

PLATO, *ALCIBIADES I* 122e

At *Alc. I* 132a Socrates dignifies Athens with a Homeric quotation: *εὐπρόσωπος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ μεγάλῃτορος δῆμος Ἐρεχθέως* alludes to *Il.* 2.547 *δῆμον Ἐρεχθῆος μεγάλῃτορος*. 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 Ἑλλήσιν 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 Ἀ. δίηι* |, *Od.* 4.702, 5.20 *ἐς Ἀ. δίαν* |, *Od.* 3.326, 4.313, 13.440 | *ἐς Ἀ. δίαν*), 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 αὐτοὶ τε ἰδιώται 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' ἡλέκτρον τε καὶ ἀργύρου ἦδ' 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 ἵπποβότοιο*): cf. *Alc. I* 122d *ἀνδραπόδων κτήσσει* τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῶν εἰλωτικῶν, οὐδὲ μὲν 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 συγγραφέων*) 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).