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The Historicity of Plato's Apology of Socrates

David J. Bowman

Loyola University Chicago

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THE HISTORICITY OF PLATO'S
APOLOGY OF SOCRATES

BY
DAVID J. BOWMAN, S.J.

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VITA

David J. Bowman, S.J., was born in Oak Park, Illinois, on May 20, 1919. After his elementary education at Ascension School in Oak Park, he attended Loyola Academy of Chicago, graduating from there in June, 1937.

On September 1, 1937, he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio. For the four years he spent there, he was academically connected with Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio.

In August of 1941 he transferred to West Baden College of Loyola University, Chicago, and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in Greek in December, 1941. Whereupon he enrolled in the graduate school of Loyola University in the department of the Classics.
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INTRODUCTION

This paper will deal with the problem of how much of Plato's Apology belongs to Socrates, and how much of it is Plato's own work. Perhaps the first question a reader may ask will be, "Why treat this subject at all?" He may think that it has been labored over, and belabored again and again, until all that is left is a muddle of conflicting opinions.

Two answers to this question may be proposed. First, even though the subject has been treated often and by many masters, it remains one of the most interesting in the field of classics. The impact of the Apology is still felt and will always be felt in a world founded on Graeco-Roman culture. And secondly, a new version of what happened in the court of the Ἰρμων βασιλεὺς in 399 B.C., has recently appeared. This version runs counter to the commonly-accepted idea of Socrates' last speech in court, and this version I intend to refute. Socrates will be established as the speaker of the Apology of Plato -- at least, as the speaker of the speech which Plato wrote up, and which we now know as Plato's Apology of Socrates.¹

To show the lengths to which Mr. Oldfather goes in his desire to deprive PA of any historical value, here are two of his state-

¹ For obvious reasons, this terminology will be abbreviated in this paper. I shall follow the lead of Mr. R. Hackforth in calling the Apology of Plato simply PA, that of Xenophon, XA.
even Plato's brilliant and moving drama is in so many respects simply inconceivable, both of the man and of the occasion, that the best critical judgment of our time gives it up as an authentic historical record." And again, referring to the desire of later authors to write speeches purporting to be Socrates' Apology, he says: "If Socrates had really delivered so much as a tithe of what Plato with such fine effect puts into his mouth, a feeling like this would surely not have been so natural"--a feeling that what should have been said had not been said in court. He continues: "There is no deceptive statement (that these are Socrates' actual words), and I suspect that Plato himself would have been astonished to find anyone taking his Apology as an authentic record of precisely what was said and done."4

As we shall see, Mr. Oldfather's guide to this extreme stand is Gomperz; other prominent critics have approached their position. Most of these scholars look on the Socrates portrayed by Plato as too ideal, "an ideal which is too good to be quite true", as Shorey says.5 Mr. Isaac Flagg argues that fidelity to scene -- PA is noteworthy authentic in its courtroom details -- does not

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3 op. cit., 204.
4 Ibid., 211.
mean fidelity to words and acts.

although its scene is historical, (it) does not record the discourse that was pronounced on the occasion to which it is adapted; nevertheless, in vindicating his master to the world at large, while presenting under the lineaments of Socrates a picture of the Ideal Sage in its simple unity and integrity, Plato would be moved by feelings of piety, no less than by the sense of artistic fitness, to exclude every feature not essentially characteristic, every line or shade of color not genuine and true to the life. 6

Bonner agrees with Flagg's general idea, and compares the tone of the speech to that of Lysias' famous oration For the Cripple. 7

This is the basic idea of Professor Werner Jaeger, who claims "...the speech is too artfully constructed to be merely a revised version of the actual speech which Socrates made, ex tempore, in court." 8 But he goes on to say, "it is amazingly true to Socrates' real life and character," 9 and "only Plato had enough Athenian feeling and enough 'political' feeling to understand Socrates fully." 10 He concludes: "In the Apology Plato presents him as the incarnation of the highest courage and greatness of spirit, and in Phaedo he tells of his death as a heroic triumph over life." 11

This view of the Apology as the picture of the ideal

7 R. J. Bonner, "The Legal Setting of Plato's Apology", Classical Philology, III (1908), 169-177.
9 ibid., 37 10 ibid., 73. 11 ibid., 76.
philosopher is just a little bit more like the extreme view of Oldfather and Gompers, than the opinion of those who look on the speech as a portrait of Socrates -- not the actual picture, but an idealized version of what he said and what he might have said in court. We may take Phillipson's account as representative.

All these things (details about the PA) are in accord with our knowledge of the historical Socrates acquired from all the various sources, and they are not incompatible with the new circumstances created by the accusation. All these things are true to life and true to fact, even though Plato may adopt a slight embellishment here, and make a slight adjustment of phraseology and sequence of expressions there; for his attitude is that of a true artist of penetrating vision, not that of a shorthand reporter; his picture is a portrait, not a photograph.12

Numbered among those who hold this view is Mr. de Laguna, who writes against what he calls the traditional view of Ueberweg, Grote and Zeller, -- the view that PA is substantially a reproduction of the actual defence. This interpretation, Mr. de Laguna claims, is now acknowledged to be untenable.13 His reason is the contrast between the finished form of PA and the extemporaneity of the actual speech as given by Socrates. He therefore agrees with Phillipson and Field14 that PA is more a portrait than a picture. One conclusion which he draws from the facts given above

is that the **Apology** was not necessarily published immediately after the trial of Socrates, since it is not meant to be an exact record of his words.

This question of the date of the PA has been argued for centuries, and on it depends, to some extent, the answer to our problem. Of course, we cannot go into the matter of dates for all the Platonic dialogues; such an inquiry is fit subject of a doctorate thesis. But we can give a few of the ideas which, while they will be inconclusive, will help us in approaching the main issue of this paper.

The question is this: was PA written almost immediately after the trial or not? If it was, then very likely it is historically accurate; otherwise, people who had attended the trial would have recognized discrepancies and denounced the work as a fraud. If it was not published soon after the trial, we have much less external evidence for considering it historical, for such testimony against it would hardly be forthcoming, since most of the audience would be dead or dispersed.

Taylor and Burnet, of course, argue for an early date. Those who agree as to this (Grot is one, in his *Plato and the Early Companions of Socrates*) usually instance as one of their main reasons, the prophecy in 39 CD:

> punishment will come upon you straightway after my death, far more grievous in sooth than the punishment of death which you have meted out to me. For now you have done this to me because
you hoped that you would be relieved from rendering an account of your lives, but I say you will find the result far different. Those who will force you to give an account will be more numerous than heretofore; men whom I restrained, though you knew it not; and they will be harsher, inasmuch as they are younger, and you will be more annoyed.  

They say that this prophecy was not fulfilled, so Plato surely would not have included it had he known that no accusers would arise "straightway." This line of argument seems to be valid, despite Mr. Adam's claim that accusers did arise, fulfilling the prophecy in a deeper sense than Socrates anticipated. "The ideal of which Socrates was the half-conscious prophet and the earliest martyr was never afterwards lost sight of by Greek thinkers."  

Perhaps true, but this was certainly not the fulfillment of Socrates actual words, and cannot undermine our strong point.

Other critics, however, do not accept the date as early, and consequently reject the argument from chronology for the historicity of PA. Field says it is possible that PA was composed and published immediately after the tragedy in court, "But it is equally likely that Plato was led to publish it by the appearance of other inferior accounts of what happened, of which we know there were several."  

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15 Texts and translations used in this thesis will be those of the Loeb Classical Library. This quotation is from Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus, transl. by H. Fowler, London, Heinemann, 1926, 137-138.  
17 Plato and His Contemporaries, op. cit., 154.
possibilities; Phillipson says that there is, and that the work was produced several years after the events described in it. He says there is no evidence "that Plato, who was present at the trial, made at the time a verbatim report of the proceedings and the speeches and kept it for future publication." 18

The case for the publication at a late date is growing stronger. Hackforth, however, seems to synthesize the evidence, and he says that PA came after QA because Xenophon says at the beginning of his work that no one has yet explained Socrates' lofty tone; surely Plato has done that. 19 Concerning the belief that PA must be an early work because of its readers, he had previously stated, "This judgment, however, implies one assumption, namely that the Apology was certain to be understood by its original readers as claiming to be an authentic report." 20 He denies the necessity of their so understanding it, although he also admits the possibility of the assumption.

We have not, then, reached a definite conclusion as to the date of the Apology. This, however, need not terminate our attempt to solve the main problem of this thesis; we need only admit that this aspect of the problem is uncertain, and that consequently some important evidence of historicity remains in doubt. We prefer to take the speech as published soon after the

18 op. cit., 18
20 ibid., 2.
trial, believing that the whole weight of psychological probability lies here. Plato's devotion to Socrates surely would prompt him to an early publishing of his master's final public defense.

The last group which we have considered, looks on the Apology as a portrait of a great philosopher, rather than as a polished edition of Socrates' actual speech. Now the moderates:

The view that it was Plato's own composition used generally to be held although it was never doubted that it was based on the facts of the trial, but some critics now believe that it is the actual speech of Socrates, edited by Plato for publication, and as near to what was said as, say, a speech of Demosthenes or Cicero in its published form was to the speech the orator actually delivered. The truth probably lies between these two views. 21

The moderates, then, look on the speech as a compound of fact and fiction, the fiction being some departure from the strict form of the actual speech without departing from its substance. Phillipson lists as holding this view: Schleiermacher, Zeller, Grote, Ueberweg, Boutroux and Bury. 22 Others are Cooper, Adam, Moore, McDonnell and Dyer, whose books will be found listed in the bibliography. Zeller remarks that "this Apology is not a mere creation of his own, but that in all substantial points, it faithfully records what Socrates said." 23 Grote says he agrees

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22 op. cit., 20.
with Schleiermacher, Üeberweg, and the common opinion, "that this is in substance the real defence pronounced by Sokrates; reported, and of course dressed up, yet not intentionally transformed, by Plato."24 He goes on to say that no matter which way we look at the Apology, it contains "more of pure Sokratism than any other composition of Plato."25

And at the other end of the scale are those who hold for close fidelity to the actual words. Even these men seem to be far more logical and likely to be right than the other extremists. At least, they allow something for Plato's devotion to his master. Havelock uses the following arguments for his case: since the Apology is the only Dialogue not a conversation, "it indicates that for once he is interested in something other than an abstract problem."26 This work alone shows Socrates in public life -- a departure to be thought historical by readers twenty years later. And this work alone refers to Plato's presence there (34 A, 38 B). "I therefore take the Apology to be Plato's one deliberate attempt to reconstruct Socrates for his own sake. This is not to say that it is reporting. On the contrary, it is very unlikely to be."27

According to Havelock, unless we take the Apology in this way,

27 Ibid., 290.
we shall know very little of Socrates, since the only other source of reliable knowledge about is Aristophanes' *Clouds*. "My thesis is that these two works, and these alone, if rightly used, provide us with a criterion for distinguishing the teaching of Socrates."28

Rogers echoes this opinion.

