

## NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

### SOCRATES, AN UNRELIABLE NARRATOR? THE DRAMATIC SETTING OF THE *LYSIS*

“I was traveling from the Academy directly to the Lyceum toward and outside the city wall under the wall itself” (ἐπορευόμεν μὲν ἐξ Ἀκαδημείας εὐθὺ Λυκείου τὴν ἑξω τείχους ὑπ’ αὐτὸ τὸ τεῖχος, 203a1–2).<sup>1</sup> Although the *Lysis* begins clearly, something is not quite right with its opening. The path of Socrates’ journey is odd, and the oddity raises a question concerning other statements in the *Lysis*.<sup>2</sup> It soon becomes apparent that the opening description is but one in a series of anomalies presented by Socrates. On the surface, each oddity might seem hardly worth our notice, but taken together they become intriguing. What follows in this paper is not an overall interpretation of the *Lysis* but rather a careful analysis of the setting in which the discussion unfolds.

If we pause to picture Socrates’ path, as he describes it, the emphasis of εὐθὺ is not compatible with τὴν ἑξω τείχους ὑπ’ αὐτὸ τὸ τεῖχος. “Straight” to the Lyceum from the Academy would have been through the Demosion Sema, through the Dipylon Gates, along the Eridanus, past the ἀγορά, and through the Diochares Gates.<sup>3</sup> Instead, Socrates swings out of his way, around the ἄστυ, and approaches the Lyceum from the north. He also recounts his actions to Hippothales later within the narrative, but alters the description slightly, omitting any mention of the path: “From the Academy I am traveling directly to the Lyceum” (ἐξ Ἀκαδημείας πορεύομαι εὐθὺ Λυκείου, 203b1–2).

Hippothales was, presumably, at home with the topography of Attica (and Athens in particular), and therefore the latter omission is curious. As described in the dialogue’s opening, Socrates’ path would have added substantial distance and time to his journey. We must note, however, that Socrates’ description provides enough information for his audience to visualize the contradiction. That unknown audience was, in all probability, as familiar as Hippothales with the topography in question, and Plato himself would have been equally so. Nevertheless, the path Plato describes is not only indirect but blatantly indirect—saying, in effect, “I went from Ceramicus directly to Syntagma Square via Omonia Square.”

1. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. All manuscript line numbers refer to the Loeb Classical Library edition (Plato, *Lysis*, in *Plato, Volume III: “Lysis,” “Symposium,” “Gorgias,”* trans. W. R. M. Lamb [Cambridge, Mass., 1925; reprint 1991]).

2. I was alerted to the curiosity of the dialogue’s opening during a private discussion with Laurence Lampert of Indiana University, Indianapolis, in the summer of 1992. This paper is indebted to him. I would also like to thank CP’s anonymous referees for their comments.

3. Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.27; Strabo 9.1.19; J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (New York, 1971 [hereafter, *PDAA*]), 169; R. E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton, 1978), 219–26; cf. J. P. Lynch, *Aristotle’s School: A Study of a Greek Educational Institution* (London, 1972), 9–31. In the fall of 1993, Indiana University offered me a grant to explore Athens. The purpose of this trip was to examine the settings described in Plato’s dialogues. See Appendix.

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On the other hand, Socrates might have been making a journey of “least resistance,” that is, avoiding one of his more customary haunts<sup>4</sup> in an attempt to reach the Lyceum “quickly.” This interpretation, however, would strain the reading of εὐθύ. Any emphasis of “quickly” could have been rendered more easily with ἐπείγομαι, or ταχέως, or something similar. Socrates instead emphasizes twice that he was going “straight” or “directly” to the Lyceum from the Academy, a notion re-emphasized by Hippothales, who echoes Socrates, bidding him to come “straight” to the collection of youths gathered (203b3). Another explanation could be that Plato was careless, but there is a general agreement that the philosopher was an exceedingly meticulous writer, as was well recognized in antiquity.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, if we cannot assume that he was careless or ignorant, but must rather assume that he was precise, then Socrates’ claim—made twice—that an indirect route is direct becomes deliberate.

