

## CHAPTER 8

The Elenctic Strategies of Socrates:  
The *Alcibiades I* and the  
Commentary of Olympiodorus

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In this chapter I examine the conditions and strategies for Socrates' elenctic practice in the first part of the *Alcibiades I* (106c–119a), the part of the dialogue that Olympiodorus specifically designates "elenctic." This part is naturally divided into two primary segments: (i) the supposed origin of Alcibiades' knowledge (the multitude);<sup>1</sup> and (ii) the question of knowing whether what is just and what is advantageous are identical or different.<sup>2</sup> Socrates will succeed in obtaining the young man's admission of double ignorance, while the latter will blame himself for failing to heed his tutor, Pericles.<sup>3</sup> What, then, are the conditions that apply to this elenctic exchange, and by what means does Socrates achieve his ends, particularly in Olympiodorus's eyes?

### The Relation Between Socrates and Plato

Being the only ancient author from whom there survive two commentaries on "investigative dialogues" (ζητητικοὶ διάλογοι) or "Socratic dialogues" (*Alcibiades* and *Gorgias*), Olympiodorus is in some sense a specialist on Plato's Socratic heritage;<sup>4</sup> yet his conception of how Socrates and Plato relate to one another is one of some complexity. Overall Olympiodorus presupposes a direct continuity between Socraticism and Platonism. The Socrates of the *Alcibiades*, especially as Olympiodorus interprets him, is an elenctic critic who produces aporetic doubt, but is

equally capable of defending precise theses about the nature of the soul. The figure of Socrates, in Olympiodorus's view, cannot always be reduced to "Plato." To begin with the hidden depths of Socratic teaching could not have been wholly accessible to the young Plato. Plato "only benefited from the instruction of Socrates in matters of ethics, and only then at a foundational level; he was still young at the time when Socrates died, and could not have grasped his more in-depth discussions (τῶν βαθυτέρων τοῦ Σωκράτους λόγων)."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Plato and Socrates would not have followed the same communicative strategies. They differed sharply in their use of irony: "Plato rejected the irony associated with Socrates (τῆς Σωκρατικῆς εἰρωνείας ἀπήλλακτο), and he was not in the habit of passing his time in the agora and the workshops, and to engage in discussions in pursuit of young men."<sup>6</sup> However, Socrates' avowal of ignorance according to Olympiodorus was only partially ironic; for example, with regard to the passage (109d) where Socrates asks Alcibiades who his teacher is so that he may himself enroll in his class, Olympiodorus believes that this remark is to some extent truthful. He offers the following principle: because every lover becomes similar to his beloved in everything, Socrates, "*qua* lover (ὡς μὲν οὖν ἐρωτικός) did not know justice, because the young man did not know it, but *qua* master he had that knowledge (ὡς δὲ διδάσκαλος ἤπιστατο)."<sup>7</sup> In general, the pursuit of the youth and the habit of initiating discussions with them, which is associated particularly with Socrates, is characterized by strategies for "seduction," initially involving refutation. What are these strategies? Here, in the light of Olympiodorus's commentary in particular, is a preliminary answer.

### A Tailored and Logically Valid Argument

The dialectical method of question and answer allows Socrates to make adjustments to his interlocutor in the same way that the orator adjusts to his audience.<sup>8</sup> This method is "cathartic," because it expels false opinions from the soul much as the doctor expels diseases from the body.<sup>9</sup> Further, Socrates does not immediately employ all his arguments right from the start of the discussion; he formulates them little by little, in accordance with the needs and abilities of Alcibiades. As Olympiodorus stresses, certain premises that Socrates solicits from Alcibiades are not universal but particular, or contingent, because they are drawn from the young man's personal experience (μερικαὶ εἰσι καὶ ἀπὸ ἱστορίας). Hence Alcibiades must offer a sincere reply, without which refutation would be pointless.<sup>10</sup> According to Olympiodorus, Socrates' dialectic proceeds from like to like (διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων).

This is why he entreats the young man passionately to recognize the ultimate object of his desire.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless his argument, in Olympiodorus's eyes, is invariably valid and able to be recast in a syllogistic form, which the commentator often takes pains to supply. As for any other logically valid argument, Socrates appeals to the common notions (*κοινὰ ἔννοιαι*). This is why the elenchus that Socrates practices, as interpreted by Olympiodorus, does not seem to be uniquely confined to Socrates. In effect, from a formal point of view, there is nothing to distinguish Socratic elenchus from philosophic argument in general. Yet it is distinct from the eristic use of argument, whose goal is victory rather than truth.<sup>12</sup>

### The Act of Questioning

In contradistinction to today's dominant tendency that consists in envisaging Socratic dialectic as the expression of his modesty or skepticism, Olympiodorus for his part emphasizes the *wisdom* of Socrates, with special regard to his role as questioner: "It is true that it is not difficult to reply; quite the contrary, it is rather the asking of questions that is a difficult task (*μᾶλλον τὸ ἐρωτᾶν χολεπὸν*), much as on a journey it is more difficult to guide than to follow."<sup>13</sup> In the *Alcibiades* Socrates effectively reveals himself as a psychologist with penetrating intuition. He recognizes the secret (and unmeasured) desires of the youthful Alcibiades, which he has been silently observing "night and day" over a long period.<sup>14</sup> If he finally makes his approach after so many years, it is because he *knows*—thanks to god, to be precise—that the youth now desires to hear him.<sup>15</sup> As master of discussion and divinely inspired lover, Socrates is the ideal guide, because he combines "good intentions, precise knowledge, and expressive power."<sup>16</sup> It is true that in the "Socratic dialogues" of Plato he is liable to offer his interlocutor an exchange of the roles of questioner and respondent.<sup>17</sup> Most often, however, this is only a formality: as the only one to master the art of asking questions, he maintains this role for virtually the entire discussion. That emerges even more strongly in the *Alcibiades*, where Socrates remains the questioner throughout the entire dialogue.<sup>18</sup> On a single occasion (if I am not mistaken) he invites Alcibiades to choose between asking questions and delivering a long speech on justice, but the youth declines this invitation as if it were a provocative suggestion.<sup>19</sup> In a word, according to Olympiodorus, the role of questioner that Socrates occupies straightaway indicates his superiority over his opponent and his ability to lead the discussion along his chosen path.