It is open to say that the *Apology* is not meant to be historical; in that case we shall have to resign ourselves to a confession of ignorance about the real Socrates. ... It appears unlikely that shortly after Socrates' death, when the facts were widely known, Plato would have undertaken to give an account of this trial which every informed person would recognize as false; there could hardly have been a surer way of defeating what clearly was his purpose. ... The only alternative to taking the account as history is to suppose that Plato is exercising his rights as a writer of fiction.29

The disjunction need not be stated so baldly. There is a third possibility: the moderate opinion referred to above. It saves the *Apology* as truly Socratic, and leaves room for Plato's genius, too. "The *Apology* is a document of unique authority. It is the only direct statement of the meaning of Socrates' life written by a man capable of penetrating to that meaning."30

28 Havelock, *op. cit.*, 290.
These, then, are the conflicting opinions concerning this problem. This thesis is an attempt to refute the first and most extreme one given: that of Gomperz and Oldfather. Numerous opinions will have to be noted in the course of this refutation. One chapter will be devoted to the interpretation of Taylor and Burnet on the Platonic Dialogues in general, and the Apology in particular, since their opinion will be used as a guide in refuting Oldfather. Throughout the chapter dealing with his article, the remarks of the different commentators will be quoted, to bolster statements which otherwise might seem entirely gratuitous. In a subject like this, on which such a mass of criticism has been expended, a generous sampling of that criticism seems to be the only way to reach an objective conclusion.
CHAPTER I

SUMMARY OF MR. OLDFATHER'S ARTICLE

Here, then, is the article in question. It was drawn in large part from Dr. Gomperz' previous article, "Sokrates' Haltung vor seinen Richtern," from which article Mr. Oldfather received the light and strength to go ahead with a paper which he had for some time been preparing on the same subject. The result is the present article which we are calling into question.

Dr. Gomperz' statements are summarized by Oldfather thus. In the Gorgias, Callicles draws a picture of Socrates on trial, with his opponent a trivial rascal. Socrates will stand there, mouth open, not knowing what to say, and will be condemned. Socrates does not answer the fellow immediately, but later repeats the prophecy, asserting the same of Callicles before the Judges of the Dead. Now this charge and its admission by Socrates are absurd if Socrates really did give a speech even remotely resembling that known as Plato's Apology of Socrates. Furthermore,

1 In Wiener Studien, LIV (1936), 32-43.
2 Lysias, Symposium, Gorgias, transl. by W. Lamb, London, Heinemann, 1925, 486 A-B.
3 ibid., 526 E, 527A.
4 Since this is a summary, no particular references are given.
a passage in the Theaetetus (172 C - 175 D) describes the same general situation of a philosopher on trial; the very same words, even, are used: πλαν ἀπορίαν... ἀπορών; ὅπερ ἔχων ὁ τι εἰπότος. Surely the Socrates of Plato's work is anything by nature except "helpless and ridiculous."

Gomperz continues. Maximus of Tyre states that Socrates did not defend himself, "and advances a number of excellent reasons for such conduct on his part." His testimony is strikingly confirmatory of that of the Gorgias, yet could hardly have been derived from it, so different is its phrasing. The conclusion is "inevitable." Socrates made no set and formal defence of any length. A person's feelings about such a question have nothing to do with the truth of the matter, which depends upon the evidence. Even though we like to think Socrates gave an inspiring speech and afterwards Plato wrote it out, our fidelity to truth compels us to deny him that honor. Thus far Dr. Gomperz.

At this point in his article, Oldfather adds some supplementary considerations of his own, all leading to the conclusion which has been enuntiated above: Socrates gave no long speech at his trial, especially no speech such as that attributed to him by Plato. He proposes eight of these considerations.

His first point is the astonishing multiplicity of speeches attributed to Socrates. Just about everybody who was anybody in Greek literature seems to have tried his hand at it: Plato,
Xenophon, (Pseudo-Xenophon), Lysias, who wrote two, Theodectes, Demetrius of Phalerum, Zeno of Sidon, Plutarch, Theo of Antioch, and even Libanius, though his was a slight matter of seven hundred years too late! So hackneyed did the theme become in schools of rhetoric, that rules were laid down for the composition of an "Apology of Socrates". Maximus of Tyre speaks of the many defenses and attacks appearing even in his day. All this suggests strongly that there never was a really adequate speech made by Socrates, but that Plato was following Thucydides' dictum about "what really ought to have been said." (I, 22, 1.) Plato and Xenophon have done little more to produce an atmosphere of reality in their efforts than has Libanius with his preposterous concoction.

His second point, and the one he considers most convincing against the time-honored view, is the tone of Plato's speech -- making it a reply, almost a retort, and definitely not an attempt to persuade his audience to acquit him. Unless Socrates actually wished to die, the whole speech is beautiful fiction, but hardly historical.

The third point is the diversity of subject matter of the three extant Apologies. All those in court would have remembered each word of the address if he gave any, so they would not allow any great divergence from what he actually said, in speeches which purported to give what he had declaimed in court.

The fourth point. A clear reference is made to the trial in
Gorgias (521 B - 522 C), where Socrates, in a brief defence of his attitude in court, says his trial will like that of a doctor answering the charges of a confectioner before a panel of children. If he speaks the truth, what a tremendous outcry such a jury would make! Then, speaking of himself, "Nor shall I be able to speak the truth ... nor anything else." Now when a man does this, obviously he does not make a speech. Plato's fiction, therefore, is truly a fiction, for Socrates is very definitely at ease and speaking the truth in Plato's Apology.

His fifth point is this. The theme of the ridiculous or pathetic figure cut by the philosopher in court is strikingly frequent in Plato. Examples are in Gorgias 484 D-E, 486 A-C, 521 B - 522 E; Theaetetus 172 C - 175 D; Republic 517 A and D; Laches 196 B. He gives other probable references as well as these. Now no other philosopher up to then had ever appeared in court and made himself appear ridiculous; they had all gone into exile before they had been brought to court -- for example, Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, Diagoras of Melos, and Prodicus. Again, the evidence accumulates against the historicity of the speech. If Plato was always thinking of Socrates, he was admitting that his beloved hero did not do himself so proud when he finally faced the Athenian jurymen.

So on to the sixth argument. According to Xenophon, the "Daimonion" expressly resisted any effort on the part of Socrates to make preparations for his defence. He states this in Memorabilia.
It is repeated in the Apology attributed to him, and confirmed by the statement in PA (40 A-C) that at no time during the time of the trial had the Divine Sign intervened. When he acted in court as any man must have acted who has made no preparation, the Sign complacently accepted the consequences. All of this serves to explain why Socrates actually said little or nothing on the occasion of his appearance in court.

His seventh point is against Zeller, who argues that since the Xenophontean Apology is spurious, the testimony of Hermogenes in the Memorabilia is "ebendamit" -- worthless. This is just a case of wishful thinking, especially when Zeller proceeds to claim that any elaborate defence would have been out of character for Socrates. He merely proves for the other side. The motive of the Xenophontean Apology and the last chapter of the Memorabilia is to explain why Socrates did not make a better defence of himself in court. This is absurd if PA in whole or in part was delivered in court, "for that is without question the finest of all imaginable defences." The poor defence for which Xenophon is trying to cover up is the actual defence, not an idealized fiction.

Mr. Oldfather's ironic criticism of PA finishes with a lengthy discourse on the improbability of a dialectician's turning into such a consummate orator before a hostile jury. Cicero failed in a similar situation, the speech for Milo. A lifetime spent in dialectic would not guarantee that a person would be an accomplished orator ex tempore, especially when the man avoided lengthy speeches
as Socrates had avoided them. His method was entirely different, both rhetorically and psychologically, from courtroom oratory, and it is inconceivable that he could fall ex tempore into such a long, artful speech as PA. (Here he makes an unfortunate reference to Christ before His accusers, not opening His mouth.) Neither John Hus nor Savonarola succeeded in their crises, despite the fact that they were among the best orators in the world. But Socrates could not, even if he had wished, have delivered such a superb oration as the Apology. At most he used to write out long series of questions and answers for use in his questionings; to compose an orderly and supremely moving oration, and this on the spur of the moment, no, we cannot believe such a manifest untruth. "To me, I confess, the entire assumption is nothing less than a patent absurdity."

These are his destructive criticisms; we shall return to them in later chapters of this thesis. Now what would he substitute for our view of what happened at the trial? Socrates is seen in a different light, as helpless in front of a crowd. It is true that Oldfather expresses these views not as certain, but as "probable, which for purposes of stylistic convenience, I shall express as statements of fact." Here, then, is what happened at the great trial of 399 B.C.

Soon after getting to his feet, Socrates made some absurd statement that amused the court. In Theaetetus (175 D) he is represented as $\beta \alpha \rho \beta \alpha \rho \iota \gamma \omega \nu$, (though Burnet reads $\beta \alpha \tau \alpha \rho \iota \gamma \omega \nu$).
At any rate, at this point developed a laugh, which soon became a disturbance, as Plato himself often admits, when he makes Socrates request the jurymen not to raise a row. (Apology 17 C-D, 20 E, 21 A, 27 B, 30 C.) Socrates awaited a period of relative quiet, then asserted bluntly that he was an honest man and a worthy citizen, referred to the oracle at Delphi, and made some remarks about the "Daimonion." He went on to state that the accusation was wholly false, claiming it was a travesty on justice for such men to sit in judgment on him, when he had spent his entire life in considering just such questions as this on which they were to decide.

Such words were bound to irritate the jurors, and his manner was also felt to be overbearing. The "lofty tone" — μεγάλεγοίδ — gave Xenophon the idea that he was weary of life and wanted to die; certainly all his words and acts implied as much, and he consistently refused to keep silence. The entire Apology of Plato is cast in a tone of an aloof and justifiably insolent contempt.

Socrates did not get so far on this tack, however. The disturbance soon became so great that he could say nothing, but just stood there with his mouth open — the picture drawn of him in the Theaetetus. In this desperate situation some of his friends tried to speak for him, but without effect, since they were not prepared, and the audience was by this time positively hostile, little more than a mob. Inevitably the first vote was
for condemnation; then Socrates brazenly proposed his counter-penalty of state pension as a benefactor of Athens, and infuriated the crowd even more. Confusion ensued, and various sums of money were shouted by one person or another, but none of them was formally recorded by the clerk. The final vote was taken amid considerable confusion. Libanius says in his Declamationes that Socrates was the victim of shyster accusation, and the jury cast their vote sooner than was right.

