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Gorgias and the Socratic Principle Nemo Sua Sponte Peccat

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Euse Calogeros:

Gorgias' Helena and Palamedes and the Socratic principle nemo sua sponte peccat.

More than one century ago the great German philologist Welker tried to confirm the tradition, that amongst the sophists the real master of Socrates had been Prodicus: Welker called him his "forerunner"(1). In our century this valuation was once exaggerated to the extent of maintaining that the "principle of Prodicus" - that is, the care for the exact distinction and usage of the meanings of synonyms- had been the starting point for every sound development in logic, whereas the methodical pattern presupposed by Socrates in his discussions was, on the contrary, a Prinzip der absoluten Vieldeutigkeit, a principle of absolute equivocation and ambiguity, and therefore the starting point for every kind of trouble in that field(2).

Of course, the connection of Socrates with Prodicus was justified by the fact that both, in their conversations, appeared frequently to be dissatisfied by certain answers or expressions of their interlocutors, and therefore discussed the meanings of certain terms used by them. But the difference between the two approaches was very sharp, as it appears from every passage of the socratic dialogues of Plato in which Prodicus is introduced to explain the demands of his synonymics in the midst of the debate(3). He wants everybody to use, for example, the verb $\eta\beta\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ in some cases and the verb $\epsilon\upsilon\pi\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota$ in some others, following what ~~he~~ he thinks to be the right usage, the $\delta\epsilon\delta\epsilon\tau\mu\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\sigma\mu\lambda\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$; whereas Socrates does not care what kind of words one may use, but is only interested in what one really expresses by these words, that is, the meaning which he gives to them. Both search for mean-

ings~~which~~ of words: but Prodicus' question is: - What does it mean?, - and Socrates question is: - What do you mean? - Prodicus says: - ἀνδρεία means this, ἡρακύτης means that: so you shall use ἀνδρεία in the first case and ἡρακύτης in the second. Socrates asks: - What do you mean by ἀνδρεία (τί λέγεις τὴν ἀνδρείαν;)? He does not care for correct speaking: he himself likes to speak εἰκῇ τοῖς ἐπιτυχούσιν ὀνόμασι (as he says in Plato's Apology, 17C). He is interested in the real thing, in what is meant, in the human behaviour which has to be chosen and in the human valuation which has to be given. So Prodicus is the forerunner of all those people who try to determine the proper meanings of the words of a language and to put together its vocabulary for the right usage of those words so long as the passage of time does not change their meanings, and also of those who write treatises on logic or semantics in the belief that the right knowledge of the meanings of a language is the best method for reasoning well. Socrates, instead, is the perennial master of the real way of reasoning well, stressing not so much logic but dialogic, that is, never pretending to know the true meaning of what has been said by others before ἐξετάζειν them and never pretending to be immediately understood by others without διδόναι λόγον to them, in that incessant dialogue which is the moral life of men.

Now, this socratic ideal of the dialogue is strictly connected with the basic principle of his ethics, nemo sua sponte peccat (οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν ἐξαμαρτάνει). As a matter of fact, only a person who understands that nobody acts in a certain way without preferring it to any other possible way of action, of which he is aware, can be interested in finding out what are the reasons for such a preference, without being certain in advance that they are wrong(4). And that principle is clear-

ly presupposed in the Helena and in the Palamedes ^{cf.} Gorgias. This sophist, therefore, might eventually be considered as the forerunner of Socrates with more reason than Prodicus, although none of his interpreters, as far as I know, seems to have suspected such a connection(5).

Let us see the main argument of the Encomium on Helen. After having briefly recalled her origin and beauty, Gorgias begins the treatment of the real subject of his speech, which is not so much an eulogy as an apology, as it was remarked by Isocrates(6). Gorgias wants, as he says, "to subject her story to critical examination, and so rescue her from ignorant calumny"(7). His point is that she acted as she did because she was irresistibly compelled to do so. As long as such a compulsion is supposed to have been determined by τύχη or by Ἀνάγκη or by the Gods or the violence of a man, there is no question: her innocence is obvious. But now Gorgias maintains that she was irresistibly compelled, and therefore deprived of any αἰτία, even if the compulsion was only enacted through the πείθω, the persuasion: - and this despite the fact that βία and πείθω were for his contemporaries the precise technical terms used to express the opposition between coercive and non-coercive behaviour, as the distinguishing characters of tyranny and democracy, of slavery and freedom.

