

of a dialogue. Only by seeing the unique ‘focus’ that explains all the features of a work can we hope to understand its purpose. And the purpose that Danzig finds informing a number of relevant works is that Plato and Xenophon were trying to address ‘the post-trial controversy’. The chief post-trial question, according to Danzig, was: why was Socrates so incompetent and arrogant in court?

The thesis works well for Plato’s and Xenophon’s *Apologies*. Both are notoriously deficient, in their respective ways, as defence speeches. It is a good idea to see the purpose of these works as defending Socrates against the charge of incompetence, and Danzig argues the thesis well in Chapter 1 (19–68). It follows, of course, that if these works are pursuing theses of which Socrates himself cannot have been aware, their value as evidence for the historical Socrates is radically diminished.

In Chapter 2 (69–113), Danzig applies the thesis also to Plato’s *Crito*. He suggests that part of the post-trial controversy was the question why Socrates chose not to escape (or, which comes to the same thing, why he was abandoned by his friends), and that the purpose of this dialogue is to address this question, rather than the more philosophical issue of the rights and wrongs of escaping. Socrates emerges as upright, competent, and obedient to the laws. In order to maintain this thesis, Danzig has to downplay the philosophy of the dialogue as jejune and muddled. This seems too extreme. There are serious philosophical points raised in the dialogue, and some of them are echoed in other dialogues. It seems hard to maintain that Plato had no interest in the philosophical issues except as rhetorical devices for convincing the broad range of audiences that Danzig envisages for the dialogue.

Chapter 3 (115–49), on Plato’s *Euthyphro*, applies the same method of exaggerating the weaknesses of the philosophical argumentation to claim that Euthyphro is meant to be an image of Socrates’ prosecutor Meletus. It’s not easy to see, however, how any reader, now or in the past, would have made this connection. Even the clues that Danzig unearths are far from immediately transparent, not

least because we know hardly anything about either of these men as historical entities.

The next two chapters (151–237) argue that in a number of works both Plato and Xenophon were concerned to defend Socrates’ memory against the charge of corrupting the youth. Whereas the actual charge involved a kind of political/religious corruption, Danzig claims that it would have been natural to read it as implying sexual corruption, and that this was a charge his followers were concerned to rebut. It is true, of course, that both Plato and Xenophon portrayed Socrates as too high-minded to give in to lust, and really these chapters do no more than display the evidence for this in excessive detail; the point could have been made in a far shorter compass, just by referring to the relevant passages. But I doubt that this charge was very important at the time, either at an explicit or implicit level.

The final Chapter 6 (239–63) is on Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*. This, on Danzig’s reading, addresses not any specifics of the ‘post-trial controversy’, but a more general controversy: isn’t philosophy just an indolent and impractical waste of time? Socrates emerges, according to Danzig, as more entitled to the honorific description ‘truly good’ (*kalos k’agathos*) than Ischomachus (or anyone else in Athens).

There is a lot of worthwhile detail in each of the chapters, and students of any of the main works examined in the book will certainly want to read the book for its insights. But the overall theses seem to me to be somewhat tenuous. There is a certain circularity in that the evidence for the post-trial controversy that Danzig claims Plato and Xenophon are addressing is only to be found within the pages of Plato and Xenophon in the first place. Danzig’s point is to develop a reading of the dialogues as determined by audience and character rather than philosophical interests as such – a thesis that runs the risk of ignoring both thinkers’ evident interest in philosophical topics and argumentation.

Lakonia, Greece

Robin Waterfield

Socratica 2008: Studies in Ancient Socratic Literature. Edited by Livio Rossetti and Alessandro Stavru. Pp. vii, 353, Bari: Levante Editore, 2010, €32.00.

This reasonably priced collection of essays is the second in a projected series. Rossetti has long specialized in the immediate followers of Socrates – what can be salvaged of their writings and thought. The present volume is the fruit of a second international conference on the topic. The thirteen essays are in Italian (7), English (2),

Spanish (2), and French (2). They are grouped as relevant to: ‘The First Generation’ (4 essays); ‘Plato’ (4 essays); ‘Xenophon’ (2 essays); and ‘Nachleben’ (3 essays).