Once the final vote was taken, and Socrates had become a criminal, someone gave him a buffet on the side of the head, perhaps as he was being led off to prison. This is mentioned in Gorgias, and fits in perfectly with the rest of the evidence.

A confirmation of the above description of the trial can be had, in a way, from Diogenes Laertius, who mentions nothing of a formal defence. He records only an unsuccessful attempt that Plato made to speak, the dispute about the fine, and the penalty of the pension. Although Diogenes is usually unreliable, because he often omits passages, on this point he may be right. Socrates was undoubtedly the kind of man whom Plato represents. He never quailed; he never compromised; he did the best he could under the circumstances. But he did not deliver that superb speech which Plato attributes to him.

Mr. Oldfather ends his article rather challengingly. Those who accept the historicity of PA must characterize as liars the following: Plato in his other dialogues; Xenophon, Hermogames, Diogenes Laertius, Justus, Maximus of Tyre, the author of the Prolegomena, or the sources of these latter authors. On the other hand, the picture given by Oldfather is plausible and acceptable to all students. Plato nowhere says, "These are the words that Socrates uttered at his trial." The Apology is a mere defence dreamed up by Plato. Either the Apology is historically right, or the Gorgias and Theaetetus are; they cannot both be right at the same time, and Mr. Oldfather prefers the latter two. His final words are: "My appeal is from Plato drunk (in the Apology) to Plato sober (in the other two.)"

Thus far Mr. Oldfather. His arguments, in brief, are these. Everybody wrote "Apologies;" the tone of PA shows it is fiction; different versions prove it was not given; Plato himself tells us Socrates did not give it in court; Xenophon says Socrates did not prepare for his trial, and tries to explain his poor showing; besides, Socrates was not a speaker. And all through his arguments runs that fundamental misconception: the inconceivability of any man's getting up before an audience in court and doing anything else but try to escape with his life.
CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF THE REFUTATION

Some years ago, a book appeared whose title is "Euclides Vindicatus." Perhaps the title of this thesis should be "Platonis Socrates Vindicatus," since its purpose is to establish the reality of the Socrates portrayed in the dialogues of Plato, and especially of the Socrates depicted in the Apology. Mr. Oldfather maintains that the real Socrates gave no such speech as the PA, but rather was so nonplussed on his appearance in court before the rioting judges, that he failed completely to deliver any convincing address, much less a polished oration such as Plato's little masterpiece. He argues at length; I shall give here a summary of my arguments against him. Since it is a summary, there will be apparent a few lacunae in the thought; these will be eliminated in the exhaustive treatment of each argument, which will be found in the fourth chapter.

And since our point of view is important, the conclusion which we shall try to reach with objective evidence is this: Socrates did deliver the speech which forms the basis for the polished oration which we now call Plato's Apology, though the finished literary style of the speech is due to the genius of the
disciple, and not to the *ex tempore* speaking ability of the master. This is the opinion of Burnet and Taylor, with modifications, and probably of most of the modern commentators.¹ And now to the summary of the refutation.

Dr. Gomperz' arguments from the *Gorgias* and *Theaetetus* require a number of quotations from the Greek text, so we shall let them wait until the more detailed refutation in a later chapter. Suffice it to say now that the picture drawn in these dialogues is not that of Socrates in court -- and we may reach this conclusion from external evidence in no way connected with the *Apology* of Plato. Since the statements of Maximus of Tyre are used mainly to confirm the conclusions from the other two dialogues of Plato, his evidence is no longer of any great value.

The first point against us concerns the multiplicity of the speeches claiming to be the actual Defence of Socrates, and the fact that rules were laid down for the composition of imitation "Apologies." The arguments given by him seem to indicate rather the opposite conclusion: the *Apology* of Plato is substantially the same as the real speech of Socrates in court. Had the fearless old gadfly not made an impressive, important speech, so many different men would not have tried to write it up. And Plato was surely best qualified to report his master's discourse most accurately. He was there; the others were not. That he did not

¹ Grote, Hackforth, Phillipson, Rogers, Zeller.
deliberately falsify his description of Socrates on trial, or idealize him over-much, we shall maintain throughout this thesis. That he did smooth out connections, improve the language, and generally edit the speech for publication, is hardly to be doubted. But that procedure has been going on for ages, and the finished products have been taken for the genuine work of their authors, even though some other writer may have put the finishing touches to the work.\(^2\) The comparison of this speech with those of the orators in Thucydides cannot be carried very far. This speech is too much our old friend Socrates -- ironical, zealous, fearless.

As a matter of fact, here is the crux of the whole question. Socrates is so much the same that Oldfather concludes the speech cannot be true historically. Socrates is so consistent in his whole life and philosophy of life, that his speech is thought to be a fiction of Plato's making. "The most convincing objection to the Apology is the tone -- his making a retort, and no attempt at persuasion." Socrates must have wanted to die, if he gave this speech; if he did not want to die -- and Oldfather takes it for granted that he did not -- the speech as Plato gives it is sheer fiction.

These statements seem to be utterly mistaken. They betray a perfect misunderstanding of the animal rationale whom we know as

Socrates. The tone of the *Apology* is its certain badge of genuinity; Socrates' reply to the unjust, unfounded charge is just what would be expected of the Socrates whose general character we know from the other dialogues. Of course he did not try to escape the death sentence! Of course he wanted to die -- obedience to state law requiring it, and unswerving allegiance to truth asking it of him.\(^3\) To my mind, the tone of the *Apology* is its most truly Socratic quality. He is perfectly consistent.

The third point is that diversity of subject-matters in the different Apologies shows that no effective speech was given in court. The answer it that the diversity is present because Plato was there; Xenophon was not. Plato probably did just what Dr. Oldfather says everybody there would have done -- remember the great speech quite exactly. Mr. Taylor makes much of this point. Furthermore, the diversity is there because Plato is Plato, and the others are not. Why they should write up the speech in the same way as an admitted genius who was present when they were not, is difficult to say. Lastly, Xenophon, or the author of the *Apology* attributed to him, says he has not written up the whole trial, and has omitted things said by Socrates and his friends.

Mr. Oldfather next comes back to the evidence from *Gorgias* and *Theaetetus*, saying that the scenes of the discomfiture of the philosopher in court are absurd if PA is really historic. But the

scenes are not absurd. Therefore, the PA is fiction. This objection is invalidated by one simple method: reading the dialogues in question. Socrates clearly says that he will not have a word of flattery to say in court. "The speeches that I make from time to time are not aimed at gratification, but at what is best instead of what is most pleasant." (Gorgias, 521 D) This is perfectly consistent with his words in the Apology. He may not have a word of flattery to say to his ignorant judges; he still may put his thoughts as to their qualifications in the forceful style of PA. He still may marshal the facts of his life and the ideals which he has undertaken to follow, and deliver them with all the sincerity he can muster, thereby endowing his speech with a forcefulness ordinarily unconnected with his discourses. These passages by no means contradict the Apology; they confirm it. All the way through the corpus Platonicum, Plato has given us a picture of his master, consistent as to his personal character and his determination to pursue truth and goodness. This corporate impression, derived from perusal of the different dialogues, is diametrically opposed to the picture of the thunder-struck Socrates whom Mr. Oldfather puts before us.

Another argument is drawn from the Memorabilia of Xenophon. If the Daimonion prevented him from making a speech beforehand, he must have been at a loss for words in court, and made no lengthy attempt to defend himself. This conclusion may be denied, and from Xenophon's own testimony in the same work, where he says
that Socrates "acquired great glory by proving the firmness of
his mind, pleading his cause, above all men, with the greatest
regard to truth, ingenuousness, and justice." And the whole of
Phaedrus may be considered a refutation of Oldfather's stand,
since in it Socrates is made out to be a surpassingly good orator.
If PA is rejected, the interpretation of this dialogue is rendered
very difficult. Why would Plato represent Socrates as such a
speaker, when everyone would recognize the picture as false?

The motive of the Xenophontean Apology and of the Memorabilia
is said to be "to explain why Socrates did not make a better
defence of himself in court." That motive does not seem to be
stated or implicitly contained in either of the works above
mentioned. They are rather written to show why Socrates adopted
the lofty plane he did take, and did not cater to the low tastes
and wishes of the jurors. This motive is quite in accord with
what we saw in regard to Gorgias and Theaetetus.

His last point is about the dialectician-turned-orator.
Socrates may not have been another Demosthenes, but he surely had
some points in his favor when he was hailed into court. His
dialectical skill at least helped him there, particularly for ex
tempore speaking. Phaedrus, as we have already seen, makes him
out to be quite skilled at speech-making. But as he says himself,
his whole life was his preparation for this speech. Included in

4 In Socratic Discourses of Plato and Xenophon, transl. by
that life must surely have been his talents of body and soul, primarily his talent for discourse. Why not a good speech, then? Perhaps not the polished masterpiece we know as PA, but at least a good effort, embodying all the essentials of that speech. This, at least, may be expected from the man Socrates whom we know from the other dialogues. These points will be expanded later.

As regards the probable scene in the courtroom which he proposes, this short opinion will suffice now. It does not agree with the facts. If the jury was such a mob, why was he condemned by the close vote of 281 to 220? The μεγάλεγορις of which Oldfather makes so much, bears the meaning of "lofty speech" as well as the "vaunting" which he favors. Socrates was defiant in court, but not necessarily contemptuous. More of this picture will be seen later.

As for his conclusion, where he says we may have either the Apology or the Gorgias and Theaetetus, but not both, we answer: we must choose both sides; they are both consistent with the character of Socrates in history. The Apology is fully in accord with the rest of the works of Plato. Its unique historical value lies largely in just that fact.
CHAPTER III
THE TAYLOR-BURNET THEORY

Having seen Mr. Oldfather's attack on Plato's Socrates, we shall now go to the other extreme, as it were, before we end in the middle. Mr. Taylor may be considered the extreme, with Mr. Burnet standing just this side of him. They agree that Plato has given us an accurate picture of the historical Socrates in his dialogues; they disagree as to some details. We shall first treat of their general theory as to the relationship between the actual Socrates and his portrait in Plato; then we shall see what they say regarding the PA.

