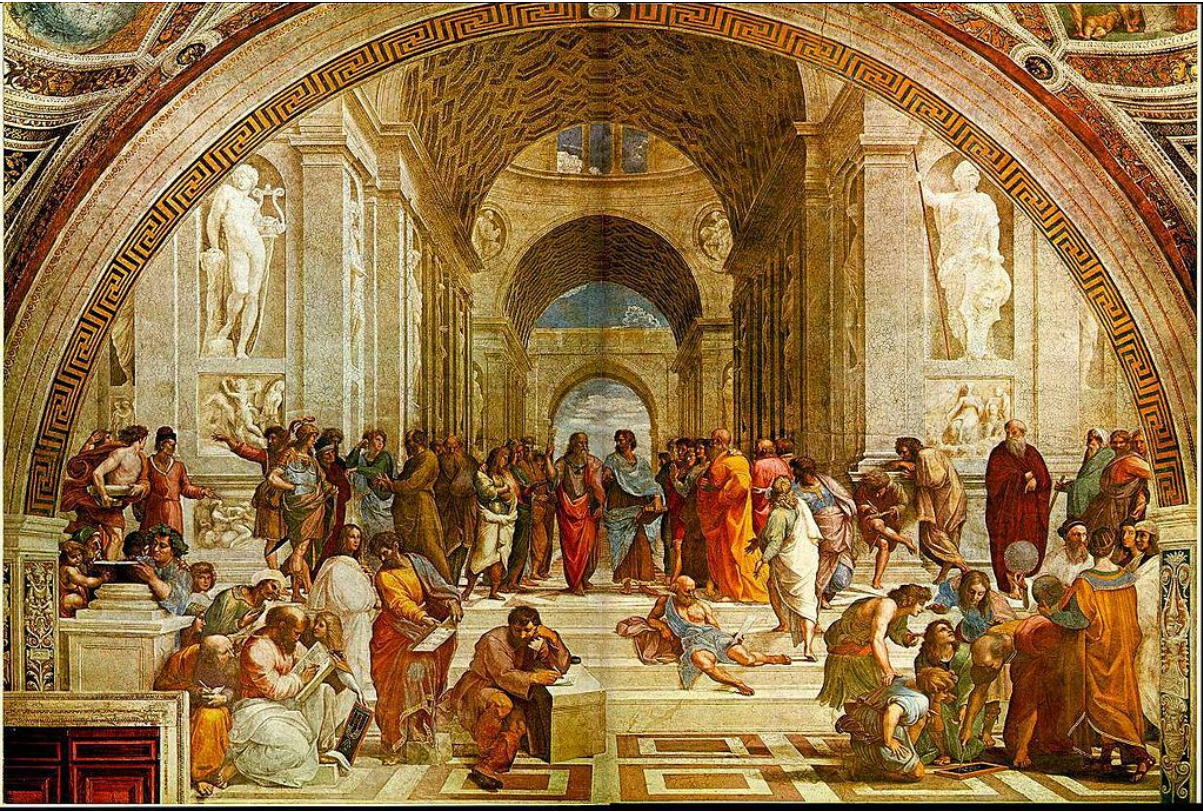


BELLARIA LXXXIV



School of Athens (Raphael, 1632)

Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*

Introduction

Diogenes Laertius (c. AD 200-250) composed the lives of 82 philosophers from Thales (c. 600 BC) to Epicurus (d. 270 BC)—all by Greeks or work written in Greek—drawing on a huge range of sources to do so (note: for ease of reading I have, where possible, omitted naming many of them).

Diogenes is not a deep thinker. His work contains little criticism or, indeed, any hints about how to be a philosopher; it simply provides a highly selective biography (no continuous narrative of important junctures) and the main details of the subject's philosophical doctrines, at greater or lesser length and detail, sometimes rather contradictory. A capacity for rational thought does not always seem to be the guiding principle behind anyone's inclusion; some are simply 'sages'. Indeed, the eminence of most of the philosophers seems often to consist in the number of amazing, often incredible, stories that have emerged about them. For example, Diogenes traces Plato's line, via Solon, back to Poseidon and claims he was born of a virgin. What often emerges is the sense that Diogenes' subjects, far

from wishing to ‘convert’ people, were just superior beings, a cut above the normal (and therefore in some cases easy to mock).

Diogenes’ work, however unreliable, was tremendously popular in Italy when it was first made available, complete, in Latin translation and then Greek in the late 15th and early 16th C, not just for its huge range of ‘information’—which soon became suspect (Nietzsche tore it to shreds)—but also because it presented a very contemporary picture of competing schools of philosophical thought (hence Raphael’s famous ‘School of Athens’ above).

I strongly recommend Pamela Mensch’s superb translation (OUP 2019), with its fine accompanying essays, reviewed at <https://classicsforall.org.uk/reading-room/book-reviews/lives-eminent-philosophers-diogenes-laertius>

I SOCRATES 469-399 BC



A formidable arguer and orator

19 According to some authors Socrates was a pupil of Anaxagoras [a physicist], and also of Damon [a musical theorist]. When Anaxagoras was condemned, he became a pupil of Archelaus the physicist; Archelaus was his lover, as Aristoxenos [musical theorist] says. Duris [tyrant of Samos; historian] makes him out to have been a slave and to have been employed on stone-work, and the draped figures of the Graces on

the Acropolis have by some been attributed to him. Hence the passage in Timon's *Silli*:

From these diverged the sculptor, the legal scandal-monger,
the magician of Greece, inventor of nit-picking arguments,
the sneerer sneering at orators, barely Attic in his mock modesty.

