

PLATO, *APOLOGY* 32 c 8–d 3

Whether Meletus, the accuser of Socrates, is to be identified with Meletus, the accuser of Andocides and participant in the arrest of Leon of Salamis (And. 1.94), has recently been discussed, with inconclusive results, by H. Blumenthal.¹ The strongest argument against the identification, it may be thought, is that Socrates mentions the arrest (32 c 4–e 1) without implicating Meletus. I propose to argue that the Meleti are one, that there is a veiled allusion to Meletus in this passage and that Socrates effects this allusion in two ways.

The text: τότε μέντοι οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ' ἔργῳ αὐ̇ ἐνεδειξάμην ὅτι ἐμοὶ θανάτου μὲν μέλει, εἰ μὴ ἀγροκότερον ἦν εἰπεῖν, οὐδ' ὅτι οὖν, τοῦ δὲ μηδὲν ἄδικον μὴδ' ἀνόσιον ἐργάζεσθαι, τούτου δὲ τὸ πᾶν μέλει. It has long been observed² that, earlier in the *Apology*, Plato puns on the name Μέλητος

(a) 24 c 5–8: Μέλητον . . . κήδεσθαι ὧν οὐδὲν τούτῳ πώποτε ἐμέλησεν

(b) c 9–d 4: ὦ Μέλητε . . . δῆλον γάρ ὅτι οἶσθα, μέλον γε σοί.

(c) 25 c 1–3: ὦ Μέλητε . . . σαφῶς ἀποφαίνεις τὴν σαντοῦ ἀμέλειαν, ὅτι οὐδὲν σοι μεμέληκεν περὶ ὧν ἐμὲ εἰσάγεις.

(d) 26 b1–2: ὅτι Μελήτῳ τούτων οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν πώποτε ἐμέλησεν.

The passages display a pattern of repeated elements: the name of Meletus, a dative, the verb, and a negative.³ Some of the same elements are present in our passage but with differences. The name of Meletus is absent, the dative refers now to Socrates, and the verb occurs both with and (uniquely in the work) without a negative. I suggest that Plato has created an expectation that Meletus would be mentioned here, that the expectation is satisfied only allusively, and that the application (in this context, the story of Leon) to Socrates of language used hitherto only of Meletus sets up an implicit antithesis between the way Socrates responded to the orders of the Thirty and the way Meletus did.

A second form of allusion to Meletus is the negative οὐδ' ὅτι οὖν,⁴ 'not in the slightest'. It has never been explained why this apparently inoffensive locution is ἀγροκότερον nor what the precise meaning of the latter term is in Plato.⁵ The locution is from the comic stage,⁶ and, with one exception, every instance of the idiom in Plato can be paralleled from Attic Comedy.

THE EVIDENCE

(1) *Euthyd.* 283 c 2–3: ὦ ξένε Θούριε, εἰ μὴ ἀγροκότερον, ἔφη, ἦν εἰπεῖν,

¹ H. Blumenthal 'Meletus the Accuser of Andocides and Meletus the Accuser of Socrates: One Man or Two?' *Philologus* 117 (1973), pp. 169–78. None of the recent participants in the debate (Blumenthal, 169–70) seem to have noted Socrates' statement of Meletus, *ραδίως εἰς ἀγῶνα καθιστὰς ἀνθρώπους* (24c6), where the plural surely implies that he was not Meletus' only victim. I would agree with Blumenthal (174–5) that Meletus' motive in these prosecutions was to get himself into the good graces of the restored democracy and adduce in support Socrates' sarcastic

Μέλητον τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φιλόπολιν, ὥς φησι (24b4–5).

² Cf. Burnet *ad* 24c7.

³ In (b) the negative is, of course, implied.

⁴ The usage is found only here in the genuine works of Plato. It also occurs at *Alcib.* II 147b6, e7.

⁵ Cf. Burnet *ad loc.* and Dodds, *ad Gorg.* 462e6 and 508e7.