Rossetti begins with an essay arguing that the terms *philosophia* and *philosophos* were first used prolifically by the first generation of Socratic

writers. Noburu Notomi's interesting essay shows that, among the Socratics, it was Plato, not the others, who pushed for the distinction between 'sophist' and 'philosopher', clearly as part of his programme of elevating philosophy as the only true education. The most interesting, but in many ways the most enigmatic of the first Socratics was Antisthenes. Aldo Brancacci argues that, immediately following Socrates' death, Antisthenes was the most influential of his followers, and teases out from the meagre evidence as much as can reasonably be recovered of his doctrines. Finally, in this section, Domingo Plácido considers Aeschines of Spettus. Plácido believes the late report that both Aeschines and Socrates taught rhetoric for money, and tries to depend the different Socratics' different perceptions of their mentor on their differing financial circumstances.

The next four essays are on the most famous of the Socratics. Louis-André Dorion, the world's leading expert in Xenophon's Socrates, considers self-sufficiency. This is the prime virtue in Xenophon, but has no prominence at all in Plato. After highlighting this gulf between the two, Dorion concludes that Plato actually did not want to recommend self-sufficiency to his readers, because for him philosophy was an ongoing quest. Walter Omar Kohan's essays stresses some discrepancies in Plato's portrait of Socrates and suggests that he is simply reflecting his own puzzlement at his enigmatic mentor. Lidia Palumbo closely analyses Plato's *First Alcibiades* 133a-c, a passage central for understanding what Plato (or possibly Socrates) meant by self-knowledge. Finally, in this section, Gabriele Cornelli and André Chevitaresh outline the political background to Socrates' trial – his association with the Thirty, and so on. Although I fully agree with their thesis, they go too far in claiming

that Socrates was actually inscribed as one of the Three Thousand citizens under the Thirty. There is, unfortunately, no such objective evidence.

In the first of the two essays on Xenophon, Donald Morrison attempts to reconcile Xenophon's remarks on *sophia*, and especially to bring it in line with the importance it receives in Plato, despite the fact that Xenophon famously contradicts Plato when he says that wisdom may be either good or bad. Then Stavru analyses *Memorabilia* 3.10, where Socrates is in conversation with an artist and a sculptor. Stavru suggests that Xenophon's distinction between overt and covert features of art, which puzzles his interlocutors, draws on technical handbooks of the time and contemporary debate.

The three final essays look at aspects of the later reception of Socrates. Michael Erler considers *parrhesia*, frank speaking. Socratic *parrhesia* is actually less than candid; when Epicurus and Philodemus promoted it, therefore, they were drawing less on Socrates than on the original democratic ideal. Socratic irony, as Graziano Ranocchia points out, was welcomed in the Epicurean school, but not among the Stoics, whose Socrates was more dogmatic and less nuanced. Michel Narcy attributes a comic fragment preserved in Diogenes Laertius' *Life* to the poet Mnesilochus, and therefore re-interprets it as complimentary rather than critical. The fragment has less to do with the supposed friendship between Socrates and Euripides than with Socrates' perceived importance in Athens.

Like most collections of essays, this one is patchy, but there is enough quality to satisfy most readers and to make the volume worthwhile.

Lakonia, Greece

Robin Waterfield

The Image of a Second Sun: Plato on Poetry, Rhetoric, and the Technē of Mīmēsis. By Jeff Mitscherling. Pp. 479, New York: Humanity Books, 2009, \$55.98.

The importance of Plato's literary-critical remarks in *Republic* cannot be underestimated: they are the earliest cases of literary criticism in Europe. The difficulty of them also cannot be underestimated: the banishment of all poetry in *Republic* 10 is puzzling in itself, and inconsistent with what Plato says elsewhere, even earlier in *Republic*.

Mitscherling's purpose is to address and resolve the puzzles, but more particularly to make sense of Plato's strictures in Book 10 – i.e. to expound Plato's aesthetic views.

Mitscherling writes in a clear and straightforward way, accessible to undergraduates (who may well be faced with this issue in a course on the

history of aesthetics, or on Plato), and useful for more experienced researchers too. As part of the same policy, he confines much of the scholarly controversy to sometimes copious end-of-chapter notes. This is a long book, but the notes occupy seventy pages, and the two appendixes occupy over 125 pages. One, on 'Plato's Quotations and References', is a bare and useful list, and the other on 'Plato's Quotations of Homer in *Republic*', includes discussion along with quotation. A bibliography (good, but with some surprising omissions) and an index round off the book.

We have to wait until Chapter 4 before Mitscherling addresses *Republic* itself. The first