First, Mr. Burnet:

The present writer believes that we are bound to regard all the dialogues in which Socrates is the leading speaker as primarily intended to expound his teaching. This by no means excludes the possibility that Plato may have idealized his hero more or less, or that he may have given a turn of his own to a good many things. That would only be human nature, but it would not seriously affect the general impression. The principle ground for holding this view is that, at a certain period of his life, Plato began to feel that it was inappropriate to make Socrates the chief speaker in his dialogues (cf. Laws, Politicus, Timaeus) ... The Philebus, one of Plato's latest works, is just the exception which proves the rule. Its theme is the application of Pythagorean principles to questions
of morals; and if we believe Plato, that was just the chief occupation of Socrates.¹

In another book he writes:

To avoid misunderstanding, I should say that I do not regard the dialogues of Plato as records of actual conversations, though I do think it probable that there are such embedded in them. I also fully admit that the Platonic Socrates is Socrates as Plato saw him, and that his image may be to some extent transfigured by the memory of his martyrdom. The extent to which this has happened we cannot, of course, determine, but I do not believe it has seriously falsified the picture.²

This is exactly the stand which will be taken in this thesis. The arguments given against Oldfather will be such as Burnet would probably use. Not that his theory can be accepted in all its details. His idea that we should start with Plato's Socrates, since he is more important than most men of flesh and blood, even if his portrait is fictitious, is neither a good idea nor a true one.³ His attempt to make a Pythagorean out of Socrates does not succeed, nor does his assertion that Socrates held the Theory of Ideas. But his points in favor of Plato's accuracy are willingly accepted and gladly used to bolster the arguments in this thesis. "The Platonic Aristophanes is thoroughly Aristophanic, and this raises at least a presumption that the Platonic Socrates is

¹ In his article "Socrates", Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, XI, New York, Scribners Sons, 1921, 671.
² Greek Philosophy, 149.
³ Ibid., 128.
As reasons why Plato could know Socrates much better and easier than Xenophon, Burnet says that Plato "was at Athens during the last two years of his (Socrates') life, while Xenophon was in Asia." The theme of all his discussion is: "The Platonic Socrates is no mere type, but a living man. That, above all, is our justification for believing that he is in truth 'the historical Socrates.'"

Taylor goes farther than Burnet, though even he will not demand slavish acceptance of every word as that of Socrates. His general opinion is:

The portrait drawn in the Platonic dialogues of the personal and philosophical individuality of Socrates is in all its main points strictly historical, and capable of being shown to be so. ... In a word, what the genius of Plato has done for his master is not, as is too often thought, to transfigure him, but to understand him.

One of his main reasons for this opinion is the fact that Plato changed his method in later life — the same reason as the one of Burnet above. He says he can see no reason for this change but that given by Burnet, "that Plato's historical sense forbade him to make Socrates the expositor of philosophical and scientific

5 ibid., xxix.
6 Ibid., lvi.
7 A.E. Taylor, Varia Socratica, First Series, Oxford, James Parker and Co., 1911, ix-x.
interests and doctrines which Plato well knew to be his own and those of his contemporaries. 8

Another of his arguments is this. It is unintelligible why Plato should put in so many little details in the character and doings of Socrates, and keep them so consistent through the writings of half a century, unless he were reproducing an actual character. Those particular characteristics are by no means necessary to the ideal sage, so must be founded on Socrates himself. The main figures of the non-Socratic dialogues, are very definitely types -- for instance, the Eleatic Stranger of the "Sophistes" and "Politicus." 9 He claims that "Plato is really the sole contemporary of Socrates who has anything of importance to tell us." 10 And he goes on to say,

The "historical Socrates," as he has been called, must be found in the full and faithful portrait, drawn with careful attention to fact, of a great thinker by another great thinker, who by God's grace, was also a master of dramatic portraiture. The portrait is that of the actual son of Sophroniscus; nearly every "historical" touch in it is known to us ultimately only on the faith of Plato. 11

So his conclusion is:

The assumption upon which the following account of Socrates will be based, is, then, that Plato's

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8 Socrates, 26.
10 ibid., 32.
11 ibid., 40.
picture of his master is substantially accurate, and that the information he supplies about him is intended to be taken as historical fact. It does not, of course, follow that there has been no "transfiguration" of Socrates in Plato's mind by meditation on his death as a martyr.... It does not follow again, that everything Plato tells us must be precise historical truth.12

Burnet and Taylor, then, agree on their main ideas; they disagree violently with Oldfather. In approaching their version of what the speech means, we shall do well to clear the ground first. They do not accept Xenophon as much of a witness, since he was away from Athens at the time of the trial, and he had left the city around the age of twenty-five, so that he could not have known Socrates very intimately before he did depart.13 "It does not appear from his own writings that he was ever particularly intimate with Socrates, and it seems certain that he cannot have been more than twenty-four at the outside when he saw the Master for the last time."14 He adds a note to this statement:

It is certain that Xenophon never saw Socrates after his own departure from Athens in 401 to join the expedition of Prince Cyrus. We do not know even that he ever revisited Athens after this before his banishment in the year 394. That he had never been very intimate with Socrates may probably be inferred from the fact that his name is never mentioned by Plato, who tells us a great deal about the members of the Socratic circle.15

12 Socrates, 32-33.
14 Taylor, Socrates, 16.
15 ibid., 16, note 1.
Xenophon, too, is not a reliable witness concerning even events at which he claimed to be present. He says he was at the Symposium; yet it occurred in 421 or 420 B.C., when he was yet a child! As regards this event and his record of it, Burnet says; "Xenophon, who had read Plato's Symposium without discovering what it was about, if we may judge from his own composition of the same name." 16

Xenophon mentions no biographical data which he could not have obtained from Plato's works; as a matter of fact, he gives very little of such data. 17 XA is made up mainly of palpable borrowings from the Apology, Crito, and Phaedo of Plato, except for what Taylor calls two not very happy additions or corrections. The first is the "remarkable and comical statement" that the purpose of Socrates in making a defence which was really a defiance was "to ensure his own conviction and so, escape the weakness and disorders attendant on old age -- hardly a creditable motive or one likely in a man vigorous enough to have left a baby in arms behind him." 18 And the Memorabilia tells us little; in it he never mentions the attempted rescue from prison and Socrates' refusal to use it, though this would have suited Xenophon's purpose. In XA he briefly mentions this, but that is all, and it is an evident "steal."

16 Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 671.  
17 Plato's Biography of Socrates, 38-40.  
18 Ibid., 32-33.
From the fact that Xenophon tells us nothing of any close friendship he had with Socrates, but only that he consulted the philosopher as to his journey to Asia, Burnet concludes that Xenophon had little more than that to do with him. "If there had been much more to tell, we may be pretty sure Xenophon would have told it; for he is by no means averse to talking about himself." And the final critique of Xenophon is, according to Burnet, the entire character of his Apology. "Xenophon's defence of Socrates is too successful. He would never have been put to death if he had been like that."20

Xenophon, therefore, is dismissed with little sympathy by Taylor and Burnet. Their idea of Aristotle's helpfulness in solving the Socratic problem is little higher. About all that they will admit is that he drew most of his facts from Plato's school, and supports their theory if he does anything.

Aristotle neither had, nor could have been expected to have, any particular knowledge of the life and thought of Socrates, except what he learned from Plato, or read in the works of the "Socratic men," and more especially ... every statement of importance made about Socrates in the Aristotelian corpus can be traced to an existing source in the Platonic dialogues.21

Aristotle exercised no kind of higher criticism on his documents, but simply accepted what he read in the works of Plato and others.

19 Burnet, Greek Philosophy, 126.
20 ibid., 149.
21 Taylor, Varia Socratica, 40-41.
as a dramatically faithful presentation of a real historical figure. And since Aristotle drew most of his knowledge of Socrates from his being in Plato's school, "the reasonable presumption is thus that the Aristotelian account of Socrates simply records familiar traits from an almost exclusively Academic school-tradition, which must rest, in its turn, on the writings of Plato."22 Taylor goes on to prove this point for twenty pages, and finishes his discussion with: "We have therefore a right to claim his testimony, such as it is, in favour of the view that Plato's dramatic portraiture of Socrates is, in all essentials, thoroughly historical."23

Burnet adds that Aristotle classed the dialogues with the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus, thus indicating that they are imitations of real people; Plato used real characters in a true-to-life way. The reason why he had no first-hand information about Socrates is that he did not come to Athens until a generation after the death of Socrates.24

So they are ready to accept only the dialogues and the Clouds of Aristophanes as of any real historical value; we have already seen that Havelock follows them in this. Their reason for accepting the Clouds seems to be that it gives them a handle for this theory of theirs that Socrates was really a Pythagorean, head of a kind of school. According to Burnet, the picture of Socrates in

22 ibid., 54.
23 ibid., 89.
24 Cf. Hastings Encyclopedia, 672.
the is intelligible only on the supposition that "Socrates was popularly regarded as the director at once of a scientific school, and of a religious conventicle, and that combination inevitably suggests a Pythagorean ." He claims that no offense was taken at the actual performance of the Clouds, just because Socrates did head some kind of esoteric group. In the Symposium, Socrates and Aristophanes are made out to be very close friends six or seven years after the production of the play. Only in the light of subsequent events was the Clouds resented, and even so the whole matter is treated quite lightly in PA. The fact that the parody is found in a comedy is a presumption that it is not a statement merely of fact, for that would not be funny. "On the other hand, every such statement must have some sort of foundation in fact; for absolute fictions about real people are not funny either."26

Taylor repeats this viewpoint, saying that if this is a caricature of the hero of the Phaedo, we should be able to find in it those glorified characteristics which we find in the latter dialogue.27 He then goes into the matter at great length, and comes out fifty pages later with this conclusion:

What has been said, unless it is all baseless fancy, seems enough to show that the account given of Socrates in the dialogues is surprisingly like the caricature of him

25 In Hastings' Encyclopedia, 666.
26 Burnet, Greek Philosophy, 145.
27 Varia Socratica, 129.
produced by the great comedian of Plato's boyhood, so much so that the two representations reciprocally confirm one another in a way which compels us to believe that the Clouds is a historical document of the first rank, and that Plato's description of the entourage, interests and early life of Socrates rests, in all its main points, on a genuinely historical basis.28

This is their general viewpoint on Plato's works; not all of it will be accepted, but we shall have the opposite view from that of Oldfather. Since this thesis will steer a middle course, both extremes must be known. As for the PA, they regard it as a "professed faithful reproduction of the actual language of Socrates at the memorable trial."29

That it is not a word-for-word reproduction of the actual speech delivered by Socrates may be granted at once. Plato was not a newspaper reporter. On the other hand, we know that he was present at the trial. (34 A, 38 B) and that suggests the possibility of something more nearly approaching a report than we can fairly assume in the case of other Σωκράτικος λόγος .... Not only was Plato present in court with many other members of the Socratic circle, but there were also the 500 (or 501) dicasts, besides an audience, which, in view of the sensational character of the trial, was no doubt a large one. Now one of Plato's aims is surely to defend the memory of Socrates by setting forth his character and activity in their true light; and, as most of those present must have been still living when the Apology was published, he would have defeated his own end if he had given a fictitious account of the attitude of Socrates and of the main

28 ibid., 174; cf. also Havelock, 282.
29 Taylor, Plato, 156
lines of his defence. The Introduction to the thesis has given arguments against this point of view; Taylor and Burnet seem to have the stronger side, however.