### The Act of Reply

Socrates repeatedly insists, and Olympiodorus with him, on the importance of the very act of reply. For it is the respondent who affirms everything that is affirmed within the dialogue, and defends all the theses that are advanced. Socrates resorts to various means of ascertaining that Alcibiades agrees at the beginning of the argument to answer his questions, and, above all, to persist with that role. In effect, Socrates must insist at several points (even at 113a1–2, that is to say after two-thirds of this elenctic first section) on the indispensable role that Alcibiades, as the respondent, is playing.<sup>20</sup> Socrates requires that Alcibiades give a truthful response, that he answer both sincerely and fairly, so that the discussion may not be in vain (*καὶ τᾶληθῆ ἀποκρίνους, ἵνα μὴ μάτην οἱ διάλογοι γίνωνται*).<sup>21</sup> Let us note that the phrase "in vain" (*μάτην*), used a little earlier by Socrates (110a3), again pointed to another indispensable condition for their discussion: the willingness of the god (*θεός*).<sup>22</sup> To give an answer is to adopt that answer for oneself; hence it is also to accept responsibility for it. If Socrates states that the personal opinions of Alcibiades can (and should) express the truth, he probably implies thereby the relative simplicity of the questions that he puts,<sup>23</sup> as much as the sincerity that should characterize them. As Olympiodorus remarks, "Often the interlocutor agrees to propositions that are not the opinions of the person asking, and on the basis of which the syllogism is constructed."<sup>24</sup> The great weakness of Alcibiades, in the first part of the dialogue, lies in his refusal to learn and then to respond. He will try at several points to avoid replying and will require Socrates to do so for him.<sup>25</sup> But he will end up recognizing how well founded his role as respondent was, making the following remark (which recalls what Socrates says to Polus in the *Gorgias*, 475d5–6): "I need to reply, and I do not believe that this will do me any harm."<sup>26</sup> To this Socrates exclaims, "You are prophetic (*Μαντικὸς γὰρ εἶ*)," a term of praise that contrasts with his other exclamation a little earlier, according to which it is crazy (*μανικόν*) to undertake to teach what one does not know;<sup>27</sup> thereby a rather obvious play on words is added to the compliment.

Besides the need to answer with sincerity and fairness as a condition for successful dialogue, Olympiodorus emphasizes the necessity to respond to the questions clearly, without ambiguity, and in terms that match those of the original question.<sup>28</sup> He points out for instance errors contained in one of Alcibiades' answers. In "this answer, Alcibiades makes three mistakes. Firstly, though only asked for a single answer he has given three. Secondly, these answers were not straightforward, but ambiguous. . . . Thirdly, he errs when he presents 'being a victim of deception, violence, or confiscation' as three different things, whereas

one can speak of them all under the common heading of injustice. . . . So he should have mentioned the common term, and so not presented them as three."<sup>29</sup> These mistakes are indicative of gaps but also of stages in the apprenticeship of the young man in the art of discussion and reasoning, the art that Socrates endeavors to impart to him in the course of his refutation.

### Agreement and Truth

The elenctic method of Socrates aims above all to reveal the contradictions between two or more opinions of the interlocutor. That means teaching him the necessity for logical coherence in the same breath. In the same way as disagreement between two persons demonstrates that error resides in (at least) one of them, contradiction between the opinions of one and the same person guarantees falsity among them. The aim of Socratic discussion is agreement, and this agreement is, for Olympiodorus, the partial expression of a collection of true opinions, linked with the common notions that each person has within. Though agreement is not necessarily a guarantee of truth, it is still an indicator of probability. As Olympiodorus points out, "Disagreement is a sign of ignorance and of a lack of knowledge; not that those who are in mutual agreement are knowledgeable in every case (for Democriteans, in mutual agreement on the existence of void, nevertheless lack knowledge for that reason, because void does not exist), but the wise are in agreement with one another."<sup>30</sup> An agreement reached in dialogue with Socrates is an even more probable sign of truth, because he at least always follows the internal voice of his conscience, and hence the common notions.<sup>31</sup> Such is the sense that Olympiodorus attributes, in his commentary on the *Gorgias*, to *Alcibiades* 114e: "For as [Socrates] said in the *Alcibiades*, if you do not listen to your own voice, . . . do not put your trust in what anybody else says."<sup>32</sup> In other words, even if many people contradict me, it is *possible* that I am nevertheless correct; but on the other hand, if I contradict myself I am *necessarily* wrong.<sup>33</sup> Finally, let me draw attention here to a pedagogic progression (that Olympiodorus fails to pick up): Socrates is leading Alcibiades from the notion of agreement between several individuals<sup>34</sup> toward that of the agreement of a single individual with himself or herself.<sup>35</sup>

It is, moreover, striking to observe the similarities between the conception of the elenchus adopted by Olympiodorus and that defended by Gregory Vlastos. According to both of them the false opinions of the respondent imply the presence within them of true opinions that form a coherent set of doctrines, which the refutation indirectly reveals.<sup>36</sup> Olympiodorus goes further than Vlastos in thinking of

Socratic knowledge as proceeding from the common notions, and therefore as sure and unerring. Further, while Vlastos finds no Socratic solution to the "problem of the elenchus" and sees in the Theory of Recollection, from the *Meno* on, a specifically Platonic solution, Olympiodorus for his part detects in the maieutic delivery of the common notions a continuity between Socraticism and Platonism.