He was formidable in public speaking; moreover, as Xenophon tells us, the Thirty forbade him to teach the art of words.

19 Ἀκούσας δὲ Ἀναξαγόρου κατὰ τινας, ἀλλὰ καὶ Δάμωνος, μετὰ τὴν ἐκείνου καταδίκην διήκουσεν Ἀρχελάου τοῦ φυσικοῦ· οὗ καὶ παιδικὰ γενέσθαι φησὶν Ἀριστόξενος. Δοῦρις δὲ καὶ δουλεῦσαι αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργάσασθαι λίθους· εἶναί τε αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς ἐν ἀκροπόλει Χάριτας ἐνιοί φασιν, ἐνδεδυμένας οὔσας. ὄθεν καὶ Τίμωνα ἐν τοῖς Σίλλοις εἶπεῖν·

ἐκ δ' ἄρα τῶν ἀπέκλινεν ὁ λαξόος, ἐννομολέσχης,
Ἑλλήνων ἐπαιιδός, ἀκριβολόγους ἀποφήνας,
μυκτὴρ ῥητορόμυκτος, ὑπαττικὸς εἰρωνευτής.

ἦν γὰρ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ῥητορικοῖς δεινός, ὡς φησι καὶ Ἴδομενεύς· ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ τριάκοντα αὐτὸν ἐκώλυσαν τέχνας διδάσκειν λόγων, ὡς φησι Ξενοφῶν.

A teacher of rhetoric and an investor; Crito's influence



Money-changing (4th C BC)

20 And Aristophanes attacks him in his plays for making the worse argument appear the better. For Favorinus [orator] says Socrates and his pupil Aeschines [not the orator] were the first to teach rhetoric. Again, he was the first who discoursed on the conduct of life, and the first philosopher who was tried and put to death. Aristoxenus says of him that he made money; he would at all events invest sums,

collect the interest accruing, and then, when this was expended, put out the principal again.

Demetrius of Byzantium [philosopher] relates that Crito removed him from his workshop and educated him, falling in love with his beauty of soul.

20 καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης αὐτὸν κωμωδεῖ ὡς τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιοῦντα. καὶ γὰρ πρῶτος, ὡς φησι Φαβωρίνος, μετὰ τοῦ μαθητοῦ Αἰσχίνου ῥητορεύειν ἐδίδαξε. καὶ πρῶτος περὶ βίου διελέχθη καὶ πρῶτος φιλοσόφων καταδικασθεὶς ἐτελεύτα. φησὶ δ' αὐτὸν Ἀριστόξενος καὶ χρηματίσασθαι· τιθέντα γοῦν τὸ βαλλόμενον κέρμα ἀθροίζειν· εἶτ' ἀναλώσαντα πάλιν τιθέναι.

Κρίτωνα δ' ἀναστήσαι αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐργαστηρίου καὶ παιδεῦσαι τῆς κατὰ ψυχὴν χάριτος ἐρασθέντα Δημήτριός φησιν ὁ Βυζάντιος.

An ill-used student of morality, not the study of nature



21 [Demetrius relates that] he discussed moral questions in the workshops and the market-place, being convinced that the study of nature is no concern of ours; and that he claimed that his inquiries embraced

Whatsoever is good or evil in an house;

that frequently, owing to his vehemence in argument, men set upon him with their fists or tore his hair out; and that for the most part he was despised and laughed at, yet bore all this ill-usage patiently. So much so that, when he had been kicked, and someone expressed surprise at his taking it so quietly, Socrates rejoined, 'If a donkey had kicked me, would I have taken it to law?' Thus far Demetrius.

21 γνόντα δὲ τὴν φυσικὴν θεωρίαν μηδὲν εἶναι πρὸς ἡμᾶς, τὰ ἠθικὰ φιλοσοφεῖν ἐπὶ τε τῶν ἐργαστηρίων καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ· κάκεῖνα δὲ φάσκειν ζητεῖν,

ὅτι τοὶ ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν τ' ἀγαθὸν τε τέτυκται. πολλάκις δὲ βιαίτερον ἐν ταῖς ζητήσεσι διαλεγόμενον κονδυλίζεσθαι καὶ παρατίλλεσθαι, τὸ πλεόν τε γελαῖσθαι καταφρονούμενον· καὶ πάντα ταῦτα φέρειν ἀνεξικάκως. ὅθεν καὶ λακτισθέντα, ἐπειδὴ ἠνέσχετο, τινὸς θαυμάσαντος, εἶπεῖν, 'εἰ δέ με ὄνος ἐλάκτισε, δίκην ἂν αὐτῷ ἐλάγχανον;' καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ὁ Δημήτριος.

