again with religion and setting off the series of conversations which form the main part of the *Memorabilia*. The previous treatment of the worship of the gods (as well as the control of the appetites) was prescriptive and could well be described as incomplete, as the criticism suggests, for it offered no justification for honouring the gods except the law of the city, and even the sanction of the Pythia, who spoke for a god herself, rather begged the original question of whether the gods deserved their worship. Socrates now offers that justification.

The first major aspect of this amplification is the introduction of Socratic process. Socrates has previously issued prescriptions in accordance with his own practice and disapproved of those who did not follow them. He offered no reasons as to why people should follow his example. He now engages individual and sometimes hostile interlocutors in conversation and reasons them through to a decision that his prescriptions are correct and that it is right for them to follow them. The instruction becomes therapeutic and *ad hominem*. Xenophon's definition of Socratic process emerges by illustration in these early stages of the work. He will however offer more definitive statements as the work nears its end—typical again of the amplificatory approach (4.5.12-4.6.1, 4.6.13-15). These illustrations and the later definition of process emphasise the use of the leading question and answer to refute ignorance, of definition, classification and analogy in proving the points, and particularly the progression toward a conclusion through mutually agreed stages. Socratic irony is never as pronounced or complex (by Vlastos' definition) in

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Xenophon's Socrates as in Plato's, but the disclaimer of knowledge is inherent in the questioning style.¹⁵

There are additional aspects of the amplification in the choice of the interlocutor and the content of the instruction. Socrates in the previous section practised sacrifice, prayer and divination and accused those who did not adopt these practices of folly. Aristodemus represents exactly the type of man whom Socrates condemned. He makes use of none of these types of worship, and evidently advises others not to, for he laughs at those who do, returning the contempt of Socrates in equal measure (1.4.2):

'I shall first say what I heard from him when he conversed about the god with Aristodemus, called the Small. Discovering that he neither sacrificed to the gods nor used divination,¹⁶ but laughed at those who did so, he said, "Tell me, Aristodemus.."'

The main argument developed by Socrates is according to the central feature of his image and the central feature of his doctrine, that you should honour those who are valuable, that is, those who are 'helpful' to you. In order to make Aristodemus honour the gods in the traditional ways, he will prove that the gods are helpful to all men including Aristodemus and are therefore worthy of his honour. He mischievously shapes his argument to his interlocutor when he uses his notoriously small body as a literal microcosm of the world's design (1.4.8). Xenophon's Socrates is never without his humour. This positive demonstration is very far removed from the negative *elenchus*, which sought to reveal ignorance rather than instil knowledge. The 'works' and 'creations' of the 'worker' and 'creator' of mankind pervade the conversation.

¹⁵ Morrison (n.7) discusses aspects of Xenophon's Socratic method with reference to bibliography by Vlastos. See also Vlastos (n.6).

¹⁶ Some editores veteres added a reference to prayer as well, evidently aware of the earlier treatment.

Socrates begins characteristically with a leading question about those 'works' of men that Aristodemus admires and he replies with a certain degree of enlightenment by classifying them into the categories of epic, dithyramb, tragedy, sculpture, painting. This classification allows Socrates to proceed by agreed stages toward his analogy between these 'creators' of works of art and the gods who have 'created' mankind. The gods should at least be *admired* as much as the artists! Socrates then puts a sequence of questions offering choices based on definitions to Aristodemus. He has him admit that he would feel even more admiring of those who created living sentient beings, but Aristodemus is no slouch and adds—as long as they were the product of deliberate design rather than chance. This will be an essential part of the argument. Socrates then leads him to define deliberate design in terms of its capacity to be useful and lectures him on how the anatomical design and the instincts of mankind are entirely helpful to him, therefore not the work of chance but of design. He invites Aristodemus to decide whether these aspects of mankind are the 'works' of chance or design, and Aristodemus has to agree to design, adding that looked at in this light, they are those of a very 'life-loving' creator/craftsman, and further, that the creator who gave men and women the desire to raise children and implanted such strong instincts in them for survival must have deliberately wanted them to live:

'Tell me, Aristodemus, are there any men you find a source of wonder for their skill?