If we examine the topography more closely, we discover that Socrates rounds the north side of Athens and walks past the Northeast Gate, approaching the Lyceum from the northwest. The grove rested beside the city wall, near the Diochares Gates (which would now be under Syntagma Square and to the east and south).<sup>6</sup> The Spring of Panops (203a3), where Hippothales and the others were assembled, should then have been near the Eridanus, just north of the Lyceum.<sup>7</sup> If this sketch is correct, and given the known layout of the ancient wall, Socrates would have been out of sight from the westernmost part of the Lyceum (presumably the main entrance) and would have had to pass the spring before reaching his stated destination.<sup>8</sup> Socrates would not have encountered the Fountain of Panops, it seems, had he simply taken the direct route through the ἄστυ and emerged from the Diochares Gate, as that route would have deposited him directly in front of the Lyceum.

Given these observations, all we can say with certainty at this point is that Socrates has claimed an indirect route to be direct—unusual, but hardly an offense to his audience. Nonetheless, could the description of the path be an indication of Socrates’ true intentions? The first sentence of the dialogue invites our skepticism and may lead us to wonder whether Socrates *intended* to go to the Fountain of Panops and not the Lyceum. If we read the entire opening with an eye thus alerted, other peculiarities in Socrates’ narrative emerge that suggest the fountain was precisely his intended destination.

Upon arrival at the Fountain of Panops, Socrates asks (204a1): “But what is this place, and what is your interest here?” (ἔστι δὲ δὴ τί τοῦτο, καὶ τίς ἡ διατριβή;) Socrates professes ignorance concerning the setting where Hippothales and the others have gathered. Specifically, Socrates seems to be unaware of a new παλαιστρά’s construction (204a2–4), even though the wrestling school was obviously situated near

4. E.g., Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.10.

5. Dion. Hal. *Rhet.* 25; Diog. Laert. 3.37; Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.7; Demetrius *On Style* 21; *OCD*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. “Plato” §16. Dionysius writes, “Up to his eightieth year Plato never ceased combing and curling and every way braiding his own dialogues.” Dionysius also informs us that several versions of the *Republic*’s opening clause were discovered after Plato’s death. Quintilian states that the first four words of the *Republic* were found on a tablet in different combinations. Diogenes Laertius tells us that both Euphorio and Panaetius would relate how the beginning of the *Republic* was found many times “turned” or “rewritten.”

6. Travlos, *PDAA* (n. 3 above), 345; Wycherley, *Stones* (n. 3 above), 226–29; cf. Lynch, *Aristotle’s School* (n. 3 above), 9–12.

7. Travlos, *PDAA*, 345; Wycherley, *Stones*, p. 226 and n. 26.

8. Travlos, *PDAA*, 169. The exact location of the Fountain of Panops is inferred, since Socrates was unlikely to have walked past the Lyceum to the Fountain with the intention of doubling back.

the Lyceum—one of Socrates' usual haunts.<sup>9</sup> Socrates is “surprised,” moreover, when Hippothales informs him that his “companion and eulogist” (ἐταῖρός γε καὶ ἐπαινέτης) Miccus has been spending his time at this παλαίστρα (a7–9). Hippothales' use of ἐταῖρος should prove significant. It is the same word Phaedo uses to describe those gathered about Socrates on the day he drank the hemlock (*Phd.* 118a16).<sup>10</sup>

What most puzzles the reader in the opening exchange (as a whole) is the apparent extent of Socrates' ignorance. The more he flaunts this ignorance the more it comes across as a series of selective half-truths. Not only would Socrates have his audience believe an indirect route to be direct, but, more incredibly, Plato suggests through Socrates' narration that an entire wrestling school could be constructed near a frequented locale without Socrates' awareness and, further, that Socrates was oblivious to the fact that a close companion was actually frequenting that new παλαίστρα.

Each claim by itself may not be noteworthy, but taken together, Socrates' actions and statements become consistent. We see Plato staging the accidental character of Socrates' presence at the new παλαίστρα. Thus we begin to wonder, is the *Lysis* truly a “chance” encounter? Did Socrates “just happen by” a new and unknown παλαίστρα near the Lyceum, a παλαίστρα where, unbeknownst to Socrates, a “close companion and eulogist,” who happened to be a sophist (οὐ φαῦλός γε ἀνὴρ, ἀλλ' ἱκανὸς σοφιστής, 204a8–9), had been passing time with promising young men? This last “coincidence” is the most difficult to accept, given that Plato frequently displays elsewhere a Socrates keenly interested in and well aware of how young men of all ages passed their time, especially when a sophist could be found with them.<sup>11</sup>