⁶ *Ar. Nu.* 344 *κοῦχι γυναιξὶν μὰ Δὲ οὐδ' ὅτι οὖν. Pl.* 457: *ἡμῖν προσελθοῦσ' οὐδ' ὅτι οὖν ἀδικουμένη.* Cf. 599–600. *ἀλλὰ φθείρου καὶ μὴ γρύξῃς/ἔτι μὴδ' ὅτι οὖν.*

εἶπον ἂν 'Σοὶ εἰς κεφαλὴν.' Cp. Ar. Pax 1063b: ἐς κεφαλὴν σοι = Plut. 526b.⁷

(2) Gorg. 462 e 6-8: Μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἢ τὸ ἀληθές εἰπεῖν· (the threat is not fulfilled) ὁκνῶ γὰρ Γοργίου ἐνεκα, μὴ οἴηται με διακωμωδεῖν⁸ τὸ ἐαυτοῦ ἐπιτήδευμα.

(3) Gorg. 486 c 2: εἴ τι καὶ ἀγροικότερον εἰρήσθαι, ἔξεστω ἐπὶ κόρρης τύποντα μὴ διδόναι δίκην. Cp. Pherecrates, F 155B Edmonds: εὐ' πὶ κόρρης αὐτόθι ἐπάταξεν.⁹

(4) Gorg. 508 e 7-509 a 2: κατέχεται καὶ δέδετα, καὶ εἰ ἀγροικότερόν τι εἰπεῖν ἐστίν, σιδηροῖς καὶ ἀδαμαντίνοις λόγοις. I can find no extant comic parallel here. The language suggests the *Prometheus Vincitus*, and some paratragic allusion may be involved.

(5) Rep. 2. 361 e 1-361 a 2: καὶ δὴ κἂν ἀγροικότερως λέγεται, μὴ ἐμὲ οἶον λέγειν, ὡς Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐπαινοῦντας πρὸ δικαιοσύνης ἀδικίαν. ἐροῦσι δὲ τάδε, ὅτι οὐτῶ διακεῖμενος ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται, ἐκκαυθήσεται τῷφθαλμῷ, τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν, ἀνασχωδυνλευθήσεται.¹⁰ Some details of this catalogue of punishments are paralleled in Ar. Ran. 618-21 (Xanthias):

πάντα τρόπον, ἐν κλίμακι
δήσας κρεμάσας ὑστριχίδι μαστιγῶν, δέρων,
στρεβλῶν, ἔτι δ' ἐς τὰς ῥίνας ὄξος ἐγχέων,
πλύνθους ἐπιθείς, πάντα τὰλλα

(6) Phdr. 260 d 3-4: ἀρ' οὖν ὡς ἀγαθὴ, ἀγροικότερον τοῦ δέοντος λελοιδορήκαμεν τὴν τῶν λόγων τέχνην. The reference is to c 7: μὴ περὶ ὄνου σκιάς. Cp. Ar. Vesp. 191b: περὶ ὄνου σκιάς (= F 192.2b) and Archippus' comedy entitled 'Ὀνου σκιά' (Σ Vesp. 191: i. 686 Kock) or 'Ὀνος' (F 33, 34).

In having Socrates apologize for the use of comic language, and in this context, Plato, I suggest, is again alluding to Meletus by taking up a thematic connection of Meletus with comedy that he had already begun. After the introduction, the Apology continues with a *prothesis* (18 a 7-19 a 7) in which Socrates distinguishes between his earlier and more recent accusers/accusations. This is followed by his defence against his earlier accusers (19 a 8-24 b 4) and his later accusers (24 b 4-28 a 4). Strictly speaking, it is only this last section which is directed against Meletus but all three sections are joined by structural and thematic links. Structurally, the last two sections are linked by verbal repetitions at their beginnings and ends:

19 a 8-b 4: ἀναλάβωμεν οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τίς ἡ κατηγορία . . . ὥσπερ οὖν κατηγορῶν τὴν ἀντωμοσίαν δεῖ ἀναγνῶναι αὐτῶν. 24 b 6-8: αὐθις γὰρ δὴ, ὥσπερ ἐτέρων τούτων ὄντων κατηγορῶν, λάβωμεν αὐτὴν τούτων ἀντωμοσίαν.