There are.

Tell me their names.

In the creation of hexameters I have found Homer the greatest source of wonder, in dithyrambs Melanippides, in tragedy Sophocles, in statuary Polycleitus, in painting Zeuxis.

Do you think that those who create senseless and unmoving images are more worthy of wonder, or those who make live and sentient beings?

Those who make live ones, by Zeus, as long as these come from deliberate design rather than some accident.

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Among those things clearly not made by chance are the works of art.

It should be the same with the works of design.

Do you think that the usefulness of their work is not heard audible through their nostrils were not?

[The lecture continues in this fashion.]

'No by Zeus, the devices of art are not made by chance.

And to implant the instincts of the mothers, to give them up and the great things of the world.

It is certain that the creator deliberately takes care of them.

The direction of the argument is whether he thinks that the challenge of design is an essential part of the developing before the world did not also is made of the same rest of the world, to the small amount have 'mind' as 'wisdom', it must be design, like the best.

Among those things which have no obvious purpose and those things clearly made for usefulness ($\omega\phi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$) which do you think are the works of design and which of accident?

It should be that the things made for usefulness are the works of design.

Do you think the original creator of mankind gave them for usefulness their various senses, eyes to see visible things, ears to hear audible things, and what use would there be in smells if the nostrils were not there?'. (1.4.2-5)

[The lecture continues, establishing the 'foresight' of the gods in this fashion.]

'No by Zeus, if you look at it that way, these look very like the devices of a wise and life-loving workman.

And to implant love of children, to implant love of nursing in the mothers, to give the greatest longing for life to those brought up and the greatest fear of death?

It is certain that these too look like the devices of one who has deliberately taken thought for the existence of living beings'. (7)

The direction then seems to change. Socrates asks Aristodemus whether he thinks he has any 'wisdom' and Aristodemus offers the challenge of question and answer: 'Ask me and I'll reply', which is an essential part of the Socratic process and has been developing before our eyes in the previous discussion. Socrates argues that if he has wisdom even in his small body (something he could not deny of course!), it would be absurd to think that the world did not also have wisdom in it. After all, he knows that he is made of the same earthly material that is so abundant in the rest of the world, and it is unlikely that this does not also apply to the small amount of wisdom in his body, so the earth too must have 'mind' as well, and if the world has the associated 'wisdom', it must be the product of deliberate and harmonious design, like the body.

It is possible to challenge this kind of argument from design,¹⁷ but Socrates is directing it here at a particular individual, as the argument from the microcosm of the small body of Aristodemus shows, and the test of the argument should really be whether Aristodemus accepts it. Xenophon certainly allows him to make no effective challenge. The rest of the conversation consists merely of a series of short objections to the almost inevitable wrestling hold that Socrates will put on his interlocutor.

Aristodemus suddenly refuses to accept the proposal that the gods have made mankind on the grounds that he does not see the maker of the world as he sees the makers of other things. He would in another world be an evolutionist. Socrates argues back that the soul, which is the maker/master of the body, is also unseen, and that by denying the invisible mind of the creator, Aristodemus runs the risk of denying the existence of his soul, and thereby saying that his own actions are all mere chance rather than deliberate (and therefore by his earlier argument not at all to be admired!). Aristodemus tacitly accepts this, but says next that the god is too great to need his service. Socrates replies that the greater the service, the more need for honour. Aristodemus grants that he would honour the gods if he believed that they cared for man. Socrates gives another long lecture on the design of the body and the soul of man which proves their care. Mankind has the best adapted body (upright carriage, hands, speech, year-round sex) and the noblest soul (the only creature who comprehends and worships the gods and takes rational care of itself 1.4.11-14). Aristodemus finally says he will believe this and honour the gods when they send messengers telling him 'what to do and what not to do' as Socrates says they send messengers to him, a reference to his divination. Socrates reminds him of the public divination of the Athenians and others apart from himself, amplifying the earlier argument of the defence about the omniscience of the gods. He then gives a third lecture on how the divine 'mind' rules the world, ranging far further and far more

¹⁷ Irwin (n.3) has a low opinion of the argument, but it has had a very long life nevertheless: R. Dawkins *The Blind Watchmaker* (Harlow 1986).