Even if we accept the above anomalies as unintended by Plato, the idiosyncrasies continue: once he accepts Hippothales' invitation to join the group, Socrates makes two specific assertions (204a10–c3). First, he claims that he is “otherwise trivial and useless, but a gift from the gods [he does] possess: to recognize quickly both a lover and beloved” (τὰ μὲν ἄλλα φαῦλος καὶ ἄχρηστος, τοῦτο δὲ μοί πως ἐκ θεοῦ δέδοται, ταχὺ οἷψ τ' εἶναι γινῶναι ἐρῶντά τε καὶ ἐρώμενον, 204b9–c2).<sup>12</sup> The unusual boast comes just before Ctesippus remarks on how Hippothales has become unusually shy (204c4–d9). The reader is presented with a stark juxtaposition of personalities: an uncharacteristically boastful Socrates before an uncharacteristically shy Hippothales. In other words, situations and interlocutors appear other than they are. And Socrates continues his reflecting: “This Lysis is a young somebody, it seems; I determined this when I heard a name that I did not recognize” (ἔστι δὲ ὁ Λύσις νέος τις, ὥς ἔοικε, τεκμαίρομαι δέ, ὅτι ἀκούσας τοῦνομα οὐκ ἔγνων, 204d10–e1). Socrates, quite simply, is asking for the identity of Lysis.

Ctesippus explains that Socrates ought to know the boy by his appearance alone, but Socrates still allows everyone to believe that he is unaware of Hippothales' love

9. Pl. *Euthphr.* 2a2–3, *Euthydemus* 271a1–2, *Symp.* 223d10.

10. Plato often uses ἐταῖρος in a loaded sense to mean a member of a close-knit social and/or political club. F. Satori, “Platone e le eterie,” *Historia* 7 (1958): 157–62.

11. E.g., *Protagoras*, *Alcibiades Major*, *Alcibiades Minor*, *Charmides*, *Republic*, *Menexenus*, *Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*, *Phaedrus*, *Theages*, *Symposium*, *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*.

12. For discussions of this claim and its philosophical importance, see: Guthrie, *Hist. Gk. Phil.*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1969), 290–98 (= *Socrates* [Cambridge, 1971], 77–86.); D. M. Halperin, “Platonic Erôs and What Men Call Love,” *AncPhil* 5 (1985): 161–204; G. R. F. Ferrari, “Platonic Love,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. R. Kraut (Cambridge, 1992), 248–76; C. H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge, 1996), 258–65.

interest. Only then does Ctesippus reveal that Lysis is the eldest son of Democrates of Aixone (204d10–e9), a family Socrates in fact appears to know (204e10–11). Socrates, however, still does not admit to knowing Lysis himself.<sup>13</sup> Plato thus suggests that Socrates' unknown audience was to believe that Socrates did not know that Hippothales was attracted to Democrates' eldest son, when Socrates clearly knew both Hippothales and the family of Democrates.

Socrates' ignorance of these things may be plausible, and perhaps his behavior can be explained away as dramatic flair or lack of interest on the part of Plato, but, even if we posit these alternative premises, Socrates' eccentricities remain both selective and consistent. The reader is carefully drawn into an elaborate game of hide-and-seek between what Socrates said he was doing and what he appears to be doing. Socrates has allowed himself to appear differently for us, his immediate audience, from the way in which he had presented himself when he approached those gathered about the Fountain of Panops—an extended display of being πολύτροπος. This “much-turnedness” concerning Socrates' innocent approach becomes more apparent when Socrates actually enters the παλαιστρα (206d8–e1).

