PLATO, *ALCIBIADES I* 122e

At *Alc. I* 132a Socrates dignifies Athens with a Homeric quotation: εὐπρόσωπος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ μεγαλήτορος δῆμος Ἐρεχθέως alludes to *Il.* 2.547 δῆμον Ἐρεχθῆος μεγαλήτορος. The words are adapted to the syntax of Socrates' sentence and to the Attic dialect.

At 122e dittography has perhaps deprived Sparta of a similar accolade. According to the MSS, Socrates says χρυσίου δὲ καὶ ἀργυρίου οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν πᾶσιν Ἕλλησιν ὅσον ἐν Λακεδαίμονι ἰδίαι. In defence of ἰδίαι it could be argued that Socrates here alludes to the controversy over private wealth and property in Sparta;[1] but his main point seems rather to be the sum total of gold and silver in the country as a whole. Read ὅσον ἐν Λακεδαίμονι δίαι. This paroemiac includes the familiar hexameter formula describing Sparta (Thgn. 1087 ἐν Λ. δίηι |, *Od.* 4.702, 5.20 ἐς Λ. δῖαν |, *Od.* 3.326, 4.313, 13.440 | ἐς Λ. δῖαν), provides confirmation from Homer of Socrates' argument, and lends a nice touch of irony at this point in his speech.[2] Socrates has just quoted a comic poet (121d), and he is about to cite a fable of Aesop (123a).[3]

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[1] See S. Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* (London, 2000), esp. pp. 35, 60, 176, 433. Denyer ad loc. explains in addition that 'only in the 370s did the Spartan state start to receive contributions from its allies in cash rather than in kind (Xen. *HG* 5.2.21–2); hence the talk of money held privately'.

At the beginning of his speech, Socrates said ἡμεῖς δὲ αὐτοί τε ἰδιῶται καὶ οἱ πατέρες (121a), but that remark seems not to be relevant at this point in his argument.

[2] The allusion may be more specific. At *Od.* 4.73 Telemachus expresses astonishment at the amount of gold, silver, etc. in Menelaus' palace (χρυσοῦ τ' ἠλέκτρου τε καὶ ἀργύρου ἠδ' ἐλέφαντος), and with pious modesty Menelaus acknowledges that he is blessed with excellent κτήματα (81, 93); later he speaks of 'horse-taming Argos' (99 Ἄργεος ἱπποβότοιο): cf. *Alc. I* 122d ἀνδραπόδων κτήσει τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῶν εἱλωτικῶν, οὐδὲ μὴν ἵππων γε.

[3] I should like to thank *CQ*'s reader and Professor Mark Joyal for their help with this note.

HERACLIDES PONTICUS, THE SNAKE KEEPER

In his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, in the section *Life of Heraclides Ponticus* at 5.89, Diogenes Laertius reports the account of a scheme that Heraclides contrived for his death. Diogenes Laertius identifies the source of his information as the work *On Poets and Authors of the Same Name* (Περὶ ὁμωνύμων ποιητῶν καὶ συγγράφεων) by the first-century B.C. author Demetrius of Magnesia.[1] In the latest edition of Diogenes Laertius by M. Marcovich,[2] this story is printed in the following form:

[1] S.J. Mejer, 'Demetrius of Magnesia: on poets and authors of the same name', *Hermes* 109 (1981), 447–72; fr. 18 p. 463.

[2] M. Marcovich, *Diogenes Laertius.* Vitae Philosophorum, vol. 1, *Libri I–X*; vol. 2, *Excerpta Byzantina* (Stuttgart–Leipzig, 1999).

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