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effectively than the puny resources of Aristodemus would (1.4.16-18). Xenophon ends with the observation that his instruction on the omniscience of the gods made his associates 'keep away from injustice' (1.4.19).

This amplification touches the heart of the true originality of Socrates, which was his process. There is no complex irony, and perhaps the definitions are not operating at the level of the Platonic, but the questioning and progression through agreed stages toward the inevitable conclusion is not inappropriately developed for an interlocutor like Aristodemus. He is a stubborn character, not easily assenting to the proposition when he sees himself in danger of accepting it. The triple exposition of doctrine in the three long monologues in the midst of the question and answer technique is not typical of the earlier Platonic dialogues, but it is found in his middle and later periods. More significantly for the present argument, the monologues contain essential justification and amplification of the beliefs of Socrates, and satisfy those critics who complained that Socrates and his crew told them to pursue virtue and the like, but never described the 'works' which might justify the pursuit, and in this case told them to honour the gods without the description of the 'works' for which they should be honoured. Perhaps it was mean-minded to ignore the procedural importance of irony, *elenchus* and self-determination, but it was on the other hand a very practical criticism.

The sophistication of this stage of Xenophon's amplification can be judged against some of Plato's representations. The doctrine itself that the 'works' of the gods are helpful to men and merit honour can be found potentially in Plato's *Euthyphro*, when Socrates asks Euthyphro to try to define what it is that the gods 'accomplish' (*ἀπεργάζονται* 14). He offers the case studies of the general and the farmer who 'accomplish' victory for the city in battle and crops from the land and invites the response from induction, recalling Xenophon's Socrates' set of analogies of areas in which the gods hold the final outcome in their hands, but Euthyphro significantly refuses to answer and reverts to the definition of piety which Xenophon's Socrates gave in his

prescription, that it is pious to do in prayer and sacrifice what is pleasing (κεχαρισμένα) to the gods. Plato's Socrates is disappointed not to pursue his inquiry, but proves Euthyphro's definition at least inconsistent with their previous agreements, and continues to take it for granted that the gods are responsible for 'all good things' (15). Plato's Socrates is still searching to define these 'good things' whereas Xenophon's Socrates has found them, it seems. The stranger in Plato's *Sophist* also refers to Xenophon's two theories of creation of the world, the one through the active intelligence of the gods, which is design, the other through chance, and he not only espouses the idea that the 'works' of the gods involve the deliberate creation of the whole animate and inanimate world (265c) and uses the same language as Xenophon in the conversation with Aristodemus of the 'creator god', but tells Theaetetus that if he did not also have this view, he would make him agree 'with cogent persuasion'. Xenophon supplies that persuasion. Perhaps the level of persuasion Plato had in mind would be more exciting than the argument from design used by Xenophon's Socrates, but the emphasis on the anatomy of the body seems somehow particularly appropriate for such a little man as Aristodemus, and the notion of the vast mind of the creator indwelling in the enormous universe is a nice partner for his smallness of stature. This episode is besides only an intermediate stage in the amplification of the instruction.