### Types of Questions

The *Alcibiades* is thus characterized, at every step of the discussion, by the cooperative spirit of Socrates as questioner and adviser. While Alcibiades encounters some difficulties, Socrates encourages him and aids him in various ways. Moreover, Socrates' tact is evident in the fact that he is reluctant to humiliate Alcibiades in front of others: he specifies that it is because they are alone<sup>37</sup> that he allows himself to reveal to him the hard truth, that he is prey to the worst kind of ignorance. In the interests of helping him, Socrates often offers him, as a preliminary step, examples of questions and answers so that the youth may imitate him in his turn.<sup>38</sup> This strategic and well-intentioned approach is illustrated by the types of question that Socrates asks, particularly hypothetical questions. I note here their principal types, without endeavoring to provide an exhaustive list. To start with, of course, there is the Socratic question par excellence, "What is . . . ?" (τί ἐστιν), asked of Alcibiades with regard to three objects: the state of embarrassment into which refutation has plunged him,<sup>39</sup> the notion of self-care,<sup>40</sup> and finally (and less directly) the nature of a human being.<sup>41</sup> Socrates also resorts to disjunctive questions (inviting answers of the yes/no or A/B type), which offer the respondent an object of inquiry as well as a choice between two or three possible answers. Finally, hypothetical questions are very frequent and include various subgroups ("If I were to ask you/myself/the two of us . . ."), and they often make reference to a questioner who is himself imaginary (τίς) ("if somebody were to ask me/you/us . . .").<sup>42</sup> In the *Alcibiades*, when for example Socrates wants to stress that it is shameful (αἰσχρόν) to be an adviser on matters of which one is ignorant, he resorts to an imaginary character so that Alcibiades may more readily comprehend and accept the implications of this scenario.<sup>43</sup> Olympiodorus stresses Socrates' tact in the use of this indirect type of question, as well as its efficacy: "And because it is boorish to refute somebody in person (for it is thus that, in the Poet, Phoenix, wishing to make an impression on Achilles in refuting him, does not present his speech *in propria persona*, but introduces Peleus as an intermediary to refute Achilles), Socrates does not rest content with the use of another character, but he

even employs the one being refuted to make a greater impression."<sup>44</sup> Hypothetical questions also aim at coming to the help of the respondent (in giving him encouragement to persevere or in explaining to him a detail that is causing him a problem), while remaining strategic to the extent that they facilitate the granting of premises needed by Socrates for the completion of his refutation. These questions allow him to bring about refutation without any immediate and obvious damage to the self-respect of his interlocutor.<sup>45</sup>

### Dubious Argument and Strategic Aim

Finally, let us briefly examine several dubious arguments that Socrates makes use of for the refutation of Alcibiades. I limit myself here to the section in which Socrates presents justice as identical with the advantageous (113d–116d). Against Alcibiades' objections that the just and the advantageous are not identical (113d5–7), Socrates offers the following universal argument: everything just is honorable (115a); everything honorable is good (116c); everything good is beneficial (116c); hence everything just is beneficial (116d). Socrates' approach is both gradual and strategic. At first he makes Alcibiades admit that certain just things are honorable, and that all just things are honorable. He offers an example well suited to Alcibiades, involving the honorable nature of courage, like that of Achilles wounded in saving his friend, cowardice being for Alcibiades the worst of evils (115d7–8). The distinction, in a way an ontological one, that Socrates establishes between courage (manifestation of honor) and death (possible fatal consequence) as if they were two distinct entities (Ἄρ' οὖν οὐκ ἄλλο μὲν ἢ ἀνδρεία, ἄλλο δὲ ὁ θάνατος; 115c1) is only fair in a limited sense, because it involves two phenomena that are in reality inseparable; courage depends on an awareness of potentially fatal risks.

In addition, Socrates' argument sometimes errs through oversimplification; for example, he proposes that people are happy owing to their acquisition of goods (Οὐκοῦν εὐδαίμονες δι' ἀγαθῶν κτήσιν, 116b7–8), something that appears, to say the least, problematic to the extent that Socrates distinguishes elsewhere in Plato between good things and their use (e.g., *Euthydemus* 280d–281b). Socrates in fact plays upon the equivocation of the expression εὖ πράττειν, which translates literally as "to behave well" but commonly signifies "to be happy"; he thus surreptitiously effects the transition from "be happy" (τὸ εὖ πράττειν) to "good conduct" (ἡ εὐπραγία, 116b11–14).<sup>46</sup>

Although he almost always defends the soundness of Socrates' arguments, Olympiodorus still recognizes that Socrates "proves" that Alcibiades does not

know utility by building on an "antiparastasis," because the demonstration (ἐνστάσις) that justice and utility are identical would require several arguments; he will only have recourse to this afterward: "If justice and utility are identical, and if it has been shown that you do not know justice, it has also been shown that you do not know utility; if, however, they differ and it is shown by the same arguments that you do not know utility, then you will have been proved ignorant of two things instead of just one."<sup>47</sup>

Overall, Socrates' argument in favor of the thesis that justice is identical with utility (113d–116d) has the primary function, at this point of the dialogue, of making Alcibiades aware of his ignorance, and therefore receptive to Socrates and to philosophy. In other words, the aim of these arguments is not the rigorous proof of a thesis but the revelation of Alcibiades' confusion, of which he must himself become conscious before being able to make an advance toward the true knowledge of himself.<sup>48</sup> This is why, even if Olympiodorus almost always defends the arguments of Socrates, including those whose logical validity seems to us today to be seriously compromised, the exegetical approach of Olympiodorus has the merit of showing that all the arguments of Socrates, in the first part of the dialogue, have as their primary strategic function to instill into the young Alcibiades a consciousness of his ignorance, as is otherwise revealed by various dramatic aspects of the dialogue.

### Conclusion

This short consideration of the formal aspects of the argumentation of the elenctic section of the dialogue (106c–119a) has also sought, indirectly, to stress the contribution that Olympiodorus's commentary can make today, particularly regarding the Socraticism of Plato.