This is evidently the main contention which Gorgias has to prove, and so he devotes to it the seven central paragraphs of his speech (8-14: seven precede and seven follow), beginning with ^{the} expression of his conviction that, although his task may appear difficult, it will be easy for him to fulfill it: εἰ δὲ λόγος ὁ πείσας καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπατήσας, οὐδὲ πρὸς τοῦτο χαλεπὸν ἀπολογήσασθαι καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν ἀπολύσασθαι ὥδε (8). And here immediately follows the famous passage on the power of

logos, which has ~~πῶς~~ always be considered as the most typical expression of Gorgias' philosophy: λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν. This power is not only the emotional force of poetry, λόγος ἔχων μέτρον, or the magic wizardry of incantations: it is also the power which we would call the persuasive force of reason:

(13) That Persuasion, when added to speech, can also make any impression it wishes to the soul, can be shown, firstly, from the arguments of the meteorologists, who by removing one opinion and implanting another, cause what is incredible and invisible to appear before the eyes of the mind; secondly, from legal contests, in which a speech can sway and persuade a crowd, by the skill of its composition, not by the truth of his statements; thirdly, from the philosophical debates, in which quickness of thought is shown easily altering opinion(9).

Gorgias expatiates on the subject of the various forms of the influence exerted by the λόγος and its πείθω upon the soul; but the conclusion is always the same, and it is clearly expressed in § 12: λόγος γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁ πείσας, ἢν ἐπείσεν, ἡνάγκασε καὶ πείθεσθαι τοῖς λεγομένοις καὶ συνκινεῖσθαι τοῖς ποιομένοις. ὁ μὲν οὖν πείσας ὡς ἀναγκάσας ἀδικεῖ, ἢ δὲ πείθεσθαι ὡς ἀναγκασθεῖσθαι τῷ λόγῳ μάτην ἀκούει κακῶς. Persuasion by λόγος is equivalent to abduction by force, as nobody can avoid to "consent to what is done" if he "agrees to what is said", in other words, nobody can help acting in accordance with the considerations to which he has been brought. In socratic terms, οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν ἐξαμαρτάνει, nobody does anything, which may appear wrong from a better point of ~~view~~ view, without considering it ἄχαθόν from his point of view. And even if this point of view is the visual perception of those objects which induce us to fall in love with them, the situation does not change, as Gorgias says in the last section of his speech: εἰ γὰρ ἔρως ἦν ὁ ταῦτα πράξας, οὐ χαλεπῶς διαφεύγεται τὴν τῆς λεγομένης ~~πραγματικῆς~~ ἀμαρτίας αἰτίαν. ἃ γὰρ ὁρῶμεν, ἔχει ψύειν

οὐχ ἢν ἡμεῖς θέλομεν, ἀλλ' ἢν ἑκάστων ἔτυχεν· διὰ δὲ τῆς ὀψέως
 ψυχῇ καὶ τοῖς τρόποις τυποῦται (615). We see the things
 as they happen to be, not as we want them to be! And what fol-
 lows seems to anticipate some wellknown socratic analyses of
 the nature of fear and courage, as situations of the soul de-
 pending from its way of seeing things as δεινὰ or θαρραλέα,
 which we find in Plato's Protagoras and Laches(10). The gene-
 ral conclusion is repeated in § 19: if Eros is a god, gods are
 irresistible, εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπινον νόσημα καὶ ψυχῆς ἀχρόημα, οὐχ
 ὡς ἀμάχημα μεμπτέον ἀλλ' ὡς ἀτύχημα νομιστέον. There is
 no need to change here, with Weidner and Immisch, νομιστέον
 into οἰκτιςτέον or to add <ἄξιον ἐλέου> with Reiske: Gorgias
 has already said, at the end of § 7, δίκαιον οὖν τὴν μὲν οἰκῆσαι,
 expressing the same idea of the ἔλεος of the "compassion", de-
 served by the κακοὶ in as much as they are ἀμαθεῖς, which is
 so common in all the platonic passages concerned with the so-
 cratic principle κακὸς ἐκὼν οὐδεὶς(11).