Baffled by Heraclitus; a battle hero

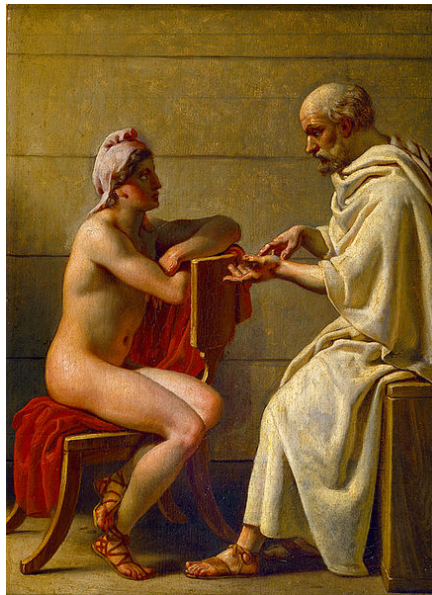
22 Unlike most philosophers, he had no need to travel, except when required to go on campaign. The rest of his life he stayed at home and engaged all the more keenly in argument with anyone who would converse with him, his aim being not to alter his opinion but to try to get at the truth. They relate that Euripides gave him the treatise of Heraclitus and asked his opinion upon it, and that his reply was, 'The part I understand is excellent, and so too is, I dare say, the part I do not understand; but it needs a Delian diver to get to the bottom of it.'

He took care to exercise his body and kept in good condition. At all events he served on the expedition to Amphipolis [422 BC]: and when in the battle of Delium [424 BC] Xenophon had fallen from his horse, he stepped in and saved his life.

22 Ἀποδημίας δὲ οὐκ ἐδεήθη, καθάπερ οἱ πλείους, πλὴν εἰ μὴ στρατεύεσθαι ἔδει. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν αὐτόθι μένων φιλονεικότερον συνεζήτει τοῖς προσδιαλεγόμενοις, οὐχ ὥστε ἀφελέσθαι τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦς, ἀλλ' ὥστε τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐκμαθεῖν πειρᾶσθαι. φασὶ δ' Εὐριπίδην αὐτῷ δόντα τὸ Ἡρακλείτου σύγγραμμα ἐρέσθαι, 'τί δοκεῖ;' τὸν δὲ φάναι, 'ἂ μὲν συνῆκα, γενναῖα· οἴμαι δὲ καὶ ἂ μὴ συνῆκα· πλὴν Δηλίου γέ τινος δεῖται κολυμβητοῦ.'

Ἐπεμελεῖτο δὲ καὶ σωμασκίας, καὶ ἦν εὐέκτης. ἐστρατεύσατο γοῦν εἰς Ἀμφίπολιν καὶ Ξενοφῶντα ἀφ' ἵππου πεσόντα ἐν τῇ κατὰ Δῆλιον μάχῃ διέσωσεν ὑπολαβών·

Love for Alcibiades



Socrates and Alcibiades (C.W. Eckersberg 1813-16)

23 For in the general flight of the Athenians he personally retired at his ease, quietly turning round from time to time and ready to defend himself if he were attacked. Again, he served at Potidaea [432-429 BC], where he had gone by sea, as land communications were interrupted by the war; and while there he is said to have remained a whole night without changing his position, and to have won the prize of valour but then resigned it to Alcibiades; indeed, he was deeply in love with him, according to [Pseudo-]Aristippus.

Ion of Chios [playwright] relates that in his youth he visited Samos in the company of Archelaus; and Aristotle that he went to Delphi; he went also to the Isthmus, according to Favorinus.

23 ὅτε καὶ πάντων φευγόντων Ἀθηναίων αὐτὸς ἡρέμα ἀνεχώρει, παρεπιστρεφόμενος ἡσυχῇ καὶ τηρῶν ἀμύνασθαι εἴ τίς οἱ ἐπέλθοι. ἐστρατεύσατο δὲ καὶ εἰς Ποτίδαιαν διὰ θαλάττης· πεζῇ γὰρ οὐκ ἐνῆν τοῦ πολέμου κωλύοντος. ὅτε καὶ μείναι διὰ νυκτὸς ὅλης ἐφ' ἐνὸς σχήματος αὐτόν φασι, καὶ ἀριστεύσαντα αὐτόθι παραχωρῆσαι Ἀλκιβιάδῃ τοῦ ἀριστείου· οὗ καὶ ἐρασθῆναί φησιν αὐτὸν Ἀρίστιππος.

Ἴων δὲ ὁ Χῖος καὶ νέον ὄντα εἰς Σάμον σὺν Ἀρχελάῳ ἀποδημῆσαι· καὶ Πυθῶδε ἐλθεῖν Ἀριστοτέλης φησίν· ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς Ἴσθμόν, ὡς Φαβωρῖνος.

An independent-minded democrat

24 His strength of will and attachment to the democracy are evident from his refusal to yield to Critias and his colleagues when they ordered him to bring the wealthy Leon of Salamis before them for execution, and further from the fact that he alone voted for the acquittal of the ten generals; and again from the facts that

when he had the opportunity to escape from the prison he declined to do so, and that he rebuked his friends for weeping over his fate, and addressed to them his most memorable discourses in the prison.