Taylor says that the speech is so characteristic that it may be accepted as an accurate reproduction of the actual speech, and hits out at Schanz and the others who argued against it. He says their doubts are due only to their assumption "that the first object of an accused man must always be to 'get off' at any price. That may be true of most men, but it is not true of all, and least of all of a man like Socrates." We shall return to this point.

What did Plato do, then? Why, just what men like Demosthenes did for their own speeches before publishing them -- polish and revise it, without falsifying any fundamental facts. The substantial value of the Apology as history is assured. Taylor and Burnet waste no sympathy on those who cannot believe that Socrates actually did not want to escape the death sentence, given the conditions. They deny their opponents' statement that this deliberate seeking of death is the only alternative to denial of the Apology as historical. They look on PA in a different light.

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31 Taylor, Socrates, 28.
32 Ibid., 116.
33 Ibid., 116.
"The object of the picture is to make us understand why the martyr chooses such a life and why the completion of his career by a martyr's death is a corona and not a 'disaster'."34

That Socrates nearly won his case in spite of his refusal to compromise, proves that the jury was not so overwhelmingly against him. Even as it was, the influence of Anytus and the rhetoric of Meletus combined only succeeded in getting a majority of 281 votes to 220. Surely that does not show a bigoted and antagonistic jury.

Now they tell us how they interpret the parts of PA. They take the first section, up to 28 A, as a parody on forensic speeches, containing only humorous explanations of his mission. The account of the Delphic oracle is humorous, as is that of the Clouds. The claim to a special mission from "God" is the actual defence; it must not be confused with the message from Apollo. The cross-examination, too, is just humor, the irony of Socrates asserting itself. Against Riddell's claim that the subtle rhetoric of the first part of Plato's speech ill accords with the historical Socrates, Burnet argues that he misses the mark, since the exordium is a parody, as is his disclaiming to have any knowledge of forensic diction. "It is, in fact, impossible to doubt that Socrates was perfectly familiar with contemporary rhetoric, and that he thought very little of it."35 He later adds that Plato would have represented Socrates as giving this turn to the tricks

34 Taylor, Plato, 156.
35 Burnet, Euthyphro, etc., 67.
of the forensic orator's trade if he had really done something of this kind. And only the exordium is so carefully done; if the critics would go on and examine the rest of the speech in the same way, they would find that it is not so smooth throughout, and their ideas would have to be changed.

If the first part is ironic, his real defence is from 28 A to 34 B. This agrees with the principles enunciated in Gorgias and Theaetetus, since it surely has not flattery for the judges in it. It concerns Socrates' divine mission, not from the oracle, but from god; that mission was to exhort everyone not to care for their bodies or for money so much as for their souls, and how to make them as good as possible. No wonder the οἱ πολλοὶ would oppose him and his ideas! That is why he had to plead for order in 30 C; here is his μεγαλεγορία, in defying the δῆμος, and claiming he has the mission of converting them. Another example of the latter was his refusal to bring in a weeping wife and children, as most defendants did. And a third was his counter-proposal of state support for the rest of his natural life. All these things conspired to tip the scales in favor of conviction; it was not any contemptuous attitude on the part of the old man. He could hardly explain his mission to the crowd in any way that was not unpleasant to them, and he could not omit some attempt at an explanation, if he was to give the true story of his life.

36 Cf. Havelock, and Hackforth's whole book, which is devoted to just this point.
In this way Taylor and Burnet interpret the Apology. They have been attacked on their view by other scholars, whose assertions will serve to counterbalance the extreme views advocated by the Englishmen, whose opinion has been summed up by an opponent:

The net result of these onslaughts, if they prove victorious, is that Plato alone has drawn the portrait of Socrates seriously from life. Xenophon has only given us a very poor sketch, chiefly making a feeble copy of the less interesting features in Plato's picture, and pretending that he has produced a likeness from his memory of the original. If, when perplexed whether to trust Plato or Xenophon, we appeal to Aristotle, he is discredited, because he knows nothing but Plato's representation. Finally, the caricature in Aristophanes, produced long before Plato's standard portrait, gives the impression that he and Plato drew from one and the same model. 37

Mrs. Adam believes that Xenophon has given us the historical Socrates, and that the Socrates of Plato is not one, but two, and there is a gradual transition from one to the other. In the early dialogues, the Socrates portrayed is the Socrates of Xenophon, plus the vitality of Plato's dramatic art.

Mr. Field agrees with her, since the Socrates of PA is much like Xenophon's Socrates -- going around asking questions. He has no special teaching kept for an inner circle. 38 And Aristotle's evidence is against the opinion that Socrates was a Pythagorean or held the Theory of Ideas, or that Plato has given us a record of the views of the historical Socrates. To be sure, the earlier

37 A.M. Adam, "Socrates, 'Quantum mutatus ab illo,'" Classical Quarterly, XII (1918), 124.
38 Socrates and Plato, 30.
dialogues have given us a reliable account of Socrates, but once Plato's thought emerged from the rudimentary stages of philosophy, he pushed ahead on his own, still keeping Socrates as his main speaker until the very last dialogues.

Paul Shorey is one of the foremost Plato scholars of modern times, and he believes that the extreme view of Taylor and Burnet must be tempered -- that Socrates' appearance in a dialogue does not *so ipso* make that dialogue historically accurate.

If Socrates had possessed a body of doctrines and a system of philosophy with principles coherent and interdependent, he would have set it down in writing. The of late much-advertised speculation that everything in Plato's writings up to and including the Republic is Socratic involves the monstrous paradox that the world's most affluent and precise thinker never wrote a line and that the writer who gave consummate expression to all this wealth of thought, formulated no ideas of his own till he was past the age of fifty. So gross a psychological improbability cannot be taken seriously.39

Against Mr. Shorey's opinion may be instanced Socrates' own idea of the superiority of the spoken over the written word, as given in both the *Phaedrus* (275 B - 277 A) and the *Protagoras* (347 E). It is not too sure that Socrates would have written out his philosophy; Plato evidently does not think he would have.

What does Shorey accept as authentic in PA, then? That the inspiration was authentic, and that "if history means the living

past, this Platonic idealization is the Socrates of history, the only Socrates that we shall ever know."40 But in the last analysis there is no likelihood that such a speech as the Apology was ever delivered as it stands. "It is too obviously Plato's idealization of his master's life and mission and his summing-up of the things that needed to be said...,"41 the ῥᾷ δεόντα which Thucydides put into the mouths of Pericles, Nicias, and others.

As we pointed out before, this comparison of the PA to the speeches in Thucydides cannot be carried too far. It is too definitely Socrates, not a "Type," who is speaking the things which ought to be said. But Mr. Shorey's main idea regarding Socrates is surely acceptable: the old fellow did not actually take part in all the scenes which Plato has pictured. Somewhere, the genius of the pupil passed the bounds of the ideas transmitted to him by his master; where, we cannot determine exactly.

One of the arguments advanced by Zeller, who is claimed by Burnet and Taylor for their side, is that the absence of any artistic handling of PA shows that it is what Socrates actually said.42 As to this, Taylor and Burnet argue that this apparent lack of artistry is really consummate skill, for it appears to make Socrates an ingenuous citizen trying to do his best in court. "Ars est celare artem." Mr. Riddell has attacked Zeller on this

40 ibid., 23
41 ibid., 81.
42 Cf. Hackforth, 56.
point, with the purpose of discrediting PA. He makes three points. First, there is plenty of rhetoric and artistry in it. Secondly, Plato had to do this to give verisimilitude to it. Thirdly, other Apologies differ from it in important details, so Plato did work on it. Riddell concludes:

It is then too much of an assumption, though countenanced by Zeller and Mr. Grote, as well as by many older writers on the subject, that we can rely on the Platonic Apology as a substantial reproduction of the speech of Socrates. ... Even if the studied speech of Plato embodied authentic reminiscences of the unpremeditated utterances of his master, to disengage the one from the other is more than we can assume to do.43

Despite this, he goes on to do just that! He regards Aristophanes' attack as a faithful reproduction of the facts,44 and he professes to find in the Apology a real portrait of Socrates in court.45 This seems to be simple contradiction. If he takes the speech as fiction, he should not be able to find a true portrait there. All that he has left is XA, which is generally discredited, so he will never know where to find a portrait of Socrates. Riddell's attack, then, does little more than clarify the issue. He helps to tone down the Taylor-Burnet theory, but he hardly establishes anything positive.

As regards the Taylor-Burnet theory of Aristophanes' value as a confirmation of PA, their conclusion cannot be accepted. They

44 ibid., xxxiv, note 14.
too obviously have an axe to grind. Socrates is very definitely incensed at the effect of the *Clouds* on the Athenians. He numbers Aristophanes with ἅλλοντες (19 B), giving as their charge:

Sωκράτης ἁδίκει καὶ περιερήξεται, ἵνα τὸ τε ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ οὐρανός καὶ τὸν ὑπὸ λόφον κρείττων ποιῶν καὶ ἀλλος τὸ αὐτὰ ταῦτα διδάσκων.

Aristophanes is the first and only example given of these men (19 C). He must be taken at the face value of his words, if PA is accepted as historical. Hackforth agrees,

the Socrates of the Apology is true to life, and ... any evidence which conflicts with it it must be rejected. The evidence of Apology 18 A - 19 D, where Socrates is defending himself against his "old accusers," i.e., misrepresentations of long standing, is, I will say roundly, utterly and entirely irreconcilable with the picture of Socrates in the *Clouds*.46

He goes on: "Least of all can I understand how scholars who hold that the *Apology* is a close representation of Socrates' actual speech, at the same time defend the caricature of the *Clouds* as a fair caricature."47 If we are to believe that PA is a faithful record of what Socrates said, these words against Aristophanes must be taken as his real attitude. They are definite.

Mr. Oldfather's arguments may now be examined again in the light of the *Apology*. Our directive norm will be the Taylor-Burnet theory, which we cannot hold slavishly, but which provides us with a reliable viewpoint in treating this subject.