Let us now see the Palamedes. The ~~xx~~ hero ^{defends} ~~defe~~ himself by
 proving, first, that he could not have carried into effect his
 supposed treason even if he had wanted to, and, secondly, that
 he could not have wanted to perform the actions of which he is
 accused, even if he had had the opportunity of performing them.
 The first part of the defence, which is by far the shortest
 of the ~~xx~~ two, does not concern our problem (as the first part
 of the Helena did not). But the second part is a continuous
 reassertion of the principle which we know as the basis of So-
 crates' ethics. Right from the beginning, in § 13 Palamedes
 asks: - What motive could I have had? - And the reason given
 for this question is a statement of that principle: οὐδεὶς γὰρ
 βούλεται προῖκα τοὺς μεγίστους κινδύνους κινδυνεύειν οὐδὲ τὴν με-
 γίστην κακότητα εἶναι κάκιστος. The formula οὐδεὶς βούλεται

προῖκα εἶναι κάκιστος corresponds almost literally to the
 formula οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν κακός. Only a few lines further, the sa-
 me presupposition is expressed in the following passage: ἀλλ' ὥς
 ἔκόντες ἔκοντι παραδόντες, μισθὸν τῆς προδοσίας ἀντιδιδόντες;
 ἀλλὰ γε ταῦτα πολλῆς μωρίας καὶ πιστεῦσαι καὶ δέξασθαι τίς γὰρ
 ἂν ἔλοιτο δουλείαν ἀντὶ βασιλείας, ἀντὶ τοῦ κρατίστου τὸ κάκιστον;
 (§ 14). As a matter of fact, the impossibility of "choosing
 the worst instead of the best" is a typical point, frequently
 underlined by Socrates in the demonstration of his principle.
 At the beginning of § 16 we read the sentence καὶ μὴν οὐδ' ἂν
 τιμῆς ἕνεκα τοιούτοις ἔργοις ἀνὴρ ἐπιχειρήσειε καὶ μέσως
 φρόνιμος, which presupposes the idea that a reasonable man ~~can~~
 cannot do things which he judges harmful to himself. And § 18
 insists: κακῶς δὲ παθεῖν οὐδὲ εἰς ἐπιθυμῶν πανουργεῖ. And § 19:
 δισσωγὴν γὰρ τούτων ἕνεκα πάντες πάντα πράττουσιν, ἢ κέρδος τι
 μετιόντες ἢ ζημίαν φεύγοντες. This theme of the κέρδος ~~is~~
 seems to anticipate the ~~subject~~ subject of the Hipparchus, whose
 connection with the principle nemo sua sponte peccat I think
 to have proved sufficiently (12). Finally, in § 25 Palamedes
 says that he cannot be accused at the same time of two opposi-
 tes, wisdom and madness: the accuser, who does so, τὸν αὐτὸν λό-
 γον λέγων πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἄνδρας περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τὰ ἐναντιώτα-
 τα λέγει (a sentence in which has been found an echo of the
 contemporary discussions about the logical rule which should
 later be called the Law of Contradiction). And here follows § 26
 to which we shall compare a corresponding passage from Plato's
Apology of Socrates:

Palam., 26 βουλοίμην δ' ἂν
 παρὰ σοῦ πυθεῖσθαι, πότερον
 τοὺς σοφοὺς ἄνδρας νομίζεις
 ἀνοήτους ἢ φρόνιμους. εἰ μὲν

Pl. Apol. 25D τί δῆτα, ὦ Μέ-
 λητε; τοσοῦτον εὐ ἐμοῦ σο-
 φώτερος εἰ τηλικούτου ὄντος
 τηλικόςδε ὢν, ὥστε εὐ μὲν

γὰρ ἀνοήτους, καὶ νὸς ὁ λόγος,
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀληθής· εἰ δὲ φρο-
νίμους, οὐ δῆπου προσήκει τοὺς
γε φρονούντας ἐξαμαρτάνειν
τὰς μεχίστας ἀμαρτίας καὶ
μᾶλλον αἰρέσθαι κακὰ πρὸ πα-
ρόντων ἀγαθῶν. εἰ μὲν οὖν
εἰμι σοφός, οὐχ ἡμαρτον· εἰ
δ' ἡμαρτον, οὐ σοφός εἰμι. οὐ-
κοῦν δι' ἀμφοτέρω ἂν εἴη ψευ-
δής.