Socrates paints for his audience a lively picture of the activities taking place inside, one of the most artful descriptions in the Platonic corpus.<sup>14</sup> Many have praised the *Lysis* for showing how Plato can go to great lengths in setting a scene so as to reveal “character” and have a “philosophical discussion” arise out of a “real-life” situation.<sup>15</sup> Socrates describes children fresh from a sacrifice and dressed in their finest attire, playing “knucklebones.” Many of those youths were gathered in the courtyard while others played “odd-even” in one corner of the wrestling school's undressing room. Socrates even notes the little baskets and the great number of bones being used, while at the same time observing other youths who were standing about and looking on with interest (206d8–e10). “And among those was Lysis. And he stood among other boys and youths, wearing a garland, and quite an appearance he bore, being not only worthy to be called fine but both fine and good as well” (ὁν δὴ καὶ ὁ Λύσις ἦν. καὶ εἰστήκει ἐν τοῖς παισὶ τε καὶ νεανίσκοις ἐστεφανωμένους καὶ τὴν ὄψιν διαφέρων, οὐ τὸ καλὸς εἶναι μόνον ἄξιός ἀκοῦσαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι καλὸς τε καὶ ἀγαθός, 206e10–207a3). By now the question should be obvious: How could Socrates have recognized Lysis at first sight if, as Socrates allowed those about him to believe just moments ago, he was unaware who the son of Democrates was?<sup>16</sup>

This is not a matter of someone identifying Lysis for Socrates. Compare, for example, how Socrates describes a similar situation in the *Protagoras*. “And sitting

13. Apparently this family was quite well known during Socrates' lifetime. Since Hippothales composed hymns describing the συγγένεια and ξενισμός with Heracles (Pl. *Lysis* 205c–d), the family probably held the hereditary priesthood of the Heraclidae in Aixone. *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.1199, 2492; B. Keil, *Anonymous Argentinensis* (Strassburg, 1902), p. 58, n. 2; S. Solders, *Die ausserstädtische Kulte und die einigung Attikas* (Lund, 1931), 77; Davies, *APF*, 9574.

Lysis' grandfather (also a Lysis) is featured on many red-figure vases (Beazley, *ARV<sup>2</sup>*, 1597–98; *Paralipomena*, 507; Beazley *Addenda*, 397). His son Democrates (our Lysis' father) appears to have been the earliest bearer of that name (*SEG* 34.199; *PA* 3512). Lysis himself was not altogether obscure. He was the father of Tomiclides and Isthmonice (*SEG* 39.203, 34.199; *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>. 7045). Isthmonice's husband Euegorus proposed a *lex de pompis* during Plato's lifetime (Dem. 21.10), and Lysis himself may also have been the son-in-law of Isthmionicus, present at the Peace of Nicias (Thuc. 5.19.2, 24.1; Davies, *APF*, 9574). All of this suggests a family of importance.

14. As in the scene in the *Protagoras*, we are greeted here with a variety of “real-life” situations.

15. Guthrie, *Hist. Gk. Phil.*, 4:135; R. G. Hoerber, “Character Portrayal in Plato's *Lysis*,” *CJ* 41 (1945): 271–73; Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (n. 12 above), 265.

16. Socrates does not actually deny that he knows Lysis. He does, however, deny that he knows Lysis' name and that he knows that Lysis is the son of Democrates and that Hippothales is interested in the boy.

about [Prodicus, the Sophist], on the couches nearby, was Pausanias of Ceramis, and with Pausanias, a youth, still a boy. I suspect that his nature was both fine and good, and his appearance was indeed very fine. I thought I heard that his name was Agathon" (παρακάθηντο δὲ αὐτῷ ἐπὶ ταῖς πλησίον κλίναις Πausανίας τε ὁ ἐκ Κεραμίων καὶ μετὰ Πausανίου νέον τι ἔτι μενιμάκιον, ὥς μὲν ἐγώμηναι, καλὸν τε κάγαθόν τὴν φύσιν, τὴν δ' οὖν ἰδέαν πάνυ καλὸς· ἔδοξα ἀκοῦσαι ὄνομα αὐτῷ εἶναι Ἀγάθωνα, 315d7–e2). When Socrates entered the House of Callias, he clearly overheard Agathon's name, and yet, in the παλαίστρα near the Spring of Panops, Socrates knew Lysis on sight.

There is, of course, an alternative possibility, a possibility that can rescue Socrates from these contradictions. If Ctesippus meant to assert that Socrates should know Lysis both by his appearance and by his "other" name (the Son of Democrates), then Socrates' reactions (upon both hearing this other name and gazing upon Lysis) should demonstrate nothing extraordinary: Socrates obviously knew of Lysis even if he did not know Lysis at firsthand. This interpretation, however, leads to another serious difficulty. Socrates must then have witnessed Lysis before this day, and that, in turn, must have been where Lysis had been spending his time, in all probability at *this* wrestling school fleeing from *this* Hippothales.