In his introduction to his commentary on the *Alcibiades*, Nicholas Denyer makes the perceptive remark that the act of writing philosophic dialogues, in this case a dialogue presenting an exemplary philosopher seeking to attract to philosophy somebody who was to become famous for his unscrupulous life, implies the adoption of a stance concerning the nature of philosophy, its techniques and its power, and its relation to other ways of life as well as obstacles to the philosophic life. These implicit positions (by comparison with the explicit affirmations of the author of a treatise) force the reader to pay attention to all aspects of literary form: "We will miss the dialogue's answers to these philosophical questions about philosophy, if we bypass its literary form, in an attempt to go straight to its content."<sup>49</sup>

The merit of Olympiodorus's exegesis resides among other things precisely in the detailed and systematic attention that he affords to the dramatic action as an integral part of the doctrinal content. In general, his interpretation highlights the following aspects: (1) the moral conditions for philosophy, including the willingness to undergo moral improvement and the capacity for progress in the love of wisdom; (2) elenchus and midwifery as two complementary functions of Socratic dialectic (the mutual agreement of interlocutors and the coherence of the common notions as criteria of truth); (3) the close ties between pedagogy and rhetoric, which illuminate the enigmatic character of both the method and the person of Socrates; (4) the direct connections that join the daimonic and erotic activities of Socrates; and (5) finally, the exegesis of hidden implication, a second-level maieutic, involving the reader's going beyond the immediate results of the arguments in search of the deeper meaning of the text. These aspects of Socrates' wisdom in the *Alcibiades*, such as they are skillfully interpreted by Olympiodorus, deserve even today to be pondered by Plato's readers.

## CHAPTER 9

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### *Akrasia and Enkrateia* in Simplicius's Commentary on Epictetus's *Encheiridion*

Marilynn Lawrence

... it is said that Socrates was always seen in the same demeanor, and never moved by things that seem pleasurable and painful, because he always lived out one and the same life, his own.

—Simplicius, in *Epicteti Encheiridion*  
(tr. Brennan and Brittain [2002: 89])

#### Introduction

Is it possible to knowingly err? In other words, can someone possessing knowledge of correct action willingly chose otherwise? Socrates did not think so, or at least that is how his position is characterized in the *Protagoras*. Making sense of this argument has been labeled by contemporary Socratic scholars as the problem of *akrasia*.<sup>1</sup> In this niche of Socratic philosophy, Socrates' denial of *akrasia* and Aristotle's response to it in the *Nicomachean Ethics* have been well discussed, producing numerous interpretations of the argument that no one willingly chooses to do what he or she knows to be an error or a worse action.<sup>2</sup> The primary problem centers upon the fact that Socrates denies the possibility of weakness of will, or even the idea that reason can be overtaken by pleasure. Strikingly, this view seems to be in direct contradiction to the commonsense notion not only that such weakness does exist but also that often human beings

22. Proclus, *in Alc.* 107.23–25.
23. Proclus, *in Alc.* 92.8–15.
24. Cf. *Phaedrus* 249d.
25. Proclus, *in Alc.* 172.8–10. In the *Alcibiades* (132d–133c) it is not specifically lovers who do this (as in *Phaedrus* 255c–d), but given the context—in which Socrates has just claimed he is Alcibiades' only true lover—Proclus seems to characterize dialectic appropriately. Additionally, though Proclus distinguishes between erotic science, maieutic, and dialectic, it is evident that he recognizes their interrelation. See Kaproulias (2005).
26. Socrates' erotic comportment therefore does not disappear once his formal arguments begin. Thus Schomakers (2008: 596) claims that Proclus's understanding of "negative theology" is that it creates a desire that impels us to move toward the One. Proclus, *in Alc.* 170.5–12, also claims that dialectic makes the listener more attentive to the speaker than he would be during a speech, and that dialectic purifies the listener from twofold ignorance. Cf. Proclus, *in Alc.* 314.1–8. For more on Proclus and double ignorance see Layne (2009, Forthcoming c and d).
27. Proclus, *in Alc.* 171.1–3. See Marler (1993) for an analysis of the role causal reasoning plays in Alcibiades' reversion upon intellect.
28. Proclus, *in Alc.* 277.20–23. Cf. Layne (2009).
29. Proclus, *in Alc.* 35.10–13.
30. Cf. *Republic* 382a, where Socrates claims no one would willingly tell falsehoods to the most authoritative aspect of himself (τῷ κυριωτάτῳ ἐαυτοῦ) about the most authoritative things (περὶ τὰ κυριώτατα), which he equates with beings (τὰ ὄντα).
31. Proclus, *in Alc.* 220.16–17. Cf. also *Republic* 431e, in which moderation is characterized as power over oneself (κρείττω δὴ αὐτοῦ).
32. Proclus, *in Alc.* 35.13–22.
33. Proclus, *in Alc.* 209.5, 300.13–301.7.
34. Cf. *Charmides* 154d–e, where Socrates claims that they must strip Charmides to see whether he is beautiful in soul even though he is clearly beautiful in body.
35. Proclus, *in Alc.* 95.7–26. On Plato's soul as indeterminate activity, see Demos (1978).
36. Cf. Socrates in *Gorgias* 482a–b comparing his two loves: philosophy, which always says the same things, and the son of Kleinias, who differs from one moment to the next.
37. Proclus, *in Alc.* 36.5–11.
38. Proclus, *in Alc.* 44.9–45.6.
39. *Symposium* 217c.
40. *Symposium* 218e. This does not mean that Socrates is solely interested in abstract objects of love, as Vlastos (1973) argues. Rather, Socrates loves Alcibiades as the beautiful soul that allows him to glimpse Beauty itself (*Symposium* 209c, 210c) in such a way that he is never simply a stepping-stone on the way to abstract truth. See Lawrence (2003).
41. Proclus, *in Alc.* 90.1–3. Cf. Socrates' remark in the *Republic* (492e–493a) that if anyone escapes the education of the many, he has been saved by divine dispensation (θεοῦ μοῖραν αὐτὸ σῶσαι).
42. *Symposium* 218a–b and 216a–c.