ἐγνώκας ὅτι οἱ μὲν κακοὶ κακόν
τι ἐρχάσσονται ἀεὶ τοὺς μάλιστα
πλησίον ἑαυτῶν, οἱ δὲ ἀγαθοὶ
ἀγαθόν, ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ εἰς τοσοῦ-
τον ἀμαρτίας ἤκω, ὥστε καὶ
τοῦτ' ἀγνοῶ, ὅτι, ἐάν τινα μοχθ-
ρὸν ποιήσω τῶν συνόντων, κιν-
δυνεύσω κακόν τι λαβεῖν ἀπ'
αὐτοῦ; ταῦτα ἐγὼ σοι οὐ
πέισομαι, ὦ Μέλητε, οἷμαι δὲ
οὐδὲ ἄλλον ἀνθρώπων οὐδένα
ἄλλ' ἢ οὐ διαψεύσειν ἢ, εἰ δια-
ψεύσειν, ἄκων· ὥστε οὐ γε κατ'
ἀμφοτέρω ψεύδῃ.

Gorgias' passage, even taken by itself, is completely so-
cratic in its content: all its words might have been said by
Socrates in a platonic dialogue. But even more astonishing
than this coincidence of the main principle both of Helena and
Palamedes' defences with the main principle of Socrates' ethics
is the similarity of this passage to the passage quoted above
parallel to it. They end practically with the same sentence,
after two formulations of a dilemma which is also substantially
the same, because it refers always to the principle nemo sua
sponte peccat, according to which nobody can, at the same ti-
me, ἀμαρτάνειν and be σοφός or διαψεύσειν and do so ἐκόν
(13). Now, the coincidence between Gorgias' Apology of Pala-
medes and Plato's Apology of Socrates is not at all limited
to this passage, but permeates the entire structure of both
works. In order not to take too much space with quotations,
we only mention, for each subject, the corresponding passage
(indicating both works with the initials of their authors

and with X. Xenophon's Apology, when the correspondence extends to it too).

Death is not the real issue: everybody is condemned to die: G.1; P.38C-D; X.27.

Real issue: if ἀποθανεῖν happens δικαίως or not: G.1; P.34E-35C; X.28.

Death is preferable to ἀκχερόν behaviour or repute: G.35; P.38E-39B.

Judges who may condemn people to death should not decide in one day: G.34-35; P.37A-B.

If you kill me, my fame will cause you to be blamed: G.36; P.38C.

I could not go elsewhere as an exile: my hosts would become suspicious, and it would be a βίος οὐ βιωτός (14), in Greece as well as ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις: G.20; P.37C-E, cp. Crito 53B-54A.

Not only I am not guilty, but I am your εὐεργέτης: G.30; P.36C (the best proof of my innocence is ~~all~~ my entire life: G.28-29; X.3).

I will not use lamentations and prayers, in order to move you to pity: I will only διδάσκειν τὸ ἀληθές: G.33; P.34C-35C, cp. 38D-E; X.4;9.

Interruption of the ἀπολογεῖσθαι by a διαλέγεσθαι with the accuser: G.22; P.24B ff.; X.19 ff.

Now we can understand why in the enumeration of the most important sophists made by Socrates in Plato's Apology (19E) Gorgias comes first, before Prodicus, and why the first hero, killed by an unjust sentence, whom Socrates thinks to meet in Hades, is Palamedes (41B)! Not only must he ~~xx~~ have heard Gorgias presuppose in his discussions the same principle upon which he had to base his ethics(15): he must also have clearly remembered Gorgias' Apology of Palamedes, when he pronounced before his

judges his own apology, of which we certainly have the best document in Plato's work. After all, this news is definitely given to us by Xenophon, who presents Socrates himself as recalling Gorgias' Apology in his Apology (26): *παρὰ μὲν δὲ ἔτι με καὶ Παλαμήδους ὁ παρὰ κλήσιός ἐμοὶ τελευτήσας· ἔτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν πολὺ καλλίους ὕμνους παρέχεται Ὀδυσσεύς τοῦ ἀδίκως ἀποκτείναντος αὐτόν*, Josef Morr(16) has well argued that this passage cannot be an allusion to Euripides' Palamedes (fr. 588 Nauck), and that *ὕμνοι* and *ὕμνεϊν* may refer also to prose works: as a matter of fact, Gorgias himself (fr. 5b Diels-Kranz) seems to call *ὕμνους* his encomia. Moreover, Morr (who had ~~ex~~ strongly underlined the coincidence between Gorgias' Palamedes and Xenophon's Apology of Socrates as to the point that everybody is already condemned by nature to die, without noting, however, the far more numerous coincidences, in this and in other points, with the platonic Apology) quotes Xen. Mem. IV, 2, 33 *τὰ δὲ Παλαμήδους οὐκ ἀκήκοας πᾶσι; τοῦτον γὰρ δὴ πάντες ὕμνοῦσιν ὥς διὰ σοφίαν ψυονηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὀδυσσεύς ἀπόλλυται*. In connection with this interpretation, according to which Ulysses had accused Palamedes because he was envious of his *σοφία*, Morr refers to Gorgias' Palamedes 25 (*σοφίαν μου κατηγορεῖς*), in order to show that the situation here is the same, and that therefore this is the work quoted by Socrates in Xenophon.