46 Hackforth, 146-147; also cf. Phillipson, 180.
47 *ibid.*, 149.
CHAPTER IV

REFUTATION OF MR. OLDFAther'S ARTICLE

Since Mr. Oldfather considers Dr. Gomperz to have proved his case already, and his own remarks to be mere additons by way of confirmationes, we shall examine the dialogues alleged by Gomperz to contradict the PA. In Gorgias 486 A, Callicles says, νῦν ἄρα εἴ τις σου λαβόμενος ἡ ἄλλως ὀτεύν τῶν τοιούτων εἰς τὸ δεσματηρίον ἀπάρει, φάσκων ἀδικεῖν μηδὲν ἀδίκουντα, ὅσθε ὅτι οὐκ ἄν ἔχουσιν ὁ τι χρησμὸ βοῶν; ἂλλ' ἰλλεγώνσιν ἄν καὶ χαρμᾶν, οὐκ ἔχων ὁ τι εἴποις, καὶ εἰς τὸ δικαστήριον ἀναβαίνει, κατηγοροῦ τυχῶν πάντων φαύλου καὶ μοχθηροῦ, ἀπεθάνοις ἄν, εἰ βούλοντο θεαντάντων τοῖς πολεμισθήσεις. Gomperz takes this as a prophecy of what actually did happen, so claims that Socrates could have given no speech like that recorded by Plato. Of this idea of Gomperz, Hackforth has this to say, "I will not discuss these suggestions, both of which seem utterly impossible."1 And Gomperz, to be logical, would have to take the whole as true to life, not just a part of the passage. This would involve taking the accusers of Socrates to be rascals, even though such an assumption does not agree with what we know of them. Anytus and Meletus were not men of this sort, but ordinary citizens of good standing at the time.

1 Hackforth, op. cit., 131.
When we read farther into the Gorgias, we find some rather contradictory statements concerning this "prophecy." Socrates does not answer Callicles at once, but goes into a long discussion of the goal of man, which he says must be the good and not the pleasurable. Then in 503 A-B he begins to discuss the oratory of the times, which Callicles admits is not always directed to the good of the people, but merely to their gratification. Socrates says there are two kinds of speech: one is flattery and mob-oratory, while the other is the noble effort to make people better and to say what is best, no matter the rest of men think of it. "But this is a rhetoric you never yet saw; or if you have any orator of this kind that you can mention, without more ado let me know who he is." Callicles admits he does not know anyone of that stamp.

Now when we recall Socrates' doctrine that if a man knows what is right, he will do it, we know what to expect from Socrates himself in court -- just the plain speech which Plato has given us, a speech directed to the good of his hearers, not to their gratification. And in the passage quoted above, his use of the word "yet" οὐ υπὸς ἔκτοτε may well be taken as an earnest of what was to come. They had not yet heard such a speaker. Socrates knew what he would do if he were ever in court.

In 504 D-E he says:

our orator, the man of art and virtue, will have in view, when he applies to our souls the words that he speaks, and also in all his actions, and in giving any gift he will give it, and in taking anything away he will
take it, with this thought always before his mind -- how justice may be engendered in the souls of his fellow-citizens, and how injustice may be removed; how temperance may be bred in them and licentiousness cut off; and how virtue as a whole may be produced and vice expelled.

Gomperz and others claim that Socrates is unable to make a speech. Yet here in Gorgias he says: (519 D–E)

In truth, you have forced me to make quite a harangue, Callicles, by refusing to answer.
Callicles: And you are the man who could not speak unless somebody answered you?
Socrates: Apparently I can. Just now, at any rate, I am rather extending my speeches, since you will not answer me.

The following is one of Gomperz' favorite passages. Socrates:

if ever I am brought before the court and stand in any such danger as you mention, it will be some villain who brings me there, for no honest man would prosecute a person who had done no wrong; and it would be no marvel if I were put to death. Would you like me to tell you my reason for expecting this?
Callicles: Do, by all means.
Socrates: I think I am one of the few, not to say the only one, in Athens who attempts the true art of statesmanship, and the only man of the present time who manages affairs of state: hence, as the speeches which I make from time to time are not aimed at gratification, but at what is best instead of what is most pleasant, and as I do not care to deal in "these pretty toys" that you recommend, I shall have not a word to say at the bar. The same case that I made out to Polus will apply to me; for I shall be like a doctor tried by a bench of children on a charge brought by a cook. (A man like this) would be utterly at a loss what to say?
Callicles: Quite so.
Socrates: Such, however, I am sure would be my own fate if I were brought before the court. For not only shall I have no pleasures to plead as having been provided by me -- which they regard as services and benefits, whereas I envy neither those who provide them nor those for whom they are
provided -- but if anyone alleges that I either corrupt the younger men by reducing them to perplexity or revile the older with bitter expressions, whether in private or in public, I shall be unable either to tell the truth and say -- "It is on just grounds that I say all this, and it is your interest that I serve thereby, gentlemen of the jury" -- or to say anything else; and so, I daresay, any sort of thing, as luck may have it, will befall me.2

At first reading, this sounds rather definite as proving for Gompers. But we must take it in context. Socrates quite clearly means that he will have no word of flattery to say to his judges, and that therefore he will surely be condemned. Indeed, he says in the next paragraph that he would be really worried and angry if a bad life caused his condemnation, εἰ δὲ κωλακίκης ἑτορικὴς ἐνδείκτη τελευτην ἔγραψε, εἰ οὖν ὅτι ἐκδίως ἢδοις ἄν με φέροντα τὸν θανάτον, αὕτω μὲν ήδος τὸ ἀπόθνησκεν οὕδεις φοβεῖται... τὸ δὲ ἐδικεῖν φοβεῖται. This is the whole point of the dialogue -- not that Socrates has nothing to do with rhetoric, but that (527 C) καὶ πάσαν κωλακίδαν καὶ τὴν περὶ ἐαυτῶν καὶ τὴν περὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, καὶ περὶ ὀλίγους καὶ περὶ πολλούς, φευκτέαν. καὶ τὴν ἑτορικὴν οὕτω χρηστέαν ἐπὶ τὸ δίκαιον λέει.

So much for the Giorgias. The other dialogue listed as contradictory to the Apology is the Theaetetus, where in a digression Socrates speaks of the philosopher in court.

2 Lamb, op cit., 513, 515, 517, 519, 531.
when he is obliged to speak in court or anywhere else about the things at his feet and before his eyes, is a laughing-stock not only to Thracian girls but to the multitude in general, for he falls into pits and all sorts of perplexities through inexperience, and his awkwardness is terrible, making him seem a fool; ... for when it comes to abusing people he has no personal abuse to offer against anyone, because he knows no evil of any man, never having cared for such things; so his perplexity makes him appear ridiculous; and as to laudatory speeches and the boastings of others, it becomes manifest that he is laughing at them — not pretending to laugh, but really laughing -- and so he is thought to be a fool.3

Then later, when the philosopher takes the lawyer into the realms of philosophy, the mean-spirited fellow is taken aback.

then the tables are turned; dizzied by the new experience of hanging at such a height, he gazes downward from the air in dismay and perplexity; he stammers and becomes ridiculous, not in the eyes of Thracian girls or other uneducated persons, for they have no perception of it, but in those of all men who have been brought up as free men, not as slaves.4

May we say that these passages are evidence against PA? I do not think so. Socrates is not even speaking of himself in them. He had prefaced all his remarks in this digression with a description of this philosopher who shows up so badly in court. (173 C-D)

The leaders, in the first place, from their youth onward, remain ignorant of the way to the agora, do not even know where the courtroom is, or the senate-house, or any other public place of assembly; as for laws and decrees, they neither hear the debates on

3 Theaetetus, Sophist, transl. by H.N. Fowler, London, Heinemann, 1928, 123.
4 ibid., 127.
them nor see them when they are published; and
the strivings of political clubs after public
offices, and meetings, and banquets, and
revellings with chorus girls -- it never occurs
to them even in their dreams to indulge in such
things.

No one, even 'omperz, would say that this is Socrates' own
description of himself. No, he speaks of Thales or of some ideal
philosopher, not of himself. And even if someone still insists
that this is Socrates, the historical Socrates, we must still note
that the philosopher will have nothing to say in flattery or
abuse. And this still agrees with the Apology.

As a matter of fact, Socrates here describes the other side
as made helpless by the philosopher's logic. These opponents of
his are always vanquished in a personal argument about the very
doctrines to which they object; they become dissatisfied with
themselves, so that their brilliant rhetoric withers away and they
seem like children. (177 B) Is this historical? If Theaetetus
is accepted as historical, then who said nothing to effect in
court? From this last passage, it was the accusers! The give and
take of a court battle is too similar to Socrates' daily arguments
for us to believe that he was at a loss in court.

Gomperz' arguments, then, cannot be claimed to have proved
the thesis. Oldfather's "supplementary considerations" have been
seriously weakened before he begins. As regards his own state-
ments, he says,

Please observe, however, that these points are
merely supplementary, for I regard the case as
already made. No one of them, of course, is conclusive, except perhaps for the third, and each is only an argument from probability. The cumulative value, however, of so much conspiring probability must necessarily be considerable.5

The cumulative value, that is, of these probabilities before they are examined and shown to be improbable. With the support of Gorgias and Theaetetus denied him, he is hard put to it to fashion an argument. By his own admission, only his third point is conclusive even to him; this point, however, is the proof based on those two dialogues already analysed:

His first point is the multiplicity of speeches attributed to Socrates. We have already indicated why this fact does not prove he never gave an Apology, but rather proves the opposite.6 While we are on this point, we shall do well to examine XA and see just how worthy of credence it is. Despite the opinion of Taylor and Burnet, who dismiss him curtly, and of Osborn and others, who believe the work to be spurious, we shall give him a chance to prove himself.

