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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Θρέψαι αὐτὸν δράκοντα ἐκ νέου καὶ αὐξηθέντα, ἐπειδὴ τελευτᾶν ἔμελλε, κελεῦσαί τινι τῶν πιστῶν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα κατακρύψαι, τὸν δὲ δράκοντα ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης θεῖναι, ἵνα δόξειεν εἰς θεοὺς μεταβεβηκέναι.

This anecdote is translated in the Loeb edition by Hicks,[3] whose text does not differ from that presented by Marcovich, as follows:

> As a boy, and when he grew up, he kept a pet snake, and, being at the point of death, he ordered a trusted attendant to conceal the corpse but to place the snake on his bier, that he might seem to have departed to the gods.

The first problem with this translation concerns zoology, that is, the lifespan of a snake, which does not seem to exceed at best a maximum of 40 years. According to the usual understanding of this account, Heraclides kept one pet snake from boyhood to his death. If we assume that Heraclides was born between 390 and 380 B.C. and died after the death of Alexander the Great,[4] then the pet snake he is supposed to have kept as a boy 'and when he grew up' (Hicks) or perhaps better: 'after he had grown up' (did he take it with him to Athens, where he spent more than 20 years, and to Colophon, where he collected for Plato the poems of Antimachus?[5]) must have been long dead by the time he arranged for his own disappearance and the substitution of a snake for his corpse.

In my view, the Greek can, and should be, understood differently: *αὐξηθέντα* should not refer to the subject of the infinitive, Heraclides (*αὐτὸν*), but the object, the snake (*δράκοντα*). The point of the anecdote is not that Heraclides had a hobby of keeping snakes around him from childhood to old age, but instead is the much more interesting, and seemingly more dangerous, alternative that he kept the snake even after it had grown up completely. The fact that it was a fully-grown snake explains why it scared the daylights out of most of the mourners, as we later learn.

The understanding proposed here is the way the author of the Byzantine epitome of Diogenes Laertius understood his source when he wrote *οὗτος ἔθρεψε δράκοντα ἐκ νέου καὶ αὐξηθέντος*,[6] at least according to the manuscript tradition. Here the participle *αὐξηθέντος* cannot refer to the subject Heraclides. The grammatical understanding of the participle *αὐξηθέντα* advocated here, that is, referring to the snake, implies that the preceding *ἐκ νέου* also refers to the snake. There is a parallel for an application of this expression to the raising of young animals in Callicles' speech in Plato *Gorg*. 483E5–6: *ἐκ νέων λαμβάνοντες, ὥσπερ λέοντας*. The parallel is the more striking since in both cases dangerous animals are domesticated by masters who begin handling them when they are still young.

The understanding of the anecdote preserved in Diogenes Laertius 5.89 as proposed here has an impact on the reading of the text. At the beginning of this section *θρέψαι αὐτὸν δράκοντα ἐκ νέου καὶ αὐξηθέντα, ἐπειδὴ τελευτᾶν ἔμελλε, κελεῦσαί* … the particle *καί* connects only the statements about the age of the snake,

[3] R.D. Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1972²), 545.

[4] J.-P. Schneider, 'Héraclide le Pontique', in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes antiques*, vol. 3 (Paris, 2000), 364 (H 60).

[5] V.J. Matthews, *Antimachus of Colophon. Text and Commentary* (*Mnemosyne* suppl. 155; Leiden, 1996), T 4.

[6] Diog. Laert. vol. 2 (n. 2), p. 259, 13–15 (Marcovich) *οὗτος ἔθρεψε δράκοντα ἐκ νέου καὶ αὐξηθέντος· ἐπειδὴ τελευτᾶν ἔμελλεν, ἐκέλευσέ τινι τῶν πιστῶν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα κατακρύψαι*. 259, 13 *αὐξηθέντα* ***BPF*** : *αὐξηθέντος Φ*.

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that is ἐκ νέου and αὐξηθέντα, but does not connect the infinitives 'he kept' and 'he ordered' . Now a particle is needed that connects θρέψαι and κελεῦσαι[7], and the easiest remedy would be to read ἐπεὶ δὲ or ἐπειδὴ <δὲ> instead of transmitted ἐπειδὴ.

I propose that the anecdote preserved by Diogenes Laertius 5.89 should be understood in the following way: Heraclides Ponticus, at an advanced age, reared a young snake. He did not, as is still done often today with pets that grow beyond what their owners can handle, abandon the snake when it had grown to its full size, but kept it. The entry 'Heraclides' in the Suda[8] goes beyond what is found in the account of Demetrius of Magnesia by stating that Heraclides tamed the snake and kept it, allowing it to share his life and even his bed. For the snake, the bed of Heraclides was a usual place to rest. For the scheme he had devised for after his death, one of Heraclides' servants had to remove his body[9] and put the snake in a place where it was accustomed to sleeping. The fact that it was fully grown (αὐξηθέντα) explains the effect it had on the mourners: it created a disturbance among most of them (διετάραξε).

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[7] The correct translation of καὶ αὐξηθέντα, ἐπειδὴ τελευτᾶν ἔμελλε would be: 'and after he had grown up, when he was about to die'; however this would deny Heraclides decades of his adult life, whereas he did not die until after he had grown up. Hicks felt this when in his translation he added an additional 'and' before 'being at the point of death' which the Greek text does not have.

[8] Suda *H* 461 s.v. Ἡρακλείδης (vol. 2, p.581, 20–1 Adler). Ἡρακλείδης … οὗτος καὶ δράκοντα ἔθρεψε καὶ ἡμέρωσε καὶ εἶχε συνδιαιτώμενον αὐτῷ καὶ συγκαθεύδοντα.

[9] Diogenes Laertius 5.89 κελεῦσαί τινι τῶν πιστῶν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα κατακρύψαι. In the version of *Excerpta Byzantina.* (n. 2) p. 259, 13 Marcovich reads ἐκέλευσέ τινι τῶν πιστῶν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα κατακρύψαι; αὐτοῦ would go with τῶν πιστῶν, whereas αὐτοῦ, as an indirect reflexive (R. Kühner–B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache* Part II (1898[3]), vol. 1, 567–8, n. 9), refers to the subject of the main clause, that is, Heraclides ordered to remove *his* body, αὑτοῦ τὸ σῶμα κατακρύψαι, which makes more sense. Did Hicks with his translation 'he ordered a trusted attendant to conceal the corpse' refer the pronoun (as if it were αὐτοῦ) to τῶν πιστῶν ('trusted attendant'), and not to τὸ σῶμα (which is in his translation simply 'the corpse')?

'SCENES' IN ROMAN DRAMA: A LEXICAL NOTE

No major dictionary of Classical, Christian or Medieval Latin (including Georges, *OLD,* Blaise, Forcellini, Souter, Du Cange, Niermeyer) registers the technical subsense of *scaena* for 'scene', or minimal narrative unit of a dramatic text.[1] This

[1] The closest istance is 'tableau' in *OLD* 5c*,* with reference to Apuleius *Met.* 6.27; 8.29; 10.23 (see *infra*). The other (main) entries in *OLD* are '**1** The background … against which a play … is performed. **2** The platform on which actors … perform. **3**a Representation(s) and performance(s) on the stage … b activity on the stage. **4** a sphere in which actions … are on public display. **5** A piece of artificial or melodramatic behaviour designed to impress, 'charade', 'theatricals'. b a piece of make-believe, pretence. c a spectacle worthy of the stage, 'tableau'. **6** The background or setting against which events take place, *mise-en-scène*'.

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