This may be true or false, but in any case Xenophon has been particularly influenced by Gorgias, and certain aspects of this influence may confirm what we have seen concerning the relation between the sophist and Socrates. Nestle, who has carefully studied the sophistic heritage in Xenophon(17), recognises, for instance, Gorgias in the *διδάσκαλος τῶν παίδων* about whom Cyrus is told by his father in Inst. Cyri, I, 6, 31. He *ἐδίδασκεν τοὺς παῖδας τὴν δικαιοσύνην. . . . μὴ ψεύδεσθαι καὶ ψεύδεσθαι*

καὶ μὴ ἐξαπατᾶν καὶ ἐξαπατᾶν, καὶ μὴ διαβάλλειν καὶ διαβάλλειν
καὶ μὴ πλεονεκτεῖν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν. διώριζε δὲ τούτων ἅ τε
πρὸς φίλους ποιητέον καὶ ἅ πρὸς ἐχθρούς. καὶ ἔτι γε ταῦτα
ἐδίδασκεν ὥς καὶ τοὺς φίλους δίκαιον εἶη ἐξαπατᾶν ἐπὶ γε
ἁχαθῶ, καὶ κλέπτειν τὰ τῶν φίλων ἐπὶ γε ἁχαθῶ. Now, if
this διδάσκαλος is really Gorgias(18), it is also easy to see
that his doctrines are very similar to certain loci communes
of the ethics of Socrates, who liked to show, in his criticism
of the traditional ἀρεταί, how what is good from the point of
view of a single ἀρετή in certain cases is not good in other
cases, for example that which is ^{good} with reference to friends may
not be good as regards enemies, and so on(19). On the other
side, Nestle ~~agx~~ agrees with Hertlein and Ritter, who see a
symbolic representation of both the destiny and the fundamental
moral principle of Socrates in the portrait of the man of whom
Tigranes tells Cyrus that his father sentenced him to death be-
cause he thought that he was corrupting him, whereas the man
~~he~~ was, in fact, so καλὸς καὶ χρηστός, that he advised the son
not to be angry with the father for this: οὐ γὰρ κακονοία τινὶ
τοῦτο ποιεῖ, ἀλλ' ἀγνοία. ὅποσα δὲ ἀγνοία ἄνθρωποι ἐξαμαρτάν-
ουσι, πάντα ἀκούσια ταῦτα ἐγὼ νομίζω (Inst. Cyri, III, 1, 38).
And so we see that in the main educational work of Xenophon, it
is Socrates and Gorgias who seem to be present, as masters of
the youth worthy to be idealized together; Gorgias maintaining
points familiar also to Socrates, and Socrates reasserting his
nemo sua sponte peccat.

Anyway, be it as it may with Xenophon, the presence of the
afore-mentioned principle in Gorgias' Helena and Palamedes is
evident, we believe, after our analyses of their contents. G.
Bux(20) was right in remarking ~~the~~ that the "logical" structure
of both those discourses has nothing to do with the εἰκός of

Teisias and Corax. Both defences do not presuppose any likely reconstruction of facts individually connected ~~with~~ with the personal situation of Helen^g or of Palamedes as for instance all other defences of Helen in Greek literature do, including that, particularly silly, of ~~I~~Socrates(21). They are based only on general arguments, which could be employed by any other ~~p~~ person accused of adultery or treason. But it is no use to say that this type of argumentation is ~~an~~ an apagogischer Schlussbeweis, whose presence in both defences as well as in the Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος declares all of them to be only exercises of eleatic dialectics(22). What is important, is the real contents of this Beweis: and this, we have seen, is nothing else than the sum of the considerations, upon which the nemo sua sponte peccat of Socrates is based.