In sum, either Socrates simply knew from the outset who Hippothales' love interest was, or Socrates had been in the neighborhood of the Fountain of Panops sometime before the *Lysis* took place. A discriminating audience must call Socrates' actions into question. Even though the reader may be caught up in Socrates' praise of Lysis' physical beauty, in how Socrates exalts the boy's appearance when Lysis is first seen, the fact remains that Socrates has implicated himself in a blatant deception.

In spite of Socrates' claims—(1) that he intended to go from the Academy directly to the Lyceum; (2) that he was unaware of a new παλαίστρα's existence; (3) that he was unaware that his companion and eulogist had been spending his time there; and (4) that he was ignorant of the new beauty Lysis—the unknown audience finds Socrates somewhere outside the direct route to the Lyceum, in the new παλαίστρα, where Miccus has been passing his time, and recognizing immediately the desirable Lysis in a crowd across a courtyard. In short, nothing Socrates has spelled out is what it professed to be. We must call Socrates' ignorance and his actions into question.

How might a reader interpret such overt inconsistency? Socrates intended to go to the new wrestling school by the Spring of Panops, knowing it existed. He wanted to visit that place, now frequented by his close friend Miccus. Socrates walked around the north side of the ἄστυ, under the outer wall, so that Hippothales, Ctesippus, and the others would witness him approaching. Socrates maneuvered himself for the express purpose of encountering Hippothales' new love interest.<sup>17</sup> Socrates contrived the whole encounter.

Strong evidence in support of this interpretation is evinced by the particular day on which Socrates arrives at this παλαίστρα. It is during a Hermaea (ὥς Ἑρμαῖα ἄγουσιν, 206d1–2). The Hermaea was celebrated at Athenian παλαίστραι on the third day of the Anthesteria, a festival in honor of Dionysus and Hermes. Plato

17. Note, for example, how Hippothales answers Socrates' initial inquiry: διατρίβουμεν δὲ αὐτόθι ἡμεῖς τε αὐτοὶ καὶ ἄλλοι πάνυ πολλοὶ καὶ καλοὶ (203b9–10). Hippothales draws attention to no one in particular, stressing instead the multitude of youths gathered, but Socrates immediately seeks ὁ καλὸς and, more specifically, the one who has captured the fancy of Hippothales (204b1–4).

provides enough clues in his dialogue for us to conclude that the Anthesteria is indeed the festival during which the *Lysis* unfolds.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the setting of the *Lysis* is a most colorful and compelling stage (not unlike that furnished for the *Republic* by the first performance of the Thracian *Βενθίδεα*),<sup>19</sup> because Socrates does not approach the Fountain of Panops on just any day: it is on the day of a children's festival.

The Anthesteria was a complex three-day celebration. Children received gifts, the dead were honored, and Dionysus was to be married. Above all else, however, this festival signified the opening of the wine casks and the end of winter, when Apollo returned to Delphi.<sup>20</sup> As its name (from the word *ἄνθος*) suggests, the festival corresponded to the time of year when blossoms first began to appear throughout Attica<sup>21</sup>—a most appropriate time for Socrates to approach blossoming young men with an interest in things philosophical.<sup>22</sup>

The third day of the festival serves as the immediate setting for the *Lysis*.<sup>23</sup> Meals of boiled vegetables were offered to Hermes, and spirits of the dead were permitted to roam about the land of the living.<sup>24</sup> “Mummers [harmful demons, bogeymen] would ride around in the city on carts, pursuing, with lewd jests, anyone they met.” This was a day of turmoil, of being “topsy-turvy.” But this “black” day was a “white” day for slaves and laborers, as they all were allowed to participate.<sup>25</sup> The

18. See notes 25, 26, and 29.

19. An appeal to the presence of youths in Piraeus is also made by Polemarchus in the *Republic* so that Socrates would remain for the *Βενθίδεα* (1.328a).

20. Burkert, *HN*, 216. The festival did not actually celebrate Apollo's return from Hyperborea, only the end of winter.

21. When Socrates encountered Hippothales and the others, much activity had been occurring in Athens. Two days previously, the “people flocked together from vineyards all over Attica: freeholders who seldom entered the city—a colorful crowd of strangers and friends with great *πίθοι* loaded on clattering carts drawn by donkeys: they gathered at the place in front of the temple, waiting for it to open at sunset, to pour the first libation to the god from the newly opened casks.” Ibid. 218.

