be a connection with the physical, not the ethereal,[20] nature of Protesilaus' ghost.[21] The choice of ἀμπρεύειν can also evoke a coercion of Protesilaus, because his time was up. The entry provides the more common ἕλκειν (Lat. *trahere*), which may specifically connote forced dragging into Hades: see Myrinus 2.1–2 Gow–Page (= *Anth. Pal.* 6.254) Στατύλλιον ... | ἕλκειν εἰς Ἀΐδην ἡνίκ' ἔμελλε χρόνος; Eunap. *VS* 7.56.11–12 τὸν Μάξιμον, τραχηλάγχην ἐπιβαλόμενον, ἔφασκε ἕλκειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ᾅδην; Sen. *Apocol.* 11.6 *Cyllenius illum collo obtorto trahit ad inferos a caelo*.

As a result, I propose the following reconstruction:

<Hermes>

(to Protesilaus, who is being led back to Hades; Laodamia is probably also on stage)

ἕπου δὲ <νῦν σε> μοῦνον ἀμπρεύοντί μοι

follow me now as I lead you alone

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PLATO, XENOPHON, AND SOCRATES' INNER CIRCLE*

ABSTRACT

Contemporary historians of philosophy almost universally embrace the idea that the young Plato had a close, personal relationship with the historical Socrates. Many refuse to countenance a similar status for Plato's contemporary, Xenophon. This note takes as its focus a novel argument intended to support the claim that Xenophon was never on intimate terms with Socrates or even privy to reliable information about him. The reply offered here has implications far beyond this apparently narrow focus, however, and points to pervasive biases in Socratic studies generally that remain in sore need of correction.

Keywords: Plato; Socrates; Socratics; Xenophon; Athenian demes; Erchia

Our evidence, such as it is, that either Xenophon or Plato was especially close to the historical Socrates during the latter's lifetime rests largely on their respective Socratic writings and the standing these enjoyed among later authors.[1] Though Xenophon was

[20] See Prop. 1.19.7–12.

[21] See Lucian, *Dial. mort.* 23.3; Séchan (n. 2), 16; Collard and Cropp (n. 4), 108; Pelliccia (n. 18), 182–3; V. Liapis, 'The somatics of the Greek dead', in G.A. Gazis and A. Hooper (edd.), *Aspects of Death and the Afterlife in Greek Literature* (Liverpool, 2021), 33–47, at 43.

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[1] Plato never mentions Xenophon, and Xenophon in his entire collected works mentions Plato only once, in passing (at *Mem.* 3.6.1). While the fragments and testimonia of the so-called 'Minor Socratics' contain numerous references to Plato's own philosophical views or his disagreements with his fourth-century B.C.E. contemporaries, none speaks to a close, personal relationship with Socrates himself.

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widely regarded in antiquity—at least outside the Academy—as no less an authoritative witness for Socrates than was Plato,[2] the situation is by no means the same today. In Plato's case, there is a nearly universal tendency among historians of ancient philosophy to countenance the Platonic corpus (and much later sources clearly influenced by this) as sufficient evidence of his personal connection to Socrates. Xenophon's Socratic writings are rarely accorded similar deference. Many scholars who are completely credulous of Plato's role at Socrates' trial based entirely on the self-references in Plato's *Apology*, for example, nevertheless discount or dispute any and all eyewitness claims in Xenophon's own Socratic works.[3] Some have even gone so far as to doubt that Xenophon was ever on intimate terms with Socrates or a member of his inner circle.[4]

A relatively recent and comprehensive rejection of Xenophon's Socratic *bona fides* along these lines can be found in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (*SEP*) article on Socrates by Nails and Monoson.[5] The considerations the authors adduce there are a mixture of old—including the tendentious assertion that Xenophon's portrait is simply too 'pedestrian' to account for the following and devotion the historical Socrates attracted—and new. The former have been adequately addressed elsewhere by others.[6] My concern here is rather with the novel argument on offer from Nails and Monoson in support of their potentially damning claim that 'Xenophon could not have chalked up many hours with Socrates or with reliable informants'.

The reasons they cite are as follows: '[Xenophon] lived in Erchia, about 15 kilometers and across the Hymettus mountains from Socrates' haunts in the urban areas of Athens,

Xenophon, unlike Plato, does at least feature in the extant fragments of a dialogue by another early Socratic: on the basis of Cic. *Inv. rhet*. 1.51–3 (= *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* 6.A.70), we know that Aeschines' *Aspasia* contained a conversation, narrated by Socrates, between Aspasia, Xenophon and Xenophon's wife. We also have reports of rivalries among the early Socratics that may well have influenced which of their contemporaries each chose to reference and how; for a representative sampling of the relevant evidence see G. Boys-Stones and C. Rowe (edd.), *The Circle of Socrates* (Indianapolis, 2013), 293–7. Regarding the possible rivalry between Plato and Xenophon specifically, see Diog. Laert. 3.34, Ath. *Deipn.* 11.504c–505b and Gell. 14.3.