He was a man of great independence and dignity of character. Pamphila [scholar and historian] tells how Alcibiades once offered him a large site on which to build a house; but he replied, 'Suppose, then, I wanted shoes and you offered me a whole hide to make a pair with, would it not be ridiculous in me to take it?'

24 Ἦν δὲ καὶ ἰσχυρογνώμων καὶ δημοκρατικός, ὡς δῆλον ἔκ τε τοῦ μὴ εἶξαι τοῖς περὶ Κριτίαν, κελεύουσι Λέοντα τὸν Σαλαμίνιον, ἄνδρα πλούσιον, ἀγαγεῖν πρὸς αὐτούς, ὥστε ἀπολέσθαι· ἀλλὰ καὶ μόνος ἀποψηφίσασθαι τῶν δέκα στρατηγῶν. καὶ ἐνὸν αὐτῷ ἀποδρᾶναι τῆς εἰρκτῆς μὴ ἐθελῆσαι· τοῖς τε κλαίουσιν αὐτὸν ἐπιπλήξαι καὶ τοὺς καλλίστους λόγους ἐκείνους δεδεμένον διαθέσθαι.

Αὐτάρκης τε ἦν καὶ σεμνός. καὶ ποτε Ἀλκιβιάδου, καθά φησι Παμφίλη διδόντος αὐτῷ χώραν μεγάλην, ἵνα ἐνοικοδομήσῃται οἰκίαν, φάναι, 'καὶ εἰ ὑποδημάτων ἔδει, καὶ βύρσαν μοι ἐδίδους, ἵν' ἐμαυτῷ ὑποδήματα ποιησαίμην, καταγέλαστος ἂν ἦν λαβών.'

On worldly goods; immune to illness

25 Often when he looked at the multitude of wares exposed for sale, he would say to himself, 'How many things I can do without!' And he would continually recite the lines:

The purple robe and silver's shine
More fits an actor's need than mine.

He showed his contempt for Archelaus of Macedon and Scopas of Cranon and Eurylochus of Larissa [the last two unknown] by refusing to accept their presents or to go to their court. He was so orderly in his way of life that on several occasions when pestilence broke out in Athens he was the only man who escaped infection.

25 πολλάκις δ' ἀφορῶν εἰς τὰ πλήθη τῶν πιπρασκομένων ἔλεγε πρὸς αὐτόν, 'πόσων ἐγὼ χρεῖαν οὐκ ἔχω.' καὶ συνεχὲς ἐκεῖνα ἀνεφθέγγετο τὰ ἱαμβεῖα·
τὰ δ' ἀργυρώματ' ἐστὶν ἢ τε πορφύρα
εἰς τοὺς τραγωδοὺς χρήσιμ', οὐκ εἰς τὸν βίον.

ὑπερεφρόνησε δὲ καὶ Ἀρχελάου τοῦ Μακεδόνοιο καὶ Σκόπα τοῦ Κρανωνίου καὶ Εὐρυλόχου τοῦ Λαρισσαίου, μήτε χρήματα προσέμενος παρ' αὐτῶν, μήτε παρ' αὐτοὺς ἀπελθών. εὐτακτός τε ἦν τὴν δίαιταν οὕτως, ὥστε πολλάκις Ἀθήνησι λοιμῶν γενομένων μόνος οὐκ ἐνόσησε.

His two wives and various children



Socrates' two wives (Reyer van Blommendael, 1660)

26 Aristotle says that he married two wives: his first wife was Xanthippe, by whom he had a son, Lamprocles; his second wife was Myrto, the daughter of Aristides the Just, whom he took without a dowry. By her he had Sophroniscus and Menexenus. Others make Myrto his first wife; while some writers affirm that they were both his wives at the same time. [Plato and Xenophon mention only Xanthippe]. For they say that the Athenians were short of men and, wishing to increase the population, passed a decree permitting a citizen to marry one Athenian woman and have children by another; and that Socrates accordingly did so.

26 Φησὶ δ' Ἀριστοτέλης δύο γυναῖκας αὐτὸν ἀγαγέσθαι· προτέραν μὲν Ξανθίππην, ἐξ ἧς αὐτῷ γενέσθαι Λαμπροκλέα· δευτέραν δὲ Μυρτώ, τὴν Ἀριστείδου τοῦ δικαίου θυγατέρα, ἣν καὶ ἄπροικον λαβεῖν, ἐξ ἧς γενέσθαι Σωφρονίσκον καὶ Μενέξενον. οἱ δὲ προτέραν γῆμαι τὴν Μυρτώ φασιν· ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ ἀμφοτέρας σχεῖν ὁμοῦ,· φασὶ γὰρ βουλευθέντας Ἀθηναίους διὰ τὸ λειπανδρεῖν συναυξῆσαι τὸ πλῆθος, ψηφίσασθαι γαμεῖν μὲν ἀστὴν μίαν, παιδοποιεῖσθαι δὲ καὶ ἐξ ἑτέρας· ὅθεν τοῦτο ποιῆσαι καὶ Σωκράτην.