22. The festival was a celebration of particular importance: a jubilation of community but with a conscious effort to ward off ghosts. The central feature of the Anthesteria was the procession of Dionysus. The god arrived in the city on a ship-chariot, followed by a train of flute-playing satyrs and young men ready for sacrifice—all in a recognition of community—and it provided an opportunity for merriment and uninhibited celebration to induce fertility in the vine.

On the first day (*Pithoigia*), children received “little jars.” These jars, and the wine casks themselves, were then opened. A procession and celebration, including a ritual drinking contest, occurred on the second day (*Choes*), while on the third day (*Charians* or *Keres*), the Hermaea took place. “Birth, [Anthesteria], adolescence, and marriage” were the basic stages in the development of a young Athenian. The Anthesteria was, in short, a ritual of “initiation.” The goal of the Hermaea, however, was to overcome a “day of pollution,” i.e., to ward off days of evil. Ibid. 217–31; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Hildesheim, 1966), 102–10; H. W. Parke, *The Festivals of the Athenians* (Ithaca, 1977), 107–20.

23. Athenians would offer a mixture of wheat flour and honey by throwing it into a small chasm near the Olympium, once believed to be an entrance to Hades. This was a general atonement to spirits. The living also chewed sacred plant leaves (buckthorn), painted black pitch over doors, and closed public temples throughout the city. They then gathered behind these closed doors and feasted together, but at separate tables.

This odd tradition had a myth to explain it: Orestes, infected with the blood guilt of murdering his mother, Clytemnestra, had taken refuge in Athens. He could have polluted the community, because he had arrived during the Anthesteria, and moreover because Demophon, the king of Athens, did not want to be inhospitable. The King ordered all temples sealed and the meal tables separated, thus protecting the Athenians. Eur. *IT* 942–1041; Ath. 10.437c (= *FGH Hist* 327 F 11); schol. Ar. *Ach.* 1085; Burkert, *HN*, 217–23; Parke, *Festivals* (n. 22 above), 119.

24. Burkert, *HN*, 217–31; Parke, *Festivals* (n. 22 above), 116.

25. Burkert, *HN*, 218, 226–28; a point emphasized by Socrates at 223a–b. Plato's use of festivals in the staging of his dialogues needs to be explored more thoroughly. Many have prominent celebrations that serve as precise settings or are displayed clearly in the background, e.g., Bendideia (*Republic*), Lenaea (*Symposium*), Great Panathenaea (*Parmenides*), Lesser Panathenaea (*Timaeus-Critias*), Olympia (*Hippias Major* and *Minor*), Asclepiad and Panathenaea (*Ion*), and Delia (*Phaedo*). Plato indeed goes to great lengths to

“upside-down” day during this complex Dionysian celebration suggests that Socrates’ walk past the Fountain of Panops was no accident: this day, on which owners of wrestling schools were paid for their services, was one of the few days of the Athenian year in which grown men would be allowed to mingle freely about παλαῖσται among unescorted boys.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, Plato subtly paints a most intricate and elaborate image through the use of a single word: “Hermæa.” During a Dionysian celebration, when strangers were in Athens in large numbers, when revelers dressed up as satyrs frolicked about town in almost uncontrolled wantonness, Plato displays his own Silenus/Marsyas<sup>27</sup> entering the wrestling school near Panops on one of the few days out of the year when he could do so unimpeded.<sup>28</sup> Celebrating youths were initiated into the community on this day, while dangerous ghosts and demons coursed through the streets of Athens,<sup>29</sup> and Plato’s own musical satyr engages these assembled young men in discussions of φιλία—a virtue that can turn excessive, intense, and even violent<sup>30</sup>—in an attempt to initiate them into philosophy.