Some authors have defended XA as the more reliable picture of what actually happened in court. Mrs. Adam's approbation of the work has already been noticed, and Bonner says, "In the Apology attributed to Xenophon, we have, I believe, the nearest approach to an exact report of the real speech."7 Grote and Zeller

5 Classical Weekly, op. cit., 203.
6 Cf. p. 22.
7 op. cit., 169.
agree; they hold that Xenophon’s Apology and Plato’s are not incompatible, and prefer XA as the guide in using the two speeches. Grote says the two accounts represent the differing attitudes of the different men; Xenophon is the man of action speaking of the practical, and Plato is the philosopher speaking of the theoretical. They supplement each other. Alcibiades in the Symposium describes Socrates as a two-sided man (216 C-E), a statement which Jaeger echoes in saying that Socrates’ personality must have contained the twofold aspect that made him the subject of the two different interpretations.8

What, then, is the objection to Xenophon? Rogers, who had called Xenophon’s account “a logically possible point of view, but one which so far as I am aware has never been consistently adhered to,”9 claims nevertheless that Xenophon’s record is historically unreliable for the following reasons. His other writings make no claim to be history, for instance, the Symposium, Oeconomicus, Cyropaedia. The tone of his Apology is just like himself and not particularly like Socrates. The dialectic is Xenophontic rather than Socratic. The subjects chosen are favorites of Xenophon, but probably not of Socrates. The intellectual level of the conversations in his work is low; Socrates there is a bore. Some of the incidents he relates are improbable — the visit to Theodote, for instance. Xenophon has Socrates always

8 Cf. Paedeia, op cit., 26; Field and Phillipson agree with them. 9 op. cit., 56. 10 Ibid., 166-175.
putting utility first -- an unlikely thing.

Mr. Hackforth has less respect for the "Attic bee."

the method of Xenophon is the Memorabilia is
to trust to memory supplemented by conjecture
and invention; he remembers what Socrates was
like in general, and the sort of things he used
to say, and he composes the dialogues to
illustrate Socrates' character and teaching....
We shall be justified in regarding all this
(three-quarters of XA) as the author's own
invention.... But in terming this "invention"
I do not mean to deny that it includes ele­
ments of fact, or at least of what the author
believed to be fact: I only mean that the
composition is of that type where primary aim
is not to record facts, but to describe a
character, or rather certain aspects of a
character.11

Jaeger gives some other reasons why XA is not the better of
the two. XA "is immediately suspect because of its obvious
intention to whitewash Socrates. ... But recent research has
shown that the Memoirs too are heavy with subjective coloring."12
Xenophon was never one of Socrates' pupils; he never saw Socrates
after he left Athens; his books about him were composed some
decades afterwards. And the great objection to Xenophon is:
"If Socrates had been simply a Babbitt, he would never have aroused
the suspicion of his fellow-citizens, far less have been condemned
to death as dangerous to the state."13

This last statement is echoed by Bury, who says Xenophon

11 Hackforth, op., cit., 35, 38.
12 op. cit., 20.
13 Ibid., 21.
makes Socrates a good man but not a great one, and that "for appreciating the personality of Socrates the book is almost negligible." The difference between the two figures is that the Socrates of Xenophon is a figure which would bulk in human history on about the same scale as Dr. Johnson. The Socrates of Plato is the real Socrates, a figure that inspired every noble character of Greek and Roman antiquity to the last hour of its decline.

This, after all, is the most persuasive point against XA, just as the strongest point for PA is its tone -- its utterly convincing picture of a Socrates who would have been condemned to death by a jury angry at hearing the truth about themselves. No, Xenophon does his best in his Apology, but it is not enough. Olidfather himself calls XA "trivial, chaotic, and implausible to a degree." Our final word must be that of Shorey, who confirms the stand of Taylor and Burnet.

His Socratic writings borrow much from Plato. He could not possibly have remembered after so many years of campaigning, the conversations of Socrates that he claims to have heard and to report verbatim. It can even be argued that he was wholly dependent upon the dialogues of Plato and other Socratics for all ideas except a few of his own favorite commonplaces that he put into the mouth of Socrates.

So Xenophon's effort is not much of a competitor with PA. The other Apologies deserve even less consideration. Plato is the

15 Cornwall, op. cit., 59.
16 op. cit., 56.
only one who was present and wrote about what he saw and heard. The fact that others copied his report only indicates what an impression the speech made on Athens and all the civilized world at the time. The Athenians may not in their grief have put Meletus to death and banished Lycon and Anytus, as Diogenes Laertius would have us believe,\textsuperscript{17} but they surely must have looked on his life, trial and death as landmarks in the history of their time. Attempts to reproduce his "famous last words" would inevitably be made, and especially in the schools, just as the Gettysburg Address is assigned so often for imitation in our English classes.

Oldfather's idea that PA was composed in the manner of Thucydides, giving "what really ought to have been said," is not tenable, though Zeller agrees with him.\textsuperscript{18} Burnet remarks that all the orators in Thucydides speak in the same style, that they are by no means characterized as individuals, that their words give \textit{τα δ' εισ' εντα} -- what is called for by the occasion -- and not \textit{τα προσ' η' η' εντα} -- what suits the character of the speaker. Throughout PA we hear the same Socrates whom we know from other dialogues. He is no ideal type, no vague generality, a kind of animated Universal Idea of a Philosopher. No, he is our well-known Socrates, blunt, ironical, devoted to truth, seeking always to make his hearers better, even though it may mean the forfeiture of his life. Pater thinks we may take PA as a sincere version of the actual

\textsuperscript{17} op. cit., II, no. 43.
\textsuperscript{18} op. cit., 165, note 1.
words of Socrates, "closer to them, we may think, than the Greek record of spoken words however important, the speeches in Thucydides for instance, by the admission of Thucydides himself, was wont to be." 19

Oldfather's second argument is the tone of the PA. Socrates makes no attempt to get off, but rather assures his condemnation by his attitude toward his judges. Schanz first brought this objection against the PA, and now Oldfather finds it cogent enough to force him to his conclusion about the value of PA.

Such an attitude toward Socrates seems to betray a consummate ignorance of the man's true character. The Gorgias has already been quoted, wherein he says he will not mind dying if it is only in the cause of justice. (522 D-E) And Oldfather could have found his answer in PA itself, had he cared to accept it. Socrates says a man is wrong if he thinks "a man in whom there is even a little merit ought to consider danger of life or death, and not rather regard this only, ... whether the things he does are right or wrong." (28 B) Here is Socrates speaking -- a red-blooded old warrior unafraid of the consequences of his just battle for truth. His defence is "manly and uncompromising." 20 He would not yield to unworthy demands made on him; he well knew that only this extreme example could hope to save his fellow-citizens from the

moral abyss into which they were falling. He did not mind personal sacrifice, if his mission would be accomplished -- the saving of Athens herself, to stop the decadence which had already caused her to lose the vast empire gained under Pericles.

Moral decay of this kind is not arrested by arguments, however clearly these refute the immoral practices they attack. It can only be refuted by action and action of a remarkable kind. For no normal, decent average goodness will convince men in that state of disillusioned cynicism which is the mark of such a time. Hence the immense significance of the almost gratuitous way in which Socrates went to his death. There was no kind of possibility that his action could be explained in a way which would save the face of those clever sceptics who knew that morality was nonsense.

This may explain the tone, but does not say that that tone was contemptuous.

More than one critic believes that Socrates did embody defiance as well as defence in his speech, which "was in the loose and desultory style in which he was wont to speak 'in the agora and among the tables of the money-changers,' and was naturally regarded by the dicasts as not so much a defence as a defiance." And yet, this "contempt" or "defiance" is not evident in PA, and especially before 28 D. Even in the part of his speech immediately preceding his appeal to them μη Θορυβείτε (30 C), he has prefaced

his remarks with ημᾶς... διπεδίζωμεν μεν καὶ φιλῶ (29 D). Surely this is not "insolent contempt."

As a matter of fact, most critics agree that the tone of PA is familiarly Socratic, thereby establishing it as genuine and close to the original speech. Dyer speaks of "the colloquial freedom in the change of grammatical constructions and in failure to complete sentences." Flagg makes it more general: "the familiar conversational tone pervades the whole work, even where its eloquence is most solemn and impressive." Contrary to Mr. Oldfather, these men seem to believe that the tone brings Socrates to them as nothing else could. The conversational manner, the lack of artistic arrangement, and the flavor of Socratic irony makes for the belief that in PA we are listening to the actual voice from the platform.

One instance of this is the confusion of the words, ἔκλημα, ἀντωμοσία, and ἀντίγραφη for the "indictment" — a meaning sustained only by the first of the three. This is just the kind of little inconsistency which we would expect a man to commit, whose only acquaintance with court procedure had been listening to a case as a juror. (17 D)

To our mind, then, Socrates spoke plainly and as his heart dictated, not merely to infuriate his judges. He had to remain

24 op. cit., 33, note 1; cf. Pater, op. cit., 67)
true to his own convictions; he did not deliberately insult the jury or irritate them so as to die. Rather he wanted to live and to help his city, as a gadfly if need be. (30 E) He mentions that some of the jurors seem to think he is trying to offend them.

Perhaps some of you think that in saying this, as in what I said about lamenting and imploring, I am speaking in a spirit of bravado; but that is not the case. The truth is rather that I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged anyone; but I cannot convince you of this, for we have conversed with each other only a little while. (37 A)

He did not court death; on the contrary, he said plainly that he desired an honorable acquittal, provided only that acquittal involved no compromise with the truth.

Well, then, I must make a defence, men of Athens, and must try in so short a time to remove from you this prejudice which you have been for so long a time acquiring. Now I wish that this might turn out so, if it is better for you and for me, and that I might succeed with my defence. (19 A)

It was not surprising — certainly not to him — that he was put on trial for his life. He was too frank, too sharp a probe of the selfish hearts of the self-contented Athenians to escape unscathed. "The wonder of it is, not that he was tried at all, but that he was not tried until so late in his life:..."25 And when it came, he was prepared. He knew what to do. We know that he himself contributed as much to the result as his accusers did. Lysias is said to have offered him a ready-made speech, which he

25 Grote, Greece, op. cit., 482.
refused; Cicero says he spoke not as a defendant, but as "magister aut dominus...judicum." (De Oratore, I, 54) Quintilian says his wonderful speech renounced all chance of acquittal. So the ancient world accepts his speech; some moderns cannot accept its sublimity.

