

M.D. MACLEOD, *Xenophon: Apology and Memorabilia I. With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2008, 250 pp., ISBN 0-85668-712-X.

This volume puts together Xenophon's *Apology* and *Memorabilia* I on the grounds that much of the latter (at least as far as 1.3.6) is, like former, devoted to rebutting charges brought against Socrates at his trial. The target audience includes classicists and non-classicists with an interest in literature and philosophy. The latter are reflected by the presence of a certain number of linguistic notes suitable for those with relatively basic knowledge of Greek. But the annotation is, in general, lacking in complexity and unadorned with much of the heavier apparatus of scholarship. The number of modern works cited is modest. Given the profusion of bibliography on Socrates and the Socratic Question, this may be regarded as a boon, but what *is* cited is not entirely up to date (the items listed at the front of the book include only one that post-dates 2000), and the *recherche* is by no means absent: at one point the reader is invited to seek further enlightenment on the καλὸς καὶ καθὺς from a 1961 (misprinted as 1951) Würzburg dissertation by Hermann Wankel. Still, such things cannot hide the fact that this volume is best understood as one for beginners. Another sign of this is that there is little attempt to situate what happened to Socrates in a rich historical context, embracing not only the political events of 404–402 but wider questions about the judicial persecution of “intellectuals” or the critique of religious “novelty”.

The bulk of the volume consists of text, translation and commentary. The text for both works is basically a reproduction of Marchant's OCT, with heavily abbreviated *apparatus criticus*. Sometimes when Macleod favours a different reading from that in Marchant this is incorporated in the printed text (and reflected in the translation). But on other occasions the OCT text is printed unchanged and the preferability of another

reading (recorded in the *apparatus*) is highlighted by a marginal asterisk. The distinction is nothing to do with the merits of the cases but simply the ease with which the OCT could be adjusted without extensive new typesetting. We are thus left with a printed text that is neither one thing nor another. It would have been much better to leave the OCT entirely unaltered and note all desirable deviations in the same way. I note that the great majority of such deviations involve preferring the reading of MSS, papyri or indirect sources such as Athenaeus or Stobaeus over modern editorial alterations.

I have not attempted to make a systematic assessment of the translation in its own right. My impression is that, as one would expect, it is generally accurate and serviceable. p. 28 prints Marchant's text of *Apol.* 14 (the Delphic oracle's response about Socrates), but the translation includes καὶ σοφώτερον ("juster"), following a possible emendation that is mentioned in the commentary (p. 49) but not very explicitly endorsed. At *Mem.* 1.1.20 "heretic" probably has overtones that are not present in μὴ σωφρονεῖν περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς. In *Mem.* 1.2.29, by contrast, Macleod's "seduce" over-simplifies Xenophon's πειρῶντα χρῆσθαι καθάπερ οἱ πρὸς τὰ φροδίσια τῶν σωμάτων ἀπολαύοντες— though "vile" for μηδενὸς ἀγαθοῦ in the same passage is a decided over-translation.

The commentary provides appropriate basic annotation, but contains little that will seem new to Xenophon scholars. (One small incidental question: why does Macleod call the brief sections into which *Apology* is conventionally divided "chapters"?) Macleod's views on larger questions surrounding Socrates and his literary memorialists emerge from a general introduction on Xenophon's life and on the dating of Xenophontic and Platonic Socratic works (in this section the running page-top title is "Dating and Relationships": I do hope that this is an intentional joke), a separate introduction to each work (though that on *Memorabilia* is almost entirely devoted to a summary of the work's content), and a six page epilogue ("Xenophon's Socrates") describing the distinctive features of Xenophon's portrayal and addressing the issue of historicity.

The account of Xenophon's life-history is entirely conventional, and there is nothing specially startling in the

proposed datings of his works. (On the controversial issue of the relationship between Xenophon *Symposium* and Plato's homonymous work Macleod sits on the fence.) I note just two points. (a) The claim that *Oeconomicus* at least partially post-dates Euphranor's depiction of Gryllus' death (in 362) in the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios (hence the allusion to that location in 7.1) will not work with Noreen Humble's recent downdating of Euphranor's painting (*Historia* 57, 2008, 347-66). (b) *Apology* is dated after Plato's *Apology* and *Meno* on the grounds that *Ap.* 29-31 is his reaction to Plato's over-lenient treatment of Anytus in *Meno*. I am not wholly convinced that it was Plato's intention to be specially lenient, and I do not see how we could *know* that the reason both authors speak of education of children in relation to Anytus is not *inter alia* that Anytus' children actually *were* a source of embarrassment. (The possibility that Xenophon twice cites Theognis *via* Plato's *Meno*, p. 134, makes no difference to the essential point.)