43. Proclus, *in Alc.* 36.11–15. Cf. Plato, *Letter VII*, 344a: "Neither quickness of learning nor a good memory can make a man see when his nature is not akin to the object, for this knowledge never takes root in an alien nature." Cf. also *Phaedo* 79d in which the soul is said to be akin to the Forms.
44. Proclus, *in Alc.* 57.6–8.
45. Proclus, *in Alc.* 253.13–15. Cf. Proclus, *in Alc.* 39.10–16: "As in the intelligent considerations of philosophy obstacles are raised by the sophist's way of life and the association with it that drags away the less perfect from the consideration of reality to the appearance that corresponds to the coming-to-be and passing-away, so also in the elevation to divine love the multitude of common lovers becomes an obstacle by assuming the character of the true lover and dragging down the soul of the youth."
46. One of the disappointing aspects of the few modern interpretations of the *Alcibiades* is that they simply ignore the erotic aspect of Socrates' character. For instance, Schleiermacher (1836) attacks the authenticity of the *Alcibiades* on the grounds that all reference to Socrates' love for Alcibiades is omitted insofar as he has not approached Alcibiades until his looks are fading. Aside from the fact that Socrates begins the dialogue talking about his love for Alcibiades (103c), for Proclus we should expect that he has stayed away, not because he does not love Alcibiades, but because Socrates is the only person capable of truly loving him. Those modern commentators who do account for Socratic ἔρωσ include Denyer (2001) and especially Gordon (2003).

## Chapter 8

This brief chapter belongs to a series of investigations into Olympiodorus as a Platonic commentator, involving the *Alcibiades I* and its reception in antiquity; see for example Renaud (2006, 2007, 2008, and 2012). I would like warmly to thank Harold Tarrant for kindly taking it upon himself to translate the French text, and so elegantly.

1. *Alcibiades I* (= *Alc.*) 110e2–3: Παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν. (References are to the text of J. Burnet, 1900.)
2. *Alc.* 114b1–2: πότερον δὲ ταῦτά ἐστι δίκαιά τε καὶ συμφέροντ' ἢ ἕτερα.
3. *Alc.* 118e8: Ἐγὼ οἶμαι αἴτιος οὐ προσέχων τὸν νοῦν. Cf. Plutarch, *Alc.* 8.1–3.
4. Cf. Tarrant (1998: 4).
5. *In Gorgiam commentaria* (= *in Gorg.*) 41.6: παρὰ γὰρ Σωκράτους τὰ ἠθικὰ ἀφέλητο μόνον, ἔ. διὰ θεμελίους εὐλήφει· νέος γὰρ ἦν ἐπὶ Σωκράτους ἀποθανόντος καὶ οὐδέπω ἦν ἀψάμενος τῶν βαθυτέρων τοῦ Σωκράτους λόγων.
6. *In Alcibiadem commentaria* (= *in Alc.*) 2.149–152: καὶ γὰρ καὶ τῆς Σωκρατικῆς εἰρωνείας ἀπὸ ἡλλακτο καὶ τοῦ ἐν ἀγορᾷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐργαστηρίων διατρίβειν καὶ τοὺς νέους θηρῶντα ποιῆσθαι τοὺς λόγους.
7. *In Alc.* 88.5–6: ὡς μὲν οὖν ἐρωτικὸς ὁ Σωκράτης ἠγνόει τὸ δίκαιον ἀγνωσοῦντος τοῦ νέου, ὡς δὲ διδάσκαλος ἠπίστατο. As for 124a–c, where Socrates declares himself in search of self-knowledge, the single type of self-knowledge that Socrates does not possess, according to Olympiodorus, is the highest of the seven degrees of knowledge.

8. *In Alc.* 56.9–57.4: τὸ διαλογικὸν σχῆμα καὶ ἡ κατὰ βραχὺ τῶν λόγων διαπλοικὴ κατὰ πᾶσιν γινόμενη καὶ ἀπόκρισιν. ἢ, ὡς φησιν ἐν τῷ Φαίδρω, ‘δεῖ τὸν λόγον εὐκείναι ζῶφ’. . . ὡσπερ οὖν οὗτος λεμιῶν ἐστὶ ποικίλων ζῶων, οὕτω δεῖ καὶ τὸν λόγον εἶναι πλήρη παντοδαπῶν προσώπων. . . ὅτι τὸ κατ’ ἐρώτησιν καὶ ἀπόκρισιν σχῆμα διεγερτικὸν ἐστὶν καὶ ἐπιστρεπτικόν. τοιγαροῦν καὶ οἱ ῥήτορες, ὅτε βούλονται διεγείρει τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἢ ἐπιστρέφειν <πρὸς> τὸν λόγον, αὐτῷ κέχρηται, οἷον ‘ἀλλά μοι ἀπόκριται, πρὸς θεῶν’.

9. Cf. *Sophist* 230b–e.

10. *In Alc.* 89.13–17: Καὶ τάληθῆ ἀποκρίνου, ἵνα μὴ μάτην οἱ διάλογοι γίνωνται: . . . ἐπειδὴ μερικαὶ εἰσι καὶ ἀπὸ ἱστορίας εἰλημμένα, αἰτεῖ αὐτὸν ἀληθεύσαι.

11. *In Alc.* 7.4–8: ὁ οὖν Σωκράτης οὐχ οὕτως ἐπανορθοῦται τὰς ψυχὰς, ὡσπερ οἱ προσηρημένοι, ἀλλὰ διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων μᾶλλον· εἰ μὲν τίς ἐστὶν ἐρωτικός, λέγων ‘μάθε τίς ὁ τῶν καλῶν ἔρωας’· εἰ δέ τίς φιλοχρήματος, φάμεν ‘μάθε τί τὸ αὐταρκές’· εἰ δὲ φιλήδονος, ‘τίς ἢ ἀληθῶς ῥαστώνη, ἦν καὶ θεοῖς ὁ ποιητὴς ἀνατίθησι, λέγων “θεοὶ βεῖα ζώνοντες.”’ On dialectic as purification in Plato, cf. *Rep.* 533d2–4, 527e1–3.