On plain living and refusing fees

27 He could afford to despise those who scoffed at him. He prided himself on his plain living, and never asked a fee from anyone. He used to say that he most enjoyed the food which was least in need of condiment and the drink which made him feel the least hankering for some other drink; and that he was nearest to the

gods in that he had the fewest wants. This may be seen from the comic poets, who in the act of ridiculing him give him high praise, Thus Aristophanes:

O man that justly desirest great wisdom,
how blessed will be thy life amongst Athenians and Greeks,
retentive of memory and thinker that thou art, with endurance of toil
for thy character: never art thou weary whether standing or walking,
never numb with cold, never hungry for breakfast;
from wine and from gross feeding and all other frivolities thou dost turn

away.

27 Ἦν δ' ἰκανὸς καὶ τῶν σκωπτόντων αὐτὸν ὑπερορᾶν. καὶ ἐσεμνύνετο ἐπὶ τῇ
εὐτελείᾳ, μισθὸν τε οὐδένα εἰσεπράξατο. καὶ ἔλεγεν ἡδιστα ἐσθίων ἡκιστα
ὄψου προσδεῖσθαι· καὶ ἡδιστα πίνων ἡκιστα τὸ μὴ παρὸν ποτὸν ἀναμένειν·
καὶ ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος ἔγγιστα εἶναι θεῶν. τοῦτο δ' ἐνέσται καὶ παρὰ τῶν
κωμφοδοποιῶν λαβεῖν, οἱ λανθάνουσιν ἑαυτοὺς δι' ὧν σκώπτουσιν
ἐπαινοῦντες αὐτόν. Ἀριστοφάνης μὲν οὕτως·

ὦ τῆς μεγάλης ἐπιθυμήσας σοφίας ἄνθρωπε δικαίως,
ὡς εὐδαίμων παρ' Ἀθηναίοις καὶ τοῖς Ἑλλησι διάξεις.
εἶ γὰρ μνήμων καὶ φροντιστής, καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωρον ἔνεστιν
ἐν τῇ γνώμῃ, κοῦτε τι κάμνεις οὔθ' ἐστὼς οὔτε βαδίζων,
οὔτε ῥιγῶν ἄχθει λίαν, οὔτ' ἀρίστων ἐπιθυμεῖς,
οἴνου τ' ἀπέχει κάδηφαγίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνοήτων.

High-minded

28 Ameipsias [comic poet] too, when he puts him on the stage wearing a cloak, says

A. You come to join us, Socrates, worthiest of a small band and emptiest by far? You are a robust fellow. Where can we get you a proper coat?

B. Your sorry plight is an insult to the cobblers.

A. And yet, hungry as he is, the man has never stooped to flatter.

This disdainful, lofty spirit of his is also noticed by Aristophanes when he says

Because you stalk along the streets, rolling your eyes, and endure, barefoot, many a hardship, and gaze up at us [the clouds].

And yet at times he would even put on fine clothes to suit the occasion, as in Plato's *Symposium*, where he is on his way to Agathon's house ...

...

28 Ἀμειψίας δ' ἐν τρίβωνι παράγων αὐτὸν φησὶν οὕτως·

α. Σώκρατες ἀνδρῶν βέλτιστ' ὀλίγων, πολλῶ δὲ ματαιόταθ', ἡκεις
καὶ σὺ πρὸς ἡμᾶς. καρτερικός γ' εἶ. πόθεν ἂν σοι χλαῖνα γένοιτο;

β. τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν κατ' ἐπήρειαν τῶν σκυτοτόμων γεγένηται.

α. οὗτος μέντοι πεινῶν οὕτως οὐπώποτ' ἔτλη κολακεῦσαι.

τοῦτο δ' αὐτοῦ τὸ ὑπεροπτικὸν καὶ μεγαλόφρον ἐμφαίνει καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης λέγων οὕτως,

ὅτι βρενθῦει τ' ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς, καὶ τῶφθαλμῶ παραβάλλεις,
κάνυπόδητος κακὰ πόλλ' ἀνέχει, κὰν ἡμῖν σεμνοπροσωπεῖς.
καίτοι ἐνίστε πρὸς τοὺς καιροὺς ἀρμοστόμενος καὶ λαμπρὰ ἠμπίσχετο·
καθάπερ ἐν τῷ Πλάτωνος συμποσίῳ παρ' Ἀγάθωνα βαδίζων...

Unworldly

31 Again, when Charmides offered him some slaves in order that he might derive an income from them, he declined the offer; and according to some he scorned the beauty of Alcibiades. He would extol leisure as the best of possessions, according to Xenophon in the *Symposium*. There is, he said, only one good, that is, knowledge, and only one evil, that is, ignorance; wealth and good birth bring their possessor no dignity, but on the contrary evil. At all events, when someone told him that Antisthenes' mother was a Thracian, he replied, 'Did you expect a man so noble to have been born of two Athenian parents?' He made Crito ransom Phaedo who, having been taken prisoner in the war, was kept in degrading slavery, and so won him for philosophy.