[2] On the importance of Xenophon's Socratic writings for Hellenistic philosophers, see A.A. Long, 'Socrates in Hellenistic philosophy', *CQ* 38 (1988), 150–71. Diogenes Laertius, writing sometime in the third century C.E., notably places Xenophon's biography first among those of Socrates' followers. On Diogenes' approach and value as a historian of philosophy, see J. Warren, 'Diogenes Laërtius, biographer of philosophy', in J. König and T. Whitmarsh (edd.), *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2007), 133–49.

[3] For an extensive discussion of attitudes toward Xenophon's various eyewitness claims both in *Memorabilia* and in his Socratic works more generally, see M. Bandini and L.-A. Dorion, *Xénophon Mémorables. Tome 1. Introduction générale, Livre I* (Paris, 2000), xxxix–lii.

[4] See e.g. J. Burnet (ed.), *Plato: Phaedo* (Oxford, 1911), xviii; H. Maier, *Sokrates, sein Werk und seine geschichtliche Stellung* (Tübingen, 1913), 7–8; L. Robin, *La pensée grecque et les origines de l'esprit scientifique* (Paris, 1923), 187–8; A.E. Taylor, *Socrates* (Edinburgh, 1932), 18; W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, *Vol. 2: In Search of the Divine Center* (Oxford, 1943), 20; A.-H. Chroust, *Socrates, Man and Myth: The Two Socratic Apologies of Xenophon* (South Bend, IN, 1957), 9; G. Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), 103 with n. 87; and C. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge, 1996), 15 n. 28.

[5] D. Nails and S.S. Monoson, 'Socrates', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2022 Edition), ed. E.N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/socrates/; accessed 31 March 2025. Though Monoson is listed as co-author in the most recent revision of this article, both the claim and the arguments meant to support it discussed below also appear in earlier versions, which were attributed to Nails alone. (The first version of the *SEP* 'Socrates' entry was published in 2005; the revision in which Monoson was first listed as co-author appeared in 2022.)

[6] There has been a resurgence of interest in Xenophon's Socratic works over the past fifty years, thanks in no small part to the pioneering work of such scholars as Livio Rossetti, Donald Morrison, Louis-André Dorion and Claudia Mársico. The collected essays in G. Danzig, D. Johnson and D. Morrison (edd.), *Plato and Xenophon: Comparative Studies* (Leiden, 2017) offer a useful starting point.

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and his love of horses and horsemanship (on which he wrote a still-valuable treatise) took up considerable time. He left Athens in 401 on an expedition to Persia and, for a variety of reasons (mercenary service for Thracians and Spartans; exile), never resided in Athens again.' As it turns out, almost every detail of significance in these two sentences requires either correction or qualification. Given the standing of the *SEP* as a leading reference work in philosophy, it seems worthwhile to attempt to set the record straight here, lest the faulty premises of this particular argument (much like the questionable conclusion they are meant to warrant) pass into the realm of *opinio communis*.

First, nothing supports the claim that Xenophon resided in Erchia, his ancestral deme. Membership in a particular Athenian deme entailed only that one's relevant paternal ancestors had been resident there at the time of Cleisthenes' democratic reforms in 508/7 B.C.E.[7] Thus we are by no means certain that Xenophon himself was even born in Erchia, much less that he lived there for any portion of his youth or adult life.[8] Socrates, for his own part, appears not to have resided as an adult in his ancestral deme of Alopeke, which also lay outside the city walls of Athens.[9] Even were there reason to believe that Xenophon had resided in Erchia, however, the considerably greater distance to urban Athens from either Megara or Thebes does not seem to have occasioned similar doubts that either Euclides or Simmias managed to be on close terms with Socrates regardless.[10]

The idea that Xenophon's 'love of horses and horsemanship' would have prevented him from spending significant time with Socrates is even more fanciful. An interest in horses was hardly unique among Athenian aristocrats. The more mundane and time-consuming tasks associated with horse ownership presumably fell to their slaves.[11] Nor do the well-documented equestrian interests of Alcibiades, for example, seem to have prevented him from becoming close to Socrates.[12] One can only imagine that Xenophon also found time apart from any outside interests or hobbies to spend with his friends, whoever these may have been. Moreover, a ready access to horses would presumably have made even a trip between Erchia and urban Athens easier and quicker than, say, the five-mile walk from the Piraeus Antisthenes is reported to have made daily to listen to Socrates.[13]

[7] See D. Whitehead, *The Demes of Attica, 508/7–ca. 250 B.C.: A Political and Social Study* (Princeton, 1986), 67–8.