12. Cf. Tarrant (2000, 116–118).

13. *In Alc.* 62.4–8: δυσχερὲς ἦν καὶ χαλεπὸν τὸ ἀποκρίνεσθαι· ἐπειδὴ δὲ Σωκράτης ἐστὶν ὁ μαιευτικὸς καὶ πρὸς ἀφέλειαν καὶ διόρθωσιν τῶν νέων σκοπῶν, εἰκότως οὐ χαλεπὸν, τούναντίον δὲ μᾶλλον τὸ ἐρωτᾶν χαλεπὸν, καθόπερ καὶ ἐν ὁδῷ τὸ ἡγεῖσθαι τοῦ ἕπεσθαι.

14. *Alc.* 110b1–2: Πολλάκις σοὶ ἐν διδασκίλων ἤκουον παιδὸς ὄντος καὶ ἄλλοθι; *Alc.* 106e4–9: ταῦτ’ ἐστὶν ἂν ἐπίστασαι, εἰ μὴ πού τι μανθάνων ἐμέ λέληθας· οἷμαι δὲ γε, οὔτε νύκτωρ οὔτε μεθ’ ἡμέραν ἐξῶν ἐνδοθεν.

15. *Alc.* 104c3: ὅθεν δὴ εὐ οἶδα ὅτι θαυμάζεις; Alcibiades confirms it (104d4): τῷ ὄντι γὰρ θαυμάζω.

16. *In Alc.* 62.22–23: Τριῶν ὄντων τούτων στοιχείων ἀγαθοῦ συμβούλου, προαιρέσεως ἀγαθῆς, γνώσεως ἀκριβοῦς, δυνάμεως ἀπαγγελτικῆς; *in Alc.* 41.10–12: στοιχεῖα δὲ καὶ τεκμήρια ἐνθέου ἔραστοῦ λέγει δύο ταῦτα, ὅτι δεῖ τὸν ἐνθεὸν ἔραστην καὶ κρίσιν ἔχειν καὶ συμπάθειαν. Cf. *in Gorg.* 145.23–146.10.

17. E.g., *Gorgias* 448c1–3, 462a3–5; cf. *Pr.* 338c7–d3.

18. *Alc.* 113b1–2: Οὐκοῦν ἄρτι διὰ παντὸς ἐγὼ μὲν ἢ ὁ ἐρωτῶν.

19. *Alc.* 114b2–5: τί οὐκ ἀπέδειξας; εἰ μὲν βούλει, ἐρωτῶν με ὡσπερ ἐγὼ σέ, εἰ δέ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ σεαυτοῦ λόγῳ διέξελεθε. Cf. 114d4–7: Ἴθι νῦν, ἐπειδὴ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φαίνεται πολλοὺς τε καὶ ἓνα πείθειν, ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐμμελέτησον καὶ ἐπιχειρήσον ἐπιδείξαι ὡς τὸ δίκαιον ἐνίστε οὐ συμφέρει.—Υβριστὴς εἶ, ὃ Σώκρατες. Cf. 106c1–4.

20. *Alc.* 113a1–2: Περὶ δὴ τούτων μὲν ἐγὼ φαίνομαι λέγων ὁ ἐρωτῶν, ἢ σὺ δὲ ἀποκρινόμενος.

21. *Alc.* 110a2–3.

22. *Alc.* 105e6–7: οὐκ εἶα ὁ θεὸς διαλέγεσθαι, ἵνα μὴ μάτην. Cf. 113c4.

23. Cf. *Gorgias* 495a; *Republic* 350e.

24. *In Alc.* 99.13–15: καὶ ὅτι πολλάκις δίδωσιν ὁ προσδιαλεγόμενος προτάσεις τοιαύτας μὴ δοκούσας τῷ ἐρωτῶντι, ἐξ ὧν σύγκειται ὁ συλλογισμὸς.

25. E.g., *Alc.* 114d11–e2: Ἐκ μὲν ὧν σὺ λέγεις οὐκ εἰκόσ.—Ὅραξ αὖ τοῦθ’ ὡς σὺ καλῶς εἶπες, ὃ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ; 112d10–e1: Ἀποκρίνου μόνον τὰ ἐρωτώμενα.—Μή, ἀλλὰ σὺ αὐτὸς λέγε.—Τί δ’; οὐχ ὅτι μάλιστα βούλει πεισθῆναι.

26. *Alc.* 114e10–115a1: Οὔτοι, ἀλλ’ ἀποκριτέον· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν οἶμαι βλαβήσεσθαι.—Μαντικὸς γὰρ εἶ. Cf. *Gorgias* 475d5–6, where Socrates says to Polos: μὴ ἔκνει ἀποκρίνασθαι, ὃ Πῶλε· οὐδὲν γὰρ βλαβήση.

27. *Alc.* 113c5–7: μαυκὸν γὰρ ἐν νῷ ἔχεις ἐπιχείρημα ἐπιχειρεῖν, ὃ βέλτιστε, διδάσκειν δὲ οὐκ οἶσθα, ἀμελήσας μανθάνειν. Cf. *in Alc.* 63.9–10, 67.22.