31 Χαρμίδου τε οἰκέτας αὐτῷ διδόντος, ἴν' ἀπ' αὐτῶν προσοδεύοιτο, οὐχ εἴλετο· καὶ τὸ κάλλος ὑπερεῖδεν Ἀλκιβιάδου κατὰ τινας. καὶ ἐπήνει σχολὴν ὡς κάλλιστον κτημάτων, καθὰ καὶ Ξενοφῶν ἐν Συμποσίῳ φησὶν. ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ ἐν μόνον ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, τὴν ἐπιστήμην, καὶ ἐν μόνον κακόν, τὴν ἀμαθίαν· πλοῦτον δὲ καὶ εὐγένειαν οὐδὲν σεμνὸν ἔχειν· πᾶν δὲ τοῦναντίον κακόν. εἰπόντος γοῦν τινος αὐτῷ ὡς εἴη Ἀντισθένης μητρὸς Θράττης, 'σὺ δ' ὄου,' ἔφη, 'οὕτως ἂν γενναῖον ἐκ δυοῖν Ἀθηναίων γενέσθαι;' Φαίδωνα δὲ δι' αἰχμαλωσίαν ἐπ' οἰκήματος καθήμενον προσέταξε Κρίτωνι λυτρώσασθαι, καὶ φιλόσοφον ἀπειργάσατο.

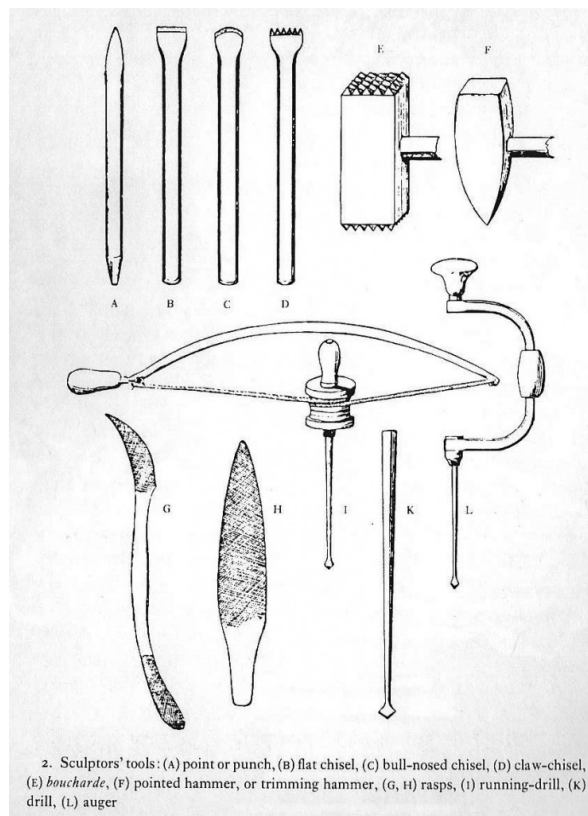
His exercise, his sign, and definition of virtue

32 Moreover, in his old age he learnt to play the lyre, declaring that he saw no absurdity in learning a new accomplishment. As Xenophon relates in the *Symposium*, it was his regular habit to dance, thinking that such exercise helped to keep the body in good condition. He used to say that his supernatural sign warned him beforehand of the future; that to make a good start was no trifling advantage, but a trifle turned the scale; and that he knew nothing except just the fact of his ignorance. He said that, when people paid a high price for fruit which had ripened early, they must despair of seeing the fruit ripen at the proper season. And, being once asked in what consisted the virtue of a young man, he said, 'In doing nothing

to excess.' He held that geometry should be studied to the point at which a man is able to measure the land which he acquires or parts with.

32 Ἀλλὰ καὶ λυρίζειν ἐμάνθανεν ἤδη γηραιός, μηδὲν λέγων ἄτοπον εἶναι ἅ τις μὴ οἶδεν ἐκμανθάνειν. ἔτι τε ὠρχεῖτο συνεχές, τῆ τοῦ σώματος εὐεξία λυσιτελεῖν ἠγούμενος τὴν τοιαύτην γυμνασίαν, ὡς καὶ Ξενοφῶν ἐν Συμποσίῳ φησίν. ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ προσημαίνειν τὸ δαιμόνιον τὰ μέλλοντα αὐτῷ· τό τε εὖ ἄρχεσθαι μικρὸν μὲν μὴ εἶναι, παρὰ μικρὸν δέ· καὶ εἰδέναι μὲν μηδὲν πλὴν αὐτὸ τοῦτο εἰδέναι. τοὺς τε τὰ πρῶϊμα πολλοῦ ἐωνημένους ἀπογινώσκειν ἔλεγεν εἰς τὰς ὥρας ἐλθεῖν. καὶ ποτε ἐρωτηθεὶς, τίς ἀρετὴ νέου, 'τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν,' εἶπεν. ἔφασκέ τε δεῖν γεωμετρεῖν μέχρι ἂν τις μέτρῳ δύνηται γῆν παραλαβεῖν καὶ παραδοῦναι.