Diogenes Laertius recorded that Socrates “made Lysis most virtuous through urging”—indicating, it seems, that the son of Democrates became a follower of Socrates (Diog. Laert. 2.29.6–7). Plato’s dialogue should thus mark the beginning of Socrates’ association with Lysis. Much like the *Protagoras* and the *Republic*, the *Lysis* places Socrates in a situation where promising youths could be captivated by sophistry, and he engages in conversation to draw them toward philosophy. And, much like the *Symposium*, the *Lysis* uses a complex and meaningful setting, a setting that offers valuable hermeneutic insights into the dialogue and its narrator such that Plato’s Socrates of the *Lysis* and Socrates’ own narration appear more intricate than has been previously acknowledged.<sup>31</sup> An appreciation of the *Lysis*’ physical setting reveals a series of anomalies presented by the tale’s teller, half-truths that lend themselves to a variety of explanations but are, nonetheless, still

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establish precise contexts for his dialogues, placing many of them, even late dialogues such as the *Parmenides*, during the time of a specific festival.

In the *Timæus-Critias*, for example, the elder Critias uses the occasion of the Panathenaea to highlight certain aspects of another “initiation” festival (Apaturia). And the *Symposium*, which occurs at a second celebration after Agathon’s first victory during the Lenaea, has many complex allusions to the profanation of the Eleusinian Mysteries, a scandal concerning yet another festival of “initiation.” L. Lampert and C. Planeaux, “Who’s Who in the *Timæus-Critias* and Why,” *RMeta* 52 (1998): 95–99; C. Planeaux, “Apolodoros, Socrates, and Alcibiades: The Dramatic Settings of Plato’s *Symposium*” (paper delivered to the Conference on Global and Multicultural Dimensions of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy and Social and Literary Thought: African, Jewish, Greek, Islamic, and Asian Traditions, Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, State University of New York Binghamton, October, 1999).

26. Aeschin. 1.9–12; R. Garland, *The Greek Way of Life* (New York, 1989), 239–41; D. M. Macdowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Ithaca, 1978), 125. This opportunity is stressed by Hippothales at 206d1–3.

27. Pl. *Symp.* 215a–b, e, 216c–d, 221d–e; Xen. *Symp.* 4.19, 5.7.

28. Besides the obvious association of satyrs with Dionysus (*OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v. “satyrs and silens”), there is also evidence that Silenus himself played a specific role in the Anthesteria. He is seen pulling a “little cart,” which was often a present for a child. F. Eckstein and A. Legner, *Antike Kleinkunst im Liebieghaus* (Frankfurt, 1969), pl. 41; CVA USA 306.3; Burkert, *HN*, p. 221, n. 28.

29. An image Socrates uses for dramatic effect at 223a: κῆρα ὥσπερ δαίμονες τινες, προσελθόντες οἱ παιδαγωγοί, ὃ τε τοῦ Μενεξένου καὶ τοῦ Λυσίου.

30. Pl. *Leg.* 837a; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1158a12.

31. Intriguing examples (that need further examination) include Lysis’ father. Democrates was a lover of Alcibiades (Plut. *Vit. Alc.* 3; Davies, *APF*, 9574). It would be most difficult to imagine that Socrates was ignorant of this, given his long interest in and love affair with Alcibiades (Lampert and Planeaux, “Who’s Who” (n. 25 above), 95–119).

half-truths. The explanations demanded by these half-truths require the utmost caution, because the stability of the *Lysis* overall is much less secure than might appear.

The insecurity begins with something apparently transparent and banal, a simple description of Socrates' journey from the Academy to the Lyceum, a description that proves, however, to be a disingenuous account. Before one attempts to assess the dialogue's philosophical core, one must look to this staging: Who are the interlocutors? And for what occasion does Socrates speak? Why might Socrates have used this tactic of deception? The philosopher discusses *φιλία* with young men at a children's festival—seemingly by chance—during a time when wanton merriment pervades the streets of Athens. The more one studies the *Lysis*, however, the more this conversation appears carefully staged. What is made to seem accidental is in fact arranged, and what seems to be mere chance, yields to artifice. The author stages his character staging the conversation—part of the fictive power of a master craftsman.