Euthydemus is the focus of the fourth amplification of the topic of religion. The fourth book offers an extended version of the Socratic education of a particularly spirited individual, who was one of those who thought he knew everything and was therefore by definition a candidate for the *elenchus* (see 1.4.1), which he receives in full measure (4.2). It looks so self-contained that it has been subject to the theories of separate composition. Yet amplification proves again to be behind the appearance of a fresh beginning, not least the amplification of the dual process of instruction, negative and positive, required by the critics of 1.4.1. Arrogant enough to think that he had no need of instructors in any area of life at all, but could reach his goals in life through reading the books from his vast library, Euthydemus was subjected to extreme ironic *elenchus*, in which he several times admitted

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ignorance of definitions of even the most obvious qualities, such as justice, and the most obvious processes, such as knowing oneself, and the most obvious subjects of inquiry, such as the nature of a democracy (4.2). Chastened, he was then subjected to more constructive dialectic instruction (4.2.40, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6). The first two topics in this more positive instruction are predictably the need to honour the gods and the need for self-control (4.3, 4.5), which mirror the two basic charges of the defence. Xenophon now amplifies these for an interlocutor who is a potentially excellent pupil marked out for leadership, who has been subjected to *elenchus* and whose subsequent greater co-operativeness demonstrates the full value of the dual process of 1.4.1. Aristodemus had not been prepared in this way, and remained obstinately and persistently opposed to the proposition Socrates was trying to endorse. There is indeed in that earlier conversation no absolute sign that he did ultimately reform the small man.

The argument is again from design. Socrates starts significantly with the last argument he tried on Aristodemus, that the gods cared for men, as if he were picking up where he left off (1.4.11-15), and he asks Euthydemus whether he has reflected on the way in which the gods have arranged for the needs of mankind to be fulfilled. There is no question of resistance. Euthydemus merely has not reflected. He then assents question by question to the points Socrates previously established in monologue lectures with Aristodemus. There is more genuine interchange between Euthydemus and his mentor and more automatic agreement than previously. Socrates also advised Aristodemus to honour the gods by appealing mainly to the design of man, but he advises Euthydemus to honour them by appealing to the design of the world, because it enhances the usefulness of the design of man. Aristodemus accepted the argument that eyes are useful, but Euthydemus is offered the new angle, that to permit this usefulness to emerge, the eyes need the light of the world. Euthydemus shows the ability to participate positively beyond mere yes or no from the outset, when he adds that men would be blind without the light for all their eyes (4.3.3). The arguments proceed to mutual agreement on the usefulness of night, of the sun, the moon, the earth, etc. Socrates receives assent to every point

from Euthydemus, often to the extent of a sentence or longer, always on the right track, that the design of the world for men indicates a deliberate act of loving creation (χαρίτος ἄξιον 4.3.4, φιλάνθρωπα 5, προνοητικόν 6, ὑπερβάλλει ... φιλανθρωπία 7, ἀνθρώπων ἕνεκα 8). Euthydemus comes finally to the conclusion that the gods seem to have no other 'work' at all apart from their service to mankind (4.3.9).

Euthydemus also states the difficulties in the argument in a modest rather than a confrontational way. Thus he says 'there is something in his way' and this is that the other living creatures in the world also benefit from the gods' design of the universe, diminishing the uniqueness of mankind—until he is shown that even their enjoyment of the world is ultimately for the benefit of mankind. He can even add his own contribution: that even the stronger animals tend to be subdued to the service of man (4.3.10). He is also unlike Aristodemus immediately disposed to accept the invisible presence of the gods, referring in more complimentary fashion to the signs that Socrates received from the gods 'unmasked' as proof that they treat him in even more 'friendly' fashion than the rest of mankind (4.3.12). There is a particular amplification of the invisibility of these makers of the universe which Aristodemus found so problematic, on analogy with the soul and several other similar phenomena (4.3.13-14). Finally where Aristodemus thought the gods too great to need his honour and had to be persuaded to that point of view (1.4.10), Euthydemus' heart positively fails him at the immensity of the honour he knows he must render for these services (4.3.15). Socrates cheers him up at this point (as he did not in his *elenchus*) by giving him the same instruction as in his earlier prescription, to worship according to the law of the city and sacrifice according to ability and pray only for the greatest goods (1.3.1-4):