[8] Cf. J.W.I. Lee, 'Xenophon and his time', in M. Flower (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon* (Cambridge, 2017), 15–36, at 19.

[9] See K.R. Sanders, 'Swearing by Hera *redux*: further speculation on the origin of the oath νὴ τὴν Ἥραν', *Mnemosyne* 68 (2015), 121–6, at 125 with n. 24.

[10] See e.g. the comments regarding Euclides and Simmias by Nails herself in D. Nails, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics* (Indianapolis, 2002), 145 and 261, respectively.

[11] As Xenophon himself suggests at *Eq.* 4.4.

[12] Both Plato and Xenophon attest to Socrates' relationship with Alcibiades. Besides the two dialogues attributed to Plato that bear Alcibiades' name (but whose authorship is disputed), see Pl. *Grg*. 481d, *Prt.* 309a–b, *Symp*. 212d–223b and Xen. *Mem*. 1.2.12–48. Among other Socratics, Aeschines, Antisthenes, Euclides and Phaedo are all reported to have authored a work entitled *Alcibiades*. In the cases of both Euclides and Phaedo, only the title is attested; see Diog. Laert. 2.108 (= *SSR* 2.A.10) and *Suda* s.v. Phaedo (= *SSR* 3.A.8), respectively. (But Alcibiades apparently also featured alongside Socrates in Phaedo's *Zopyrus* and *Simon*; see L. Rossetti, '"Socratica" in Fedone di Elide', *StudUrb(B)* 47 [1973], 364–81, at 370–3 and the extensive collection of texts and commentary regarding *Zopyrus* in particular in L. Rossetti, 'Ricerche sui "Dialoghi Socratici" di Fedone e di Euclide', *Hermes* 108 [1980], 183–200, at 183–98). On Antisthenes' *Alcibiades*, see Diog. Laert. 6.18 (= *SSR* 5.A.41) and the discussion in S. Prince, *Antisthenes of Athens: Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2015), 162. The evidence regarding Aeschines' *Alcibiades* is more extensive: see Kahn (n. 4), 19–23 and F. Pentassuglio, *Eschine di Sfetto. Tutte le testimonianze* (Turnhout, 2017), 64–119, 252–66, 394–429.

[13] See Diog. Laert. 6.2 (= *SSR* 5.A.12).

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While it is true that Xenophon left Athens in 401 B.C.E., around two years before Socrates' trial and execution, this fact by itself says little about the amount of time Xenophon could have spent in the company of Socrates, either in absolute terms or in comparison to Plato, who may have been Xenophon's junior by several years.[14] Recall in this regard the story that Xenophon himself tells about his decision to join the Greek mercenary army being assembled by the Persian prince Cyrus. According to *Anabasis* 3.1.4–8,[15] Xenophon first conferred with Socrates on the matter and heeded his advice to consult the Delphic Oracle. In doing so, however, Xenophon effectively guaranteed a response that supported his own antecedent desire to enlist by asking the Oracle 'to which of the gods he should sacrifice and pray in order to most successfully and satisfactorily embark on the journey he had in mind' (τίνι ἂν θεῶν θύων καὶ εὐχόμενος κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ἔλθοι τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἐπινοεῖ, 3.1.6). Socrates rebuked Xenophon for not having asked instead whether it would be better for him to stay or go but then added: 'Since you did put the question in that way, you ought to do everything the god commanded' (ἐπεὶ μέντοι οὕτως ἤρου, ταῦτ', ἔφη, χρὴ ποιεῖν ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐκέλευσεν, 3.1.7). Xenophon's story does not paint an especially flattering portrait of his younger self. It does, however, illustrate perfectly the kind of advice Xenophon elsewhere claims that Socrates regularly gave to his 'close friends' (ἐπιτηδείους): 'on day-to-day matters, he advised them to do as he thought would be best; but on matters whose outcome was uncertain, he sent them to consult an oracle about what should be done' (τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖα συνεβούλευε καὶ πράττειν ὡς ἐνόμιζεν ἄριστ' ἂν πραχθῆναι· περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀδήλων ὅπως ἀποβήσοιτο μαντευσομένους ἔπεμπεν, εἰ ποιητέα, *Mem*. 1.1.6).