28. Cf. *Gorgias* 448d–e, 451d–e, 489e.

29. *In Alc.* 80.12–81.10: τριχῶς δὲ ἐν τούτοις ἀμαρτάνει. πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι ἐν ἐρωτηθείς τρία ἀπεκρίνατο. δεύτερον ὅτι οὐχ ἀπλᾶ ταῦτα, ἀλλ’ ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα. . . τρίτον ἀμαρτάνει ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν ὡς τρία προήγαγε τὸ ἀπατᾶσθαι ἢ βιάζεσθαι ἢ ἀποστρεφίσθαι, κοινὸν δὲ ἐστὶν εἶπεῖν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν τὴν ἀδικίαν. . . ἔδει οὖν αὐτὸν τὸ κοινὸν εἰπόντα μὴ οὕτως ὡς τρία ταῦτα προαγαγεῖν.

30. *In Alc.* 92.4–9: σημεῖον δὲ ἀγνοίας καὶ ἀνεπιστημοσύνης ἢ ἀσυμφωνία· οὐχ ὅτι οἱ συμφωνοῦντες ἀλλήλοις πάντως ἐπιστήμονές εἰσιν (διὰ τοὺς Δημοκriteίους, συμφωνοῦντας μὲν περὶ τοῦ κενοῦ ὅτι ἐστὶν, ἀνεπιστήμονας δὲ διὰ τοῦτο ὄντας, οὐκ ἔστι γάρ), ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν ἐπιστήμονες συμφωνοῦσιν ἀλλήλοις, κατὰ τὴν σὺν ἀντιθέσει ἀντιστροφῆν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπομένου γινομένην οἱ μὴ συμφωνοῦντες ἀνεπιστήμονές εἰσιν.

31. Tarrant (1997a: 188).

32. *In Gorg.* 19.1; cf. 41.9; cf. *Alc.* 114e, *Phd.* 91c.

33. *Gorgias* 472b–c, 482c–d. Cf. Denyer (2001: 142).

34. *Alc.* 111b3–5: Οὐκοῦν τοὺς εἰδότας ὁμολογεῖν τε ἀλλήλοις καὶ μὴ διαφέρεισθαι.

35. *Alc.* 117a5–6: Περὶ ὧν ἄρα ἔκων τάναντία ἀποκρίνη, δῆλον ὅτι περὶ τούτων οὐκ οἶσθα; cf. 117b2–3. There is, however, just a glimpse of the idea of agreement with oneself at 111d11–e2: Ἰκανὸν δὲ σοὶ τεκμήριον ὅτι οὐκ ἐπίσταται οὐδὲ κρήγουσι διδάσκαλοι εἰσιν τούτων, ἐπειδὴ οὐδὲν ὁμολογοῦσιν ἑαυτοῖς περὶ αὐτῶν.

36. Vlastos (1994: 25–29); cf. Tarrant (1998: 10).

37. *Alc.* 118b5–6: ἐπειδὴ μόνω ἐσμέν, ῥητέον.

38. E.g., *Alc.* 108b4–5: Ἀλλὰ πειρῶ ἐμέ μμεῖσθαι.

39. *Alc.* 116e5: ἀγνοεῖς τὸ πάθημα τί ἐστὶν.

40. *Alc.* 127e9: τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι.

41. *Alc.* 130c2–3: ἢ εἴπερ τί ἐστὶ, μὴδὲν ἄλλο τὸν ἄνθρωπον συμβαίνειν ἢ ψυχῆν. This is one of the examples that Aristotle gives of this type of question, the fourth of his classification, *Analytica posteriora* B 1, 89b23–35.

42. *Alc.* 105a3–5: ἴσως ἂν σὺν εἴποις, ἅτε εἰδὼς ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγω, “Τί δὴ οὖν, ὃ Σώκρατες, τοῦτ’ ἐστὶ σοὶ πρὸς λόγον”; *Alc.* 105c7–d1: δοκεῖς γὰρ μοι, εἴ τίς σοὶ εἶποι θεῶν· “ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ, πότερον βούλει ζῆν ἔχων ἢ νῦν ἔχεις, ἢ αὐτίκα τεθνᾶναι· εἰ μὴ σοὶ ἐξέεται μεῖζω κτήσεσθαι.”

43. *Alc.* 108e5–109a3: Ἀλλὰ μέντοι αἰσχρὸν γε εἰ μὲν τις σε λέγοντα καὶ συμβουλευόντα περὶ σιτίων ὅτι βέλτιον τόδε τοῦδε καὶ νῦν καὶ τοσοῦτον, ἔπειτα ἐρωτήσῃεν “Τί τὸ ἄμεινον λέγεις, ὃ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ”; περὶ μὲν τούτων ἔχειν εἶπεῖν ὅτι τὸ ὑγιεινότερον, καίτοι οὐ προσποτῆ γε ἱατρὸς εἶναι· περὶ δὲ οὐ προσποτῆ ἐπιστήμων εἶναι καὶ συμβουλευόμενος ἀντιστάμενος ὡς εἰδὼς, τούτου δ’, ὡς εἰκοῦς, πέρι ἐρωτηθείς ἐὰν μὴ ἔχης εἶπεῖν, οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἢ οὐκ αἰσχρὸν φανεῖται.

44. *In Alc.* 102.27–103.9: [Οὐκοῦν ἐλέχθη ὅτι περὶ δικαίων ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης]: καὶ ἐπειδὴ φορτικόν ἐστὶ τὸ ἐξ οἰκείου προσώπου προσφέρειν τοὺς ἐλέγχους—οὕτω γὰρ καὶ παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ ὁ Φοῖνιξ βουλόμενος καταδρομῆν χρησασθαι ἐλέγχων κατὰ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως οὐκ ἐκ προσώπου οἰκείου εἰσάγει τοὺς λόγους, ἀλλ' εἰσαγαγὼν τὸν Πηλέα οὕτως ἐλέγχει: . . . ὁ δὲ Σωκράτης οὐκ ἀρκεῖται τῷ ἄλλῳ προσώπῳ χρησασθαι, ἀλλὰ χρήται καὶ τῷ ἐλεγχομένῳ πρὸς μείζονα καταδρομῆν, λέγων ὅτι 'ἐλέχθη ὑπὸ Ἀλκιβιάδου ὅτι μὴ εἰδὼς τὸ δίκαιον μέλλει συμβουλεύειν περὶ ὧν οὐκ οἶδεν'.