'Do not be down-hearted, Euthydemus. You see that the god in Delphi when anyone asks him how to please the gods, answers: "According to the law of the city (νόμῳ πόλεως)". There is a universal law that the gods be pleased with rituals 'according to ability' (κατὰ δύναμιν). How would anyone honour the gods more finely or piously than doing as they order? But you must not fall

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short of your ability. When a man does this he is then clearly not honouring the gods. You must leave nothing out and honour the gods according to your ability, and be of good heart and hope for the greatest blessings. For a man would not be sensible to expect greater prospects from others than those who are able to give the greatest help, nor otherwise than if a man should please them. And how would one please them more than by obeying them most of all?'. (4.3.16-17)

We have come full circle from the prescription of 1.3. The key ideas are all there: worship according to the law of the city and according to ability, and please the gods in this way. The categories of prayer and sacrifice and divination are taken for granted. The substantial difference is that the argument is now adapted for the greater wealth of Euthydemus, who is warned 'not to fall short' of his capacity in sacrificing, rather than being apprised of the value even of small sacrifices. The god of Delphi himself now answers the question rather than his priestess, and replies not as in 1.3.2 how an individual should sacrifice, but how the individual is to thank the gods, using the language of 'pleasing, serving and thanking' that Euthydemus has endorsed.

The level of the instruction has been considerably increased for Euthydemus even though the conclusion remains astonishingly the same. The heart of the amplification is not the doctrines themselves, but the process. The doctrine has nevertheless advanced from the idea that the design of mankind is the work of a loving creator to the idea that the design of the world itself is the work of a loving creator, with more sophisticated reference to the workings of the sun and the moon and the other heavenly bodies.

The importance of the dialectic part of the image of Socrates to Xenophon's view of his excellence is why the fourth amplification is followed now by a fifth, which is Socrates' search for Euthydemus' assent to a dialectic definition of piety (4.6.2-4). The search for definitions now becomes explicit: 'Socrates thought that those who knew what each of the essences was (τί ἕκαστον εἶη τῶν ὄντων) were able to convey them to

others'. The 'essences' are the definitions. The technical side of the dialectic of Socrates was probably least understood by those hostile to him, and this may be why it is the culmination of the treatment of the image. This dialectic treatment of the worship of the gods is part of the wider description of the helpfulness of Socrates in making men skilled in dialectic reasoning (which is in turn an amplification of the collection of definitions of the noble and the good in the middle part of the third book, 3.8-9).

Socrates now demonstrates the particularly brief dialectic process which Plato's *Protagoras* 335a, b calls βραχυλογία and he produces rapid and formulaic definitions not only of piety, but also of justice, wisdom, the good, the beautiful, courage etc. (4.6.2-4). The essence of all of them is shown to be knowledge. The definition of piety is, predictably and again significantly, the first in order:

'What sort of thing do you think is piety, Euthydemus?'

And he replied, 'The finest thing, I think.'

Can you say what sort of person the pious man is?'

'It seems to me it is the one who honours the gods.'

'Is it permitted to honour the gods in any way you like?'

'No, there are laws according to which you must honour the gods.'

'Would the one who knows these laws know how to honour the gods?'

'I think so.'

'So does the man who knows how he must honour the gods think that he must do this otherwise than as he knows?'

'Not at all.'

'Does a man honour the gods in a way other than he knows is necessary?'

'I do not think so.'

'So the man who knows the laws about the gods would honour the gods lawfully?'

'Yes.'

'So then the man who honours them lawfully honours them as he must?'

'How not so?'

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'And the man who honours as he must is pious?'

'Yes, he said.'

'So the man who knows the laws about the gods would rightly be considered pious by us?'

'It seems so to me.'