The date of Gorgias discourses is not certain, but no one has thought that they might have been written after 410 B.C. (23). As it is also quite unlikely that they were composed by the very old Gorgias after the death of Socrates, there is no reason to change the ancient view, that the Defence of Palamedes influenced Socrates' own defence, as well as its description by Plato and Xenophon, and not vice versa. At the same time, the idea of the irresistible power of λόγος and πείθω, so brilliantly outlined in the Helena, coincided with the οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν ἁρκέει of Socrates, but also confronted him with the most important problem of moral conduct. In fact, Gorgias, envisaging the nemo sua sponte peccat in its most elementary form, might fall in a sort of moral indifference. Everybody could act only according to his persuasions: so everybody could dominate the others if he was able to persuade them(24)! Against this new tyranny of the logos, which was both threatening the independence and directing the behaviour of the ψυχὴ in her most in-

timate realm (by the way, even this idea of the soul as the seat of consciousness and moral conduct, in which Burnet and Taylor saw the most important element of Socrates' philosophy, has proved present in Gorgias' discourses), Socrates had to find a remedy. And this was not a repudiation of the nemo sua sponte peccat, but the discipline of the *πείθω* by the *διάλογος*. Everybody acted according to his private reasons, but everybody had to *διδόναι λόγον* of these reasons and to *αἰτεῖν λόγον* of the reasons of the others, in order that the better ones could exercise their better *πείθω*. So the *μέγιστον ἀγαθόν* was for Socrates the *ἐξετάζειν* of the *διάλογος* both in this life and in any other possible life(25), and the *κατὰ βραχὺ διαλέγεσθαι* was the only civic discipline necessary in order to check the *μακρολογία* of the rhetors and their possibly bad *πείθω* (26). But this was not enough for Plato, who was not only a teacher but a politician as well, and did not possess the quiet socratic patience to wait for the slow results of the *διάλογος*. The fact that we find the manifesto of his new position in a dialogue entitled Gorgias, is probably because he could not discuss the faith in *πείθω* and *οὐδείς ἐκὼν κακός* and *διάλογος* of his master Socrates without beginning by a discussion of the faith in *πείθω* and *οὐδείς ἐκὼν κακός* of the master of Socrates himself.

Foot-Notes

- (1) F.G.Welker, Prodikos von Keos, Vorgänger des Sokrates, in Rhein. Mus. f. Philol., 1832 and 1836, reprinted with additions in Kleine Schriften, II (Bonn 1845), 393-541. Socrates himself says, in Plato's Meno 96D, that Prodicus had been his teacher. But even if this is not a joke, to study under and to be a disciple of are not the same thing.
- (2) Svend Ranulf, Der eleatische Satz vom Widerspruch, Copenhagen, 1924; and my criticism, Una nuova concezione della logica prearistotelica, in Giornale critico della filosofia italiana, VIII, 1927, 409-22.
- (3) See e.g. the passages quoted in Diels-Kranz, 84 A 13-18.
- (4) May I refer for this to my article Socrate, in Nuova Antologia, November 1955, 291-308, and to Logo e Dialogo (Milan, 1950).
- (5) Helena and Palamedes are still considered only as "exercises" by K.Freeman (The Pre-Socratic Philosophers², Oxford, 1949, p. 359) and as "jeux d'esprit" by E.Dupréel (Les Sophistes, Neuchâtel, 1949, p.61), although he ~~xx~~ has carefully analysed many aspects of Gorgias' ethics. As to the interpretation of Gorgias by M.Untersteiner (I Sofisti, Turin, 1949, pp.114-248), I find it very difficult to understand, even in the english ~~transl~~ translation by K.Freeman (The Sophists, Oxford, 1954, pp.92-205).
- (6) Laudatio Helenae, 14-15. That Isocrates' quotation of the $\chi\rho\acute{\alpha} = \psi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha \pi\epsilon\rho\iota \tau\eta\varsigma \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$ really refers to Gorgias and not to another apologist of Helen, is now generally accepted.
- (7) Q2. The quotation is from the summary given by K.Freeman in her Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers² (Oxford, 1952), p.131.
- (8) The feeling of the difficulty of his task is again expressed by Gorgias some lines further, if the beginning of Q9 has to be read with Immisch, $\kappa\alpha\delta\omicron\varsigma\alpha \delta\epsilon\iota\chi\alpha\iota \tau\omicron\iota\varsigma \alpha\kappa\omicron\upsilon\beta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\iota$ [δὲ δὲ], as I

think it has (all other readings give a poor sense).