On theatre, marriage, sculptors, and education



33 On hearing the line of Euripides' play *Auge* where the poet says of virtue

It's best to let it roam at will,

he got up and left the theatre. For he said it was absurd to make a hue and cry about a slave who could not be found [Auge had sex with Heracles and was sold as a slave], and to allow virtue to perish in this way. Someone asked him whether he should marry or not, and received the reply, 'Whichever you do you will repent it.' He used to express his astonishment that the sculptors of marble statues should

take pains to make the block of marble into a perfect likeness of a man, and should take no pains about themselves lest they should turn out mere blocks, not men. He recommended to the young the constant use of the mirror, to the end that handsome men might acquire a corresponding behaviour, and ugly men conceal their defects by education.

33 Εὐριπίδου δ' ἐν τῇ Αὐγῇ εἰπόντος περὶ ἀρετῆς,
κράτιστον εἰκῆ ταῦτ' ἔαν ἀφειμένα,
ἀναστὰς ἐξῆλθε, φήσας γελοῖον εἶναι ἀνδράποδον μὲν μὴ εὐρισκόμενον
ἀξιοῦν ζητεῖν, ἀρετὴν δ' οὕτως ἔαν ἀπολωλέναι. ἐρωτηθεὶς πότερον γῆμαι ἢ
μὴ, ἔφη, 'ὄ ἂν αὐτῶν ποιήσης, μεταγνώση.' ἔλεγέ τε θαυμάζειν τῶν τὰς λιθίνας
εἰκόνας κατασκευαζομένων τοῦ μὲν λίθου προνοεῖν ὅπως ὁμοιότατος ἔσται,
αὐτῶν δ' ἀμελεῖν, ὡς μὴ ὁμοίους τῷ λίθῳ φαίνεσθαι. ἡξίου δὲ καὶ τοὺς νέους
συνεχῆς κατοπτρίζεσθαι, ἵν' εἰ μὲν καλοὶ εἶεν, ἄξιοι γίγνοιτο· εἰ δ' αἰσχροί,
παιδείᾳ τὴν δυσείδειαν ἐπικαλύπτοιεν.

On food, poverty and real value



A tetradrachm

34 He had invited some rich men and, when Xanthippe said she felt ashamed of the dinner, 'Never mind,' said he, 'for if they are reasonable they will put up with it, and if they are good for nothing, we shall not trouble ourselves about them.' He would say that the rest of the world lived to eat, while he himself ate to live. Of the mass of men who do not count he said it was as if someone should object to a single tetradrachm as counterfeit and at the same time let a whole heap made up of just such pieces pass as genuine. Aeschines said to him, 'I am a poor man and have nothing else to give, but I offer you myself,' and Socrates answered, 'Do you not see that you are offering me the greatest gift of all?' To one who complained that he was

overlooked when the Thirty rose to power, he said, 'You are not sorry for that, are you?'

34 Καλέσας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον πλουσίους, καὶ τῆς Ξανθίππης αἰδουμένης ἔφη, 'θάρρει· εἰ μὲν γὰρ εἶεν μέτριοι, συμπεριενεχθεῖεν ἄν· εἰ δὲ φαῦλοι, ἡμῖν αὐτῶν οὐδὲν μελήσει.' ἔλεγέ τε τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους ζῆν ἴν' ἐσθίοιεν· αὐτὸς δὲ ἐσθίειν ἵνα ζῶη. πρὸς τὸ οὐκ ἀξιόλογον πλῆθος ἔφασκεν ὁμοιον εἶ τις τετράδραχμον ἐν ἀποδοκιμάζων τὸν ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων σωρὸν ὡς δόκιμον ἀποδέχοιτο. Αἰσχίνου δὲ εἰπόντος, 'πένης εἰμὶ καὶ ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν ἔχω, δίδωμι δέ σοι ἐμαυτόν,' ἄρ' οὖν,' εἶπεν, 'οὐκ αἰσθάνη τὰ μέγιστα μοι διδούς;' τὸν ἀποδυσπετοῦντα ἐπὶ τῷ παροραῖσθαι, ὁπότε ἐπανέστησαν οἱ τριάκοντα, 'ἄρα,' ἔφη, 'μή τι σοι μεταμέλει;'

On death, suffering and abuse



Socrates in prison (Watteau, 1780)

35 To one who said, 'You are condemned by the Athenians to die,' he made answer, 'So are they, by nature.' But some ascribe this to Anaxagoras. When his wife said, 'You suffer unjustly,' he retorted, 'Why, would you have me suffer justly?' He had a dream that someone said to him:

On the third day thou shalt come to the fertile fields of Phthia; and he told Aeschines, 'On the third day I shall die.' When he was about to drink the hemlock Apollodorus offered him a beautiful garment to die in: 'What,' said he, 'is my own good enough to live in but not to die in?' When he was told that So-and-so spoke ill of him, he replied, 'True, for he has never learnt to speak well.'