45. On these hypothetical questions, see the detailed study of Longo (2000: 93–220).

46. Cf. Denyer (2001: 150).

47. *In Alc.* 106.9–14: Τί οὖν; εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα ἕτερα μὲν τὰ δίκαια: ἄρχεται τοῦ ἐλέγχου καὶ δείκνυσιν αὐτὸν μὴ εἰδὼτα τὰ συμφέροντα ἐκ τῆς ἀντιπαραστάσεως, διότι πολλῶν λόγων δεῖται ἢ ἔνστασις εἰς τὸ δεῖξαι ὅτι ταῦτόν δίκαιον καὶ συμφέρον, ὃ ἐφεξῆς ποιήσει· νῦν δὲ φησιν ὅτι 'εἰ μὲν ταῦτόν ἐστὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ συμφέρον, ἐδείχθης δὲ μὴ εἰδὼς τὸ δίκαιον, οὐκοῦν καὶ τὸ συμφέρον· εἰ δὲ ἕτερον, δειχθείης δὲ μὴ εἰδὼς τὸ συμφέρον διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων, δύο ἀνθ' ἑνὸς δειχθήσῃ ἀγνοῶν'; see also the French translation of Segonds (Proclus 1985–1986: 445).

48. Cf. Denyer (2001: 10).

49. Denyer (2001: 11).

#### Chapter 9

1. It has been translated variously as weakness of will, incontinence, lack of self-control, and unrestraint, among other things.

2. Works on this topic are too numerous to list here. Some of the works I have drawn upon include Segvic (2008), Bobonich and Destree (2007), Hoffmann (2008), Reshotko (2006), and Vlastos (1995).

3. This point has been countered by Segvic (2008).

4. Irwin (2008).

5. Aristotle, *Magna Moralia* 1.1, 1182a14–26. If this section of *MM* is not in fact by Aristotle, it at least shows that such a division between Plato and Socrates was not out of place in the Peripatetic school.

6. See Vlastos (1991). See Kahn (1996) for a response to this position on two Socrates. Kahn shifts the conventional division of dialogues and deemphasizes the role of any historical Socrates. Rowe (2002), however, argues against Kahn's downplaying of the philosophical positions of a historical Socrates, including the denial of akrasia.

7. Dorter (2008). Also see Shields (2007: 61–86).

8. Dorter (2008: 14); cf. *Rep.* 518c–d.

9. Simplicius, in *Epicteti encheiridon*, H262/D38, 15. Brittain and Brennan (2002: 82).

10. Akrasia and enkrateia are also discussed in the context of temperance and intemperance (*sôphrosunê* and *akolasia*) in *Eudemian Ethics* III.6. Some have argued that Aristotle is inconsistent on akrasia in *EN* and other works, such as *De anima*. For more on this, see Destree (2007: 139–166).

11. Aristotle, *EE* 1226a ff.

12. *EN* 1146b35–1147b5.

13. Gerson (2007: 271).

14. *EN* 1111a22–b3. Of these two sources, akratic behavior arising from thumos is less unjust than that from epithumia (*EN* VII.6).

15. *EN* 1147a10–18.

16. Chase (1847).

17. Aristotle gives examples of such practices among “the barbarians.” *EN* 1148b20ff.

18. *EN* 1150a21–31, 1150b29ff. In contemporary terms, someone with antisocial personality disorder, also called psychopathy, might fit Aristotle's typology of the *akolast*: a person who indulges without self-control or reason (as moral reason), and who is incurable because she does not empathize or see what she has done as wrong.

19. *EN* 1150b19ff. “Precipitancy” = *Propeteia*. See Salles (2007: 249–264).

20. Aristotle's use of *μελαγχολικός* does not have the simple later meaning of “sad” or “depressed” but is closer to excitable or prone to inconstant emotions.

21. *EN* 1152a27–29. If custom is easier to cure than nature (1152a29–30) in *EN* 1154b10–15, and the melancholics (tr. by Lombardo and Bell as “excitable”) are tormented by their bodies' special composition (predominance of black bile), why should we think that one's bodily constitution (more akin to nature than nurture) is more readily curable than cognitive weakness? Perhaps Aristotle has in mind the treatability of such things that affect the temperament through medical cures, as was considered later in the Aristotelian tradition. Melancholy is discussed in the Pseudo-Aristotelian or Pseudo-Alexandrian *Problemata*, book 30, 953a ff.

22. This view was codified by Inwood (1985: 137). In light of the presence of akratic emotions in Chrysippus and *enkrateia* as a virtue in Cleanthes, Gourinat (2007: 217–248) reevaluates the role of *akrasia* in early Stoic moral theory. Gerson (2007: 272–274) also challenges this interpretation of the early Stoa.

23. For a reconstruction of Chrysippus's position on *akrasia*, see Joyce (1995: 315–335). Brennan (2003: 274) takes issue with Joyce's interpretation of the Stoic position on weakness of will.

24. Plutarch, *De virtute morali* 446F–447A.

25. *De officiis* 1.29.101; 36.132. See Gerson (1994: 169 n.76).

26. Gill (2006: 304–305).

27. Gill (2006: 306).

28. Epictetus, *Discourses*, book I (tr. R. F. Dobbin).

29. *De placitiis Hippocratis et Platonis* 3.3.13–16; 4.6.19–24. For discussion of this passage, see Dobbin (2008: 218–224). Also see Gill (1983: 136–149).

30. καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά, / θυμὸς δὲ κρείττων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων. *Diss.* 1.28.7 (tr. R. Dobbin).

31. Epictetus, *Diss.* 28.8.

32. This passage is discussed by Long (1996: 277–279 [reprint 2001]). Cf. Salles (2007: 249–264).



# THE NEOPLATONIC SOCRATES

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