- (9) From the summary of K. Freeman, which is here almost a complete translation.
- (10) Compare for example what here 3316-17 say about the φόβος as engendered in the soul by the notion of a future danger with the definition of δεινὰ as μέλλοντα κακά and θαρραλέα as μέλλοντα ἀγαθὰ, and ~~eg~~ of the ἀνδρεία as ἐπιστήμη τῶν δεινῶν καὶ τῶν θαρραλέων, in Laches 198B ff.
- (11) This principle, which ⁴⁵clearly ascribed to Socrates also by Xenophon and by Aristotle, was evidently considered so important by Plato that he never disowned it, through all his life, although he did not follow it in many developments of his philosophy. Cp. for instance Apol. 25D-26A, Protag. 345E, Hipp. Min. 376B, Hipp. Maior 296C, Gorgias 488A, 509E, Resp. 336E, 589C, Tim. 86D-E, Leges 734B, 860D.

By the way, as in Περὶ Δικαίου 374A Socrates quotes this principle as expressed by "a poet" who said οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν πονεῖ: εὖς οὐδ' ἄκων μάκαρ (which seems to be Epicharmus fr. 7 Diller-Kranz with the two last words so changed from ἄταν ἔχων), and as in Protag. 345E he ironically finds it expressed in the Simonides' poem, I wonder whether that sort of play with ancient poets (which is referred to also in Plato's Apol. 22B) may not have been extended by Socrates also to Homer. In this case, οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν ἑξαμαρτάνει ~~xxx~~ may have been the witty inversion of K 372 ἐκὼν δ' ἡμάρτανε φωτός. As a matter of fact, some MSS (quoted by Allen, ad loc.) say at this point that some people substituted the first hemistich with that of Λ 350, reading therefore καὶ βάλεν, οὐδ' ἄφ' ἡμάρτεν, ἐκὼν δ' ἡμάρτανε φωτός. They probably wanted to restore the harmony between Socrates and Homer, showing that the ἐκὼν ἁμάρτημα of Dio-

medes was not a real ἀμαρτήμα, otherwise it could not have been ἐκόν !

- (12) See my commentary of the Hipparchus (Florence, 1938), where I have also tried to show that there are many reasons to believe in its authenticity.
- (13) It is also to be remarked that, a few lines before, Socrates had asked Meletos: - ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις βούλεται ὑπὸ τῶν συνόντων βλάπτεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὠφελεῖσθαι; (250), which corresponds to the μᾶλλον κίρεισθαι κακὰ πρὸ παρόντων (or προχείρων ὄντων, if one prefers Radermacher's to Diels' conjecture) ἀχάσαν of Gorgias' passage; whereas the term ἀμαρτήματα, corresponding to ἐξαμαρτάνειν and ἀμαρτίας of Gorgias, appears in what immediately follows in Plato's Apology (26A).
- (14) Gorgias ἀβίωτος βίος (20) and βίος οὐ βιωτός (21) literally correspond to Plato's βίος οὐ βιωτός, which appears just a little further in his Apology (38A). It is to be remarked that such expressions, according to the "Wortindex" of Kranz in Diels' Vorsokratiker are used only here in all the presocratic period (ἀβίος in Antiphon has just the opposite meaning). I can't therefore understand why Untersteiner, in his commentary of this passage (I Sofisti: testimonianze e frammenti, II, Florence, 1949, pp. 123-24), says that Gorgias' ἀβίωτος βίος is an "espressione empedoclea", quoting Empedocles fr. 2, 3 as reading Ζοῆς ἀβίου. This is only conjecture of Scaliger, the text given by Sextus is Ζοῆσι βίου.
- (15) And possibly also discuss topics which became at the same time well-known points of departure for socratic discussions: for example, the μὴ ἀδικούμενον μὴ ἀδικεῖν (Palamedes, 31, and cp. Crito 49B ff.) or the idea that one has to help friends and injure enemies (Pal., 18).