19 b 4-c 1: Σωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται . . . τοιαύτη τίς ἐστίν· 24 b 8-c 2: Σωκράτης φησὶν ἀδικεῖ τοὺς τε νέους . . . τὸ μὲν δὲ ἐγκλημα τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν.

24 b 3-4: αὕτη ἐστὼ ἱκανὴ ἀπολογία πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 28 a 3-4: οὐ πολλῆς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἀπολογίας, ἀλλὰ ἱκανὰ καὶ ταῦτα.

An implication of this structure is that there may be also a thematic link. This

⁷ For variants, cf. Ach. 833 and Nu. 40.

⁸ The word is found only here in Plato.

⁹ Cf. Et. Mag. 529.39: καὶ κατὰ κόρρης λέγεται τὸ τὴν σιαγόνα πλῆξαι. ὁ δὲ Ἐρατοσθένης κτλ. G. Bernhardt, *Eratosthenica*

(Berlin, 1922), p. 233, referred the citation to Eratosthenes' περὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας. Cf. also Aelius Dionysius E 55 Erbse.

¹⁰ The verb (a comic coinage by Plato?) has been discussed by H. Hommel, *Schöpfer und Erhalter* (Berlin, 1956), p. 24, n. 47.

is provided initially by the *διαβολή* which has become attached to Socrates: this is prominent in the *prothesis* (18 d 2, 19 a 1) and is taken up again just after the end of the third section (28 a 7–8). The reasons for this *διαβολή* are articulated at 18 b 7–c 1: Σωκράτης σοφός ἀνὴρ, τὰ τε μετέωρα φροντιστῆς καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς πάντα ἀνεξηγηκῶς καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν. The details of this formulation are taken from the *Clouds*,¹¹ to which Socrates later refers (19 c 2: ἐν τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους κωμωδίᾳ), and Socrates also remarks that it is not possible to identify his earlier accusers by name πλὴν εἴ τις κωμωδοποιὸς τυγχάνει ὧν (18 d 1–2). Finally, it is this *διαβολή*, ἣ δὴ καὶ πιστεύων Μέλητος με ἐγράψατο τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην (19 b 1–2).

The comic approach characteristic of the earlier accusers is reflected in the language used to describe Meletus' activity. Beginning with the oxymoron σπουδῇ χαριεντίζεται (24 c 5–6), Plato twice more uses this comparatively rare² word of Meletus (27 a 2: ἐμοῦ χαριεντιζομένου, 27 d 6: αἰνίττεσθαι καὶ χαριεντίζεσθαι) and characterizes his mode of argumentation with the phrase καίτοι τοῦτό ἐστι παίζοντος¹³ (27 a 6–7).

In Plato's final such reference, he uses another coinage, 31 d 1–2: ὁ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ἐπικωμωδῶν Μέλητος ἐγράψατο.

If it is correct to see in these passages allusions to Meletus' complicity in the arrest of Leon of Salamis, we must ask why Socrates did not name him explicitly, as Andocides (1. 94) had done in a similar context. The answer may lie in one of the clauses of the oath of amnesty of 403: τῶν δὲ παρεληλυθότων μηδένι πρὸς μηδένα μνησικακεῖν ἐξεῖναι (Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 39.6). As Dover¹⁴ has remarked, the oath was far-reaching, but we cannot know how far and to what extent it affected relations between persons when they were outside the courtroom. Nor can we know how historically accurate the *Apology* is, but it may be suggested that it was as magnanimous of Socrates not to name Meletus as it was clever of Plato to allude to him.

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¹¹ τὰ μετέωρα, *Nu.* 228, 490; φροντιστῆς, *Nu.* 414; τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς, *Nu.* 188; ἥττων/κρείττων λόγος, *Nu.* 112–115.

¹² Elsewhere in Plato only at *Rep.* 436 d 4.

¹³ Cf. *Ar. F* 166: χαριεντίζει καὶ καταπαίζεις ἡμῶν καὶ βωμολοχεύει. For παίζειν in Comedy, cf. *Laws* 935 d 3–7.

¹⁴ *Greek Popular Morality*, p. 193.