Finally, the assertion that Xenophon 'never resided in Athens again' after 401 B.C.E. is also at least subject to doubt. The available evidence suggests that Xenophon was reconciled with Athens and saw his exile revoked long before his death.[16] We know that his sons served in the Athenian cavalry in the 360s, which presumably provides a *terminus ante quem* for the revocation of Xenophon's own exile.[17] That Xenophon also spent time in Athens during this same period or thereafter cannot be ruled out. Certainly, the contents of both *Hipparchicus* and *Poroi* suggest an awareness of issues and developments in Athens during the 360s and 350s.[18] But Xenophon would hardly have needed to return to Athens in order to have access to reliable, supplemental information regarding Socrates. In the more than two decades during which Xenophon lived in Scillus, just a few miles south of Olympia, he could easily have had personal interactions with other Socratics. His own Socratic writings also indicate a familiarity with a variety of reports or writings by other friends and followers of Socrates.[19]

[14] Though Plato's birth year is often listed as *c*. 428/7 B.C.E., he is more likely to have been born as late as 424/3. For the evidence, see R. Waterfield, *Plato of Athens: A Life in Philosophy* (Oxford, 2023), 51–4; cf. Nails (n. 10), 243–7. Xenophon's exact dates are uncertain. Some scholars put his birth year as early as 440 B.C.E., though the consensus is for a date somewhere between 430 and 425. Nails (ibid., 301) is among those favouring a date at the later end of this spectrum; cf. Lee (n. 8), 16–17.

[15] For a recent and detailed discussion of this passage, see L.-A. Dorion, 'The reception and interpretation of Xenophon's discussion with Socrates in the *Anabasis* (3.1.4–8)', in T. Rood and M. Tamiolaki (edd.), *Xenophon's* Anabasis *and its Reception* (Berlin, 2022), 85–103.

[16] See e.g. Diog. Laert. 2.59.

[17] Cf. C. Tuplin, 'Xenophon and Athens', in M. Flower (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon* (Cambridge, 2017), 338–59, at 339.

[18] Tuplin (n. 17), 344–5; cf. Lee (n. 8), 34.

[19] Xenophon explicitly credits Hermogenes as the source for much of his *Apology* and the corresponding material in *Mem*. 4.8. Hermogenes' own close connection to Socrates is attested not only by Plato (who lists Hermogenes among those present at Socrates's death at *Phd*. 59b and makes him one of Socrates's primary interlocutors in *Cra*.) and Xenophon (who names Hermogenes in *Mem*. 1.2.48 as a

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In sum, the considerations adduced by Nails and Monoson in their *SEP* article provide no better cause to doubt either Xenophon's proximity to, or access to reliable information about, the historical Socrates than do the bald assertions often found in earlier secondary literature on the subject. That so many scholars nevertheless continue to deny Xenophon a standing comparable to the one they uncritically embrace for Plato speaks to a pervasive bias in Socratic studies that remains in sore need of correction.

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TWO CONJECTURES IN XENOPHON

ABSTRACT

Conjectures in the Cynegetica *and the* Cyropaideia *of Xenophon.*

Keywords: Xenophon; trap; sauce; emendation; ἐγκαταπήγνυμι; ἐμβάπτω

I. *CYNEGETICA* 9.12

χρὴ δὲ εἶναι τὰς ποδοστράβας σμίλακος πεπλεγμένας … τὰς δὲ στεφάνας εὐκύκλους ἐχούσας καὶ τοὺς ἤλους ἐναλλὰξ σιδηροῦς τε καὶ ξυλίνους ἐγκαταπεπλεγμένους ἐν τῷ πλοκάνῳ.

The traps should be made out of plaited yew …, with a circular crown and spikes of alternate iron and wood woven into the plaited part (Waterfield).[1]

'disciple' [ὁμιλητής] of Socrates and makes him one of the members of Socrates' entourage in *Symp*.) but also by Aeschines, in whose *Telauges* Hermogenes apparently served to introduce Socrates and the titular character to one another as their mutual friend (see Procl. *In Crat*. 21 [= *SSR* 6.A.83] and the discussions in H. Dittmar, *Aischines von Sphettos: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte der Sokratiker* [Berlin, 1912], 229 and Pentassuglio [n. 12], 208). In addition to having a familiarity with various Platonic dialogues, Xenophon was also clearly conversant with, for example, the work of Antisthenes, who seems to have been regarded as the most important Socratic in the decade following Socrates' death. Kahn (n. 4), 393–401 contains a list of passages in Xen. *Mem*. and *Symp*. that may reflect an awareness of, and even dependence on, some of Plato's writings. On the relationship between Xenophon and Antisthenes, see Prince (n. 12), especially 13–14. Our primary evidence for Antisthenes' preeminence among Socratics during the 390s B.C.E. comes from Isoc. *C. soph*., on which see e.g. C. Eucken, *Isokrates: seine Positionen in der Auseinandersetzung mit den zeitgenössischen Philosophen* (Berlin, 1983), 18–27 and D.J. Murphy, 'Isocrates as a reader of Socratic dialogues', in A. Stavru and C. Moore (edd.), *Socrates and the Socratic Dialogue* (Leiden, 2017), 105–25, at 105–10.

[1] R. Waterfield, *Xenophon: Hiero the Tyrant and Other Treatises* (London, 1997), 150.

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