35 πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα, 'θάνατόν σου κατέγνωσαν Ἀθηναῖοι,' 'κάκείνων,' εἶπεν, 'ἢ φύσις.' οἱ δὲ τοῦτ' Ἀναξαγόρου φασί. τῆς γυναικὸς εἰπούσης, 'ἀδίκως ἀποθνήσκεις,' 'σὺ δέ,' ἔφη, 'δικαίως ἐβούλου;' ὄναρ δόξας τινὰ αὐτῷ λέγειν, ἤματί κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἴκοιο, πρὸς Αἰσχίνην ἔφη, 'εἰς τρίτην ἀποθανοῦμαι.' μέλλοντί τε αὐτῷ τὸ κώνειον πίεσθαι Ἀπολλόδωρος ἱμάτιον ἐδίδου καλόν, ἵν' ἐκείνῳ ἐναποθάνοι' καὶ ὅς, 'τί δέ,' ἔφη, 'τὸ ἐμὸν ἱμάτιον ἐμβιῶναι μὲν ἐπιτήδειον, ἐναποθανεῖν δὲ οὐχί;' πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα, 'κακῶς ὁ δεῖνά σε λέγει,' 'καλῶς γάρ,' ἔφη, 'λέγειν οὐκ ἔμαθε.'

On vanity, taking offence, comedy and Xanthippe



Socrates doused by Xanthippe

36 When Antisthenes turned his cloak so that the tear in it came into view, 'I see,' said he, 'your vanity through your cloak.' To one who said, 'Don't you find so-and-so very offensive?' his reply was, 'No, for it takes two to make a quarrel.' We ought not to object, he used to say, to be subjects for the comic poets, for if they satirize our faults they will do us good, and if not they do not touch us. When Xanthippe first scolded him and then drenched him with water, his rejoinder was, 'Did I not say that Xanthippe's thunder would end in rain?' When Alcibiades declared that the scolding of Xanthippe was intolerable, 'I have got used to it,' said he, 'as to the continued rattle of a windlass'.

36 στρέψαντος δὲ Ἀντισθένους τὸ διερρωγὸς τοῦ τρίβωνος εἰς τοῦμφανές, 'ὄρω σου,' ἔφη, 'διὰ τοῦ τρίβωνος τὴν κενοδοξίαν.' πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα, 'οὐ σοὶ λοιδορεῖται ὁ δεῖνα;' 'οὐχί,' ἔφη, 'ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ πρόσεστι ταῦτα.' ἔλεγε δὲ τοῖς

κωμικοῖς δεῖν ἐπίτηδες ἑαυτὸν διδόναι· εἰ μὲν γάρ τι τῶν προσόντων λέξειαν, διορθώσονται· εἰ δ' οὐ, οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς. πρὸς Ξανθίππην πρότερον μὲν λοιδοροῦσαν, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ περιχέασαν αὐτῷ, 'οὐκ ἔλεγον,' εἶπεν, 'ὅτι Ξανθίππη βροντῶσα καὶ ὕδωρ ποιήσει;' πρὸς Ἀλκιβιάδην εἰπόντα ὡς οὐκ ἀνεκτὴ ἡ Ξανθίππη λοιδοροῦσα, 'ἀλλ' ἔγωγ', ἔφη, 'συνείθισμαι, καθαπερεὶ καὶ τροχιλίας ἀκούων συνεχές.

On life with Xanthippe

37 'And you' he said 'do not mind the cackle of geese.' 'No,' replied Alcibiades, 'but they furnish me with eggs and goslings.' 'And Xanthippe,' said Socrates, 'is the mother of my children.' When she tore his coat off his back in the market-place and his acquaintances advised him to hit back, 'Yes, by Zeus,' said he, 'in order that while we are sparring each of you may join in with "Go it, Socrates!" "Well done, Xanthippe!"' He said he lived with a shrew, as horsemen are fond of spirited horses, 'but just as, when they have mastered these, they can easily cope with the rest, so I in the society of Xanthippe shall learn to adapt myself to the rest of the world.'

These and the like were his words and deeds, to which the Pythian priestess bore testimony when she gave Chaerephon the famous response:

Of all men living Socrates most wise.

37 καὶ σὺ μὲν,' εἶπε, 'χηνῶν βοῶντων ἀνέχη.' τοῦ δὲ εἰπόντος, 'ἀλλά μοι ῥᾶ καὶ νεοττοὺς τίκτουσι,' κάμοί,' φησί, 'Ξανθίππη παιδία γεννᾷ.' ποτὲ αὐτῆς ἐν ἀγορᾷ καὶ θοιμάτιον περιελομένης συνεβούλευον οἱ γνώριμοι χερσὶν ἀμύνασθαι, 'νὴ Δί', εἶπεν, 'ἴν' ἡμῶν πυκτευόντων ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγη, εἴ Σώκρατες, εἴ Ξανθίππη.' ἔλεγε συνεῖναι τραχεῖα γυναικὶ καθάπερ οἱ ἵππικοὶ θυμοειδέσιν ἵπποις. 'ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκεῖνοι,' φησί, 'τούτων κρατήσαντες ῥαδίως τῶν ἄλλων περιγίνονται, οὕτω καὶ γὰρ Ξανθίππη χρώμενος τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις συμπεριενεχθήσομαι.'

Ταῦτα δὴ καὶ τοιαῦτα λέγων καὶ πράττων πρὸς τῆς Πυθίας ἐμαρτυρήθη, Χαιρεφῶντι ἀνελούσης ἐκεῖνο δὴ τὸ περιφερόμενον, ἀνδρῶν ἀπάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος.

Next week: Aristippus.