The sheer verbiage is typical of the Platonic Socrates and in spite of the possibility of subjective judgements to the contrary, the amplification has culminated in the true representation of the heart of his process. The doctrine remains the same, except that piety is now a matter of procedure explicitly dependent on knowledge, but the process has made huge advances since the time of the prescriptions.

There is a sixth stage as well. The final chapter raises the charge that Socrates was convicted of falsehood regarding the *daimonion* because, though he said it gave him warnings of what to and what not to do, he was still executed by the Athenians (4.8.1). This is the last gasp of the opposition that generated the criticism of 1.4. It is finally revealed that the divine sign instructed Socrates not to prepare his defence, which meant that it instructed him to die. This does not amplify the understanding of his teaching or his attitude to the divine sign very much, though the previous representation of his views on religion completely justifies his decision to obey the sign, and permits Xenophon to argue strongly against the idea that he was misled about the sign (4.8.5). Rather, the final reference takes the reader right back in a version of ring composition to the initial argument of the defence, in which the topic of fraudulence (*ἀλαζονεία*) with regard to the divine sign was touched on and dismissed (1.1.5), and to the time of the trial and execution, at which time the opposition were very much present.

The structure of the presentation of the image of Socrates in respect of his teaching on the worship of the gods is very clear and deliberate. The defence of Socrates against the charge of not worshipping according to the law of the city was amplified first of all into his prescription to worship according to this law; then this prescription was amplified into his dialectic instruction of

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Aristodemus who did not worship according to that law but laughed at those who did, and then of Euthydemus who was subjected to the full Socratic process, being humbled and prepared for enlightenment through *elenchus*, who was moreover not contemptuous like Aristodemus, but simply had not reflected on the reasons why he should honour the gods and presumably did it unthinkingly; the amplification culminated in the illustration of his dialectic method of finding the definition of piety, which isolated and amplified the heart of one of his special techniques, and was offered to Euthydemus as a basic tool for his future use. The basic content of the teaching of Socrates remains extraordinarily consistent, that piety was essentially a matter of obeying the law of the city and honouring the gods according to ability, but the amplification of the process moves apace, from defensive argument to prescription, to dialectic instruction of a recalcitrant and then a co-operative individual, and finally to the heart of the method, the definition of piety which depended, as all other Socratic definitions do, on knowledge and understanding.

Plato was fond of seeing arguments as shackles that pinned down concepts as on those wretched statues of Daedalus that kept running around loose—a good image for prescription without justification. The early representations of the Xenophontic Socrates' teaching are unshackled, but the process of mutual agreement has chained them in place for Euthydemus. The Platonic Socrates might have given a more complex answer to the question of the 'works' of the gods, but Euthyphro's assertion that they are responsible for 'all good things' corresponds in essence to Xenophon's 'greatest benefits', and Plato's Socrates seems disinclined to challenge the idea even if he would be likely to want to explore the arguments about the precise nature of this 'good'.

The investigation shows that though Socrates' basic prescription about the need to honour the gods is unchanging, as was inevitable with such a basic part of cultural belief, the amplification of his process, which is the more important part of the contribution of Socrates, means that no single treatment of a

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topic can be plundered in the process of understanding the image, but that the whole must be considered—which is something that seldom happens to the *Memorabilia* these days. The amplificatory tendency might even mean that even the apparently completed image is not the final word. Amplification in its essence leaves an impression of the possibility of further development beyond the closure of the final episode, and of higher levels at which Socrates might argue his justification of the worship of the gods, which could be theorised above the level of the law of the city to some higher and abstract realm—something perhaps that might appeal even to a Plato.

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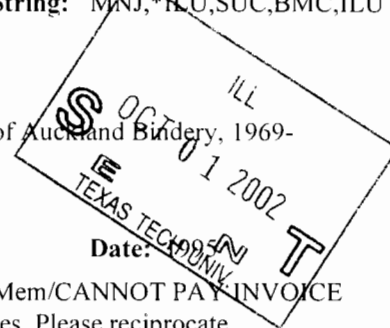
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