On the relationship between the two *Apologies* Macleod's view is essentially that where Xenophon resembles Plato he is copying him and where he differs he is writing fiction. This is held to follow from the fact that Plato was an eyewitness and wrote earlier, whereas Xenophon was dependent on Hermogenes and explicitly only interested in giving an abbreviated report to make a point about Socrates' motivation. But it does *not* follow with any certainty. Both authors had an agenda, after all. On a specific point of difference, I cannot share Macleod's certainty (pp. 52-5) that Plato's attribution to Socrates of a provocative proposal of an alternative to the death penalty is more likely to be true than Xenophon's claim that he refused to make a counter-proposal because to do so presumed guilt. Plato's version would have been consistent with Xenophon's wish to represent Socrates as unconcerned to avoid death, since it was calculated to irritate the jurors (hence the tradition that it made people who'd acquitted him vote for the death penalty), so Xenophon's failure to follow it *could* signify that he knew it was not true.

In listing Xenophon's potential sources for knowledge of Socrates, Macleod notes personal acquaintance, word-of-mouth information from Hermogenes and others (during the Scillus years and later), and Plato's works, but ignores writings by other

Socratics. He speaks of their existence elsewhere, so their neglect here is interesting; it is in fact of a piece with his willingness to believe that Xenophon was making specific use of the Platonic *Apology* and his fundamental hostility to the idea that the two *Apologies* might in some degree represent autonomous responses on the same basic event as variously remembered by a variety of primary or secondary sources. But can one really be sure, e.g. that, when Xenophon's Socrates mentions Palamedes, this must be simply because Plato's Socrates had done so. What Plato says may just be one reflection of what many people knew. Nor can I see why the fact that Socrates' strokes Apollodorus' head in Xenophon's *Apology* and Phaedo's in Plato's *Phaedo* should be due to Xenophon's misreporting, adaptation or distortion of the Platonic work. In fact it would be a good idea to stop and ask a little more deliberately whether there is any evidence that *requires* Xenophon to have read Plato's *Apology* – not as a prelude to arguing that he had *not* read it, but as a prelude to arguing that the genesis of Xenophon's *Apology* should not be viewed in such a black-and-white manner. One should also understand that, in the matter of head-stroking, the issue is not trying to establish whether Socrates as a matter of historical fact stroked the head of Apollodorus and/or Phaedo – there is far too large an element of fictive history in *all* Socratic works for it to be possible to establish any such thing.

On the broader question of the characteristics of Xenophon's Socrates, Macleod starts from premise that, since Plato knew Socrates longer, was more philosophical and was a skilled prose dramatist, his portrayal is likely to be more accurate, reliable and detailed than that of Xenophon. So far as the first two adjectives go this is close to a *non sequitur*. In particular skill as a prose dramatist plainly does not guarantee historical exactitude, at least not in an ordinary modern sense of such a concept. As Macleod's discussion proceeds it *is* admitted, after all, that Plato might indulge in fiction – and that this provided an empowering precedent for Xenophon. So, Xenophon remains the weak and manipulable figure: some lies are clearly, for Macleod, of better quality than others. Nonetheless the default assumption remains that Xenophon is simply a less reliable and less valuable source of information about Socrates. Perhaps this is true;

but the assertions here cannot stand as a demonstration of the proposition.

Macleod does acknowledge that Xenophon had the distinctive aim of making his Socrates a flawless example for imitation by fellow καλοικάγαθοί. The striking extension of the reference of the term καλοσκάγαθός involved here is part of his agenda, and Macleod eventually goes so far as to describe the idea that Socrates was really a καλοσκάγαθός as “one more Socratic paradox”. But, whereas Xenophon’s avoidance of the (Platonic) paradoxes that Socrates was ignorant or that no one willingly does wrong, seems to count to his discredit, his effective substitution of a different paradox – one that seeks to encapsulate the positive force of the man’s moral and intellectual personality in a particularly telling fashion, both socially and politically – gains him no plaudits. Once again one cannot help feeling that traditional prejudices are at work – and that a better sense of Athenian history and social values might have helped.

Another putative failing of the Xenophontic Socrates is that his comparative lack of irony makes him less humorous than his Platonic counterpart. This strikes me as a misrepresentation of the experience of reading Xenophon’s Socratic writings – and a great overestimate of the pleasure to be had from Plato’s: Macleod’s assumption that we all find Plato upliftingly entertaining rather than leadenly tiresome is perhaps in the end a non-negotiable barrier between him and some of his readers. In particular, it is profoundly puzzling to me why the Socratic irony that consists in pretence of ignorance (to which Macleod specifically draws attention) should be treated as though it gives Plato’s Socrates a light-hearted charm from which Xenophon’s is for ever excluded. How much Socrates actually professed ignorance and whether he really maintained that there was no such thing as ἀκράσία (because “no one willingly does wrong”) are real issues, but please let us not confuse them with how much fun his various pupils represent him as being.

Macleod’s discussion of “Xenophon’s Socrates” ends with the bald statement that “Plato’s most distinctive contribution to philosophical thinking, his ‘Theory of Forms’ or ‘Ideas’, expounded by his Socrates in the *Phaedo* and later dialogues, was too far-fetched for Xenophon to accept or to let his down-

to-earth Socrates use". This seems to be trying to discredit Xenophon's Socrates for not being up to dealing with something that it is admitted was entirely Platonic in the first place – a depressing example of the abiding tendency to confuse reception of Socrates with reception of Plato.

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