#### APPENDIX

The conclusion concerning the "directness" of Socrates' path assumes, of course, that there was not yet another road leading away from the Academy in an uninterrupted line to the Lyceum. A path could have run, for example, from the Academy tangential to the city wall at some point, perhaps skirting the Northeast Gate. Nevertheless, a straight or direct path cannot be taken to the Lyceum from the Academy without crossing the city walls. Remaining outside the *ἄστυ* requires an individual to swing around both Scambonidae and Cydathenaeum.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, even if a direct path could remain outside the city wall, and such a route existed in antiquity, this road could not be described as "toward and by way of the city wall, just under the wall itself." This road would have skirted the wall for only a negligible distance, and it might also have required the Lyceum to stretch as far east as Lycabettus.<sup>33</sup>

The two most probable paths out of the Academy would have been through the Demosion Sema (what today is Odos Platonos), or just east of that exit toward what is today Odos Lenorah. In either case, however, the roads would then have directed the traveler straight to the *ἄστυ* and intersected the city wall at the Dipy-lon or Eriai Gate.<sup>34</sup>

I retraced the footsteps of Socrates as described in the opening of the *Lysis*. In going from the Academy to the Lyceum, I took the "direct" route—straight past the ancient *ἀγορά* and Plaka. In returning, I followed Socrates' more detailed description, retracing the ancient city wall to the north. Here are my notes taken from my taped narration.<sup>35</sup>

32. E.g., Wycherley, *Stones* (n. 3 above), 223; Travlos, *PDAA*, 318, 345.

33. Cf. Guthrie (*Hist. Gk. Phil.*, 4:136), who interprets the sentence to mean "taking the road which leads close to the city-wall and outside."

34. Travlos, *PDAA*, 167.

35. In the spring of 1997, the University of Cambridge sent me to Athens to conclude this research, following recent archaeological reports from Syntagma. John Carr, "The Discovery of Aristotle's School Fuels Hunt for Lost Landmarks," *The Times* (London), 16 January 1997.

Early reports suggest that the Lyceum was rather large, extending farther east than perhaps initially thought, but the section of the Lyceum discovered now appears to be Roman and a later addition to the grove. The findings of my second trip did not alter my conclusions, since the general location of the original grove remains unchanged.



*Lysis Reconstruction:*

2:12 p.m. (Athens time, 17 November 1993)—walk begins at corner of (Odos) Marathonomachon and Basilikon (Vasilikon).

- NE 1 block to Platonos
- SE to intersection of Platonos, Athenon, and Konstantinoupoleos (2:20)
- cross over to Plateon, SE to Pireos (2:38)
- SW to Ermou (do not calculate, swing around Kerameikos) (2:41)
- E to Syntagma Square (3:02)
- SSW to Xenofontos (end walk, 3:04).

Subtract 3 minutes because of Kerameikos detour; transit time: 48 min. (Ermou does not swing quite as far S [through ἀγορά] as the Sacred Way must have. Does that make a difference? Probably not!).

3:15 p.m. (Athens time): *The return*—walk begins at corner of Xenofontos and Phillele

- N to Stadiou (3:20); waited at intersection—subtract 1 minute.
- NNW to Sofokleous (3:29)
- W to Pireos (3:40)
- SW to Plateon (3:59), NW to Platonos, Athenon, and Konstantinoupoleos (4:10)
- NW to Basilikon (4:21), SW to Marathonomachon.

Transit time: 1 hour 6 minutes = 1 hour 5 minutes (NOTE: Pireos does not run along the path of the outer wall from Eleftheris to Thermopylon; add 2 minutes for walk around park, maybe [but might be offset by shortcut of Ermou(?)])

Conclusion: Socrates added approximately 21 minutes to his walk, slightly more than twice what it should have taken him through Athens proper.

The Academy was approximately 3,000 meters from the Lyceum. Walking the path that Socrates describes, following the city walls, took about twenty minutes longer than traveling through the ἀγορά. This clearly shows that going through the Demosion Sema and the ancient ἄστυ would have been the most direct route between the two gymnasia.

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### PETRONIUS SATYRICA 38.6–11: ALAPA REVISITED

Reliquos autem collibertos eius cave contemnas. valde suco[s]i sunt. vides illum qui in imo imus recumbit: hodie sua octigenta possidet. de nihilo crevit. modo solebat collo suo ligna portare. sed quomodo dicunt—ego nihil scio, sed audiui—cum Incuboni pilleum rapuisset, [et] thesaurum invenit. ego nemini invideo, si quid deus dedit. est tamen **subalapa** et non vult sibi male. itaque proxime cenaculum hoc titulo proscriptis: “C. Pompeius Diogenes ex kalendis Iulii cenaculum locat; ipse enim domum emit.”

(Petronius *Satyrica* 38.6–11)<sup>1</sup>

1. The text is from Müller 1995, 30–31, which is the most recent version of the passage under discussion in this essay.