- (16) Des Gorgias Palamedes und Xenophons Apologie, in Hermes, LXI (1926), 467-70.
- (17) W.Nestle, Xenophon und die Sophistik, in Philologus, XCIV (1939-40), 31-50. On the influence of Gorgias on Xenophon see also H.Schacht, De Xenophontis studiis rhetoricis, Berl.Diss. 1890, and K.Müncher, Philologus, 13 Suppl.Band, 1920, p.3.
- (18) Nestle sees in Gorgias' philosophy the common source of what is said in this passage, in Διόσοι λόγοι, 3, and in Plato, Resp. 331E ff.
- (19) Any criticism by Socrates of the single traditional ἀρεταί in the early platonic dialogues might be quoted as an example for this (e.g. the discussion of the σωφροσύνη in Charmides: it is not equivalent to go slow and dignified, because in certain cases it is more σωφρον to hurry, and so on).
- (20) Gorgias und Parmenides, in Hermes, 1941, 393-407. Certain coincidences between Palamedes and Plato's Apology has been also remarked by H.Gomperz in his defence of the authenticity of Gorgias' work (Sophistik und Rhetorik, Leipzig, 1912, 9-11).
- (21) The history of the defence of Helen has been treated by M.S. Khafaga, Absolutio Helenae, in Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo, 1950, 85-98, which unfortunately I was unable to trace. The fact that Gorgias' discourses do not concern any individual circumstance of Helen's and Palamedes' actions, but generally prove every adultery or treason to be either impossible or unintentional, had been stressed also by H.Gomperz, Sophistik und Rhetorik, 11 ff. But, considering such demonstrations simply as absurdities, he saw in them only the proof that Gorgias' discourses were mere jokes.
- (22) Through a similar reduction of the real arguments to their xx

structural pattern H.Gomperz (Sophistik und Rhetorik, Leipzig, 1912, 1-35) had already arrived to the conclusion that περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος was a pure joke not less than Helena and Palamedes. I think to have demonstrated, on the contrary, that also the περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος is neither a joke nor an exercise, but a highly ironical reductio ad absurdum of the eleatic philosophy (especially of Zeno): see the chapter on Gorgias in my Studi sull'Eleatismo, Rome, 1932.

- (23) Helena is placed by Preuss (De Eurip. Hel., Leipzig, 1911) ~~xxx~~ between the Troade and the Helen of Euripides, in 414 B.C., and by Pohlenz (Nachr. d. Gott. Ges. d. Wiss., 1920, p.166) before the Troades (see also K.Freeman, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, p.363). The Palamedes is dated before XE 411 by Maas (in Hermes, XXII, 1887, 579).
- (24) In Plato's Gorgias 452D-E Socrates asks Gorgias what he thinks to be the μέγιστον ἀγαθόν, and how he can give it to the men: he answers that it is the πείθειν τοῖς λόγοις, because this insures the ἄρχειν ἐκάστῳ, making everybody else a δοῦλος. The same idea ὡς ἡ τοῦ πείθειν πολὺ διαφέρει πασῶν τεχνῶν· πάντα γὰρ ὑφ' αὐτῇ δοῦλα δι' ἐκόντων ἀλλ' οὐ διὰ βίας ποιοῦτο - is attributed to Gorgias in Phileb. 58A-B. So the πειθῶ, which was the essential instrument of any democratic opposition to the tyrannical βία, becomes the instrument of a new sort of tyranny (βία δι' ἐκόντων), until it is checked by δίαλογος.
- (25) Plato, Apol. 38A, 41B; and cp., for the interpretation of these passages, my article Socrate quoted above, note 4.
- (26) This explains also the fundamental value of the opposition ~~xx~~ between the sophistic μακρολογία and the socratic κατὰ βραχὺ διαλέγεσθαι in Plato's Protagoras. According to Dupréel (So-

phistes, 80-81) Plato, Gorgias 449B-C might be considered as a proof that to Gorgias the *κατὰ βραχὺ διαλέχεται* was anyway less alien than to Protagoras. This would be another sign of his particular proximity to Socrates. In any case, the only one who had not understood anything at all was poor Prodicus: confronted with the choice between *μακρολογία* and *βραχυλογία*, he just recommended a moderate length! (*μόνος αὐτὸς εὖρη- κέναι ἔφη ἂν δεῖ λόγων τέχνην· δεῖν δὲ οὔτε μακρῶν οὔτε βραχέων ἀλλὰ μετρίων*: Plato, Phaidros, 267B).