Seen as his final expression of his mission, and his final appeal to his city,

the "Platonic Defence" becomes not merely sublime and impressive, but also the manifestation of a rational and consistent purpose. ... But it bears no resemblance to the speech of one standing on his trial, with the written indictment concluding "Penalty, Death" hanging up in open court before him. On the contrary, it is an emphatic lesson to the hearers, embodied in the frank outpouring of a fearless and self-confiding conscience. It is undertaken, from the beginning, because the law commands; with a faint wish, and not even an unqualified wish, but no hope, that it may succeed. 28

So Socrates' reply to the unjust, unfounded charge is just what would be expected of the Socrates whom we know from other dialogues. Of course he did not try to escape the death sentence. Of course he wanted to die -- providing obedience to the state required it, and unswerving allegiance to truth asked it of him. And to his mind, he was called upon to do just that: to die. He had a mission; he had to carry it out to the end, even though that end be bitter. And that mission was to be a gadfly to his city, Athens, to waken Athens up to the search for truth, even though the prosecution of that divine calling meant just what came: rage

ibid., 478.
at him, then death for him. "From the Apology we know that the real Socrates tried above everything else to exhort his fellow-men to practise 'virtue' and 'the care of the soul';..."27 The end that did come was only fitting and proper. As Mr. Grote says, "No one who reads the 'Platonic Apology' of Socrates will ever wish that he had made any other defence."28 Mr. Burnet goes on:

In fact, as Plato represents the matter, Socrates would have been glad to secure an acquittal (19 A) if that could be done without stooping to unworthy compromises which would give the lie to his whole life (38 D) but he did not believe the object of life was 'to live a given length of time.' (Gorgias 512 D). That being so, his defence was such as it must needs be.29

To my mind, the tone of PA is its most truly Socratic quality. He is perfectly consistent, as Fowler points out, both in the legal procedure and in the manner of speech used. The second speech proves that he meant the first one seriously. The third speech proves that he meant both the former. And the Crito and Phaedo put the seal on all of them. He did not mind dying in a good cause, if only it was for the right and as the god desired. Perhaps Lane Cooper is a bit over-enthusiastic in his stand, but his trend of thought certainly points to the truth when he writes:

But Socrates as Plato represents him, does not taunt his judges -- as Antigone taunts Creon, and infuriates him with an accusation, when the business of her speech of defence was to save her life, and save herself for her betrothed. The Apology does not display a flaw of character, defect of judgment, or serious

27 Jaeger, op. cit., 91.
28 Quoted by Burnet, Euthyphro, etc., op cit., 65.
29 Ibid., 65.
mistake, of the sort that plunges a man or his family in a drama from happiness into utter misery. The character of Socrates is, rather, somewhat like that of a Christian martyr, and though emotions like fear and pity are aroused in us by the complication and solution so concretely represented to us, these emotions are not the fear and pity of a tragic drama, and they are enveloped by a sense of exultation or exaltation rather than grief.30

As with so many of these points about Socrates, Mr. Taylor has anticipated this opinion and mode of appreciation of him who became all but "Saint Socrates."

What is depicted is the life of a "martyr" of the best type as seen from within by the martyr himself; the object of the picture is to make us understand why the martyr chooses such a life and why the completion of his career by the martyr's death is a corona and not a disaster. In our more commonplace moods we are accustomed to think of martyrdom as a highly disagreeable duty; perhaps it must not be shirked, but we feel that, to be made tolerable to our imagination, it must be "made up" to the martyr by an "exaltation": ... The Apology is the Hellenic counterpart of the second book of the Imitatio.31

And even Xenophon says that Socrates preferred death to life -- though the soldier assigns a market-place motive to the great philosopher: the desire to avoid old age and its concomitant ills. No, Socrates did want to die. He was not a martyr, of course -- except by extrinsic denomination, for he did give his life for the sake of truth and the good of men. He chose to be put to death unjustly by his native city. And that is just what some critics

30 L. Cooper, Plato on the Trial and Death of Socrates, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1941, 46.  
31 Plato, op. cit., 158.
and un-Christian commentators do not seem to be able to understand. They ought to learn from Socrates himself; he was more Christian in some respects than they seem to be.

What Oldfather considers to be the most convincing argument against the historicity of PA turns out to be the best one of those for it! His case is not going so successfully. But he continues with his next idea, that the lack of an introduction in PA indicates that it is a work of fiction, since Plato would merely be sparing himself the necessity of telling a patent falsehood. This need not be true. Again, the point made is a point for our side. The Apology is the only one of the Dialogues which is cast in the form of one long, virtually unbroken monologue. The only conceivable reason why Plato did not write his usual introduction and bring in the scene of jurors, judges, and courtroom apparatus, is that he set out to write, as faithfully as possible, what Socrates said in his defence. "The difference in style between the Apology and Plato's usual writings, seems to prove that this Apology was not drawn up with his usual artistic freedom."32

The lack of an introduction like that of Xenophon in XA, the fact that Socrates questions Miletus only a few times -- and that in the approved courtroom manner of the Athenians33 -- and the very

33 Bonner, op. cit., 175, says this presents the most notable example of effective interrogation of an opponent in court. Such an interrogation is found nowhere else in Greek letters.
noticeable absence of some of the almost invariable characteristics of the rest of the dialogues: descriptions of the scene, of the people present, the banter and the "feeling around" of the first few paragraphs -- all this bears out our conviction that Plato has given us just about what Socrates said.

Another contention is that the diversity of subject matter in the different Apologies of Plato, Xenophon, and others, can be accounted for only on the ground that Socrates' speech was not much of an effort. Otherwise, friend and foe would have remembered it almost verbatim.

First reply: the diversity is there because Plato was present; Xenophon was not. (34 A, 38 B) Plato had first-hand information; Xenophon took someone else's word for what he put down, as we have seen. Really, I believe Plato did just what Oldfather says all would have done: remember the speech in outline quite exactly. The proof is that those who were also present, must have read his Apology. They would also recall the actual speech, and would have criticized it for any falsification. Taylor, as we saw, makes much of this point.

Second reply: the diversity is there because Plato is Plato, and Xenophon is Xenophon, and the others are themselves. Why Plato, the master-writer, the philosopher, the sympathetic disciple, should write up Socrates' speech, which he actually heard, in the same way as Xenophon, the soldier, the common-sense man-in-the-
street, who drew his picture from hearsay -- is more than we can say.

Third reply: Xenophon himself tells us why: "More than this was said, of course, both by Socrates himself and by the friends who joined in his defence. But I have not made it a point to report the whole trial...."34

With this objection answered, we come again to the prime objective reason why PA cannot be historical -- the evidence from Gorgias and Theaetetus. We have already invalidated these arguments in our refutation of Gomperz' statements at the beginning of this chapter, so we need not go into the matter so thoroughly here. Perhaps the best course is to present an alternative solution to the difficulty, a solution which still proves for our position.

Mr. Hackforth, in treating of this objection from Gorgias, says no inference need or can be drawn from what appears to be Socrates' "dizziness and gaping." Socrates really tells Callicles "You think I shall be embarrassed when I am put on my trial in a human law-court: I can tell you that it is you who will be embarrassed at the last judgment."35 So if there is anyone who does not think my reasoning in refuting this objection is valid, he

35 Hackforth, op. cit., 131-132.
may accept this interpretation of Hackforth -- that Socrates is merely making his case against Callicles all the more vivid by picturing himself, in imagination, before an earthly court. Mr. Hackforth believes that "Plato wants to bring out the point that although Socrates was ... in the ordinary sense δινατὸς εκντηβόμενος ἐνήθειν, yet he has the only 'support' that matters in the final account, the support of his own conscience...." So that when Socrates forecasts his legal helplessness in the law-court, we are meant to understand, not that he will fail to tell his judges the truth about themselves and his mission to them, "but that there will be available to him no ἐνήθειν in the sense that Callicles and everybody else thinks of a defendant's ἐνήθειν, against the charge on which he is arraigned." To put it another way, "he is deliberately adopting the standpoint of Callicles, who cannot conceive of a defendant doing anything except muster arguments for a favorable verdict."37

But whether this interpretation is accepted, or the one given previously in this thesis, these dialogues are perfectly consistent with Socrates' words in PA: his profession of fear at the accusers' power of speech (17 A), his statements that he is not a clever speaker (17 B-D), his obvious conviction that by the very words he is speaking he is sealing his death-warrant. (19 A). And the Gorgias has already been quoted to the effect that Socrates

36 op. cit., 132.
37 Ibid., 132-133.
could have rivalled the soap-box orators had he wanted to do so. Callicles even remarks at one time: δοκεῖσθαι νεανίσκου θαλὼν τῶν λογίων ὑπὸ ἀληθῶς δημιουργός ἦν (482 C). No, Socrates admits he will not have a word of flattery to say. And he has none.

Shorey in handling the summary of the Gorgias, puts Socrates' words this way:

The aim of all my words is to do good, not merely to please, and I am unskilled in the subtleties of the rhetoric of the law courts. As I was saying to Polus, my trial will be that of a physician who is accused before a jury of boys of corrupting them and destroying them with drugs and knives and reducing them to the most painful straits. So I shall be accused of corrupting youths and reducing them to embarrassment by my questions. And it will avail me as little as the physician to plead that I do it for their good. I do not admit that this helplessness is shameful. As I have said, the really disgraceful resourcelessness is the inability to defend oneself against doing, not suffering, wrong. But if I shall be condemned to die from lack of the resources of the rhetoric that flatters, you will see me bearing my death easily.38

That surely is consistent with the Apology.

Another way in which the PA may be interpreted in agreement with the Gorgias is given by Taylor, who says that PA "might be said to afford an ironical illustration of the paradox of the Gorgias about the uses which may legitimately be made of rhetorical devices."39 Socrates defends himself by what amounts to an

38 op. cit., 152.
admission of guilt in the eyes of his judges. This is full accord with the principles of the Gorgias.

So these passages by no means contradict the Apology; they confirm it. Plato has given us a consistent picture of his master. We simply cannot conceive of our familiar Socrates -- ironic, deft at repartee, brave, utterly without human respect, confident in his powers and his mission from the god, master of words -- standing agape at the bar of justice, when called to give an account of his life and work to the men whom he had been trying to help for years.

These considerations seem to take away the probative force of Mr. Oldfather's conclusion, where he says we must choose either the Apology or the Gorgias and Theaetetus, but not both, and where he appeals from Plato drunk in the Apology to Plato sober in the other two. We prefer to take Plato at his word in all three dialogues. He need not be accused of drunkenness, in order that the Apology and the other dialogues be attributed to him. They can all be accepted as complementary.

The next argument concerns the Divine Sign, which forbade him to make any preparation to speak, so that in court he acted as any man must act who has made no preparation. Xenophon wrote that Socrates spoke to Hermogenes thus: "When I was proceeding, a little while ago, to study my address to the judges, the daemon
testifies disapprobation."\(^{40}\) Once more Oldfather's conclusion must be denied, and from the same author's own testimony. In the same work he says of Socrates, "he acquired great glory by proving the firmness of his mind, pleading his cause, above all men with regard to truth, ingenuousness, and justice."\(^{41}\) Soon after this he adds that Socrates rejoices in the fact that he will not suffer deterioration of his faculties, which are evidently still in the best of condition. (IV, C. 8. 8) And a little farther on, the soldier eulogizes the Master, and says this only of the philosopher: Socrates was

so wise, that he never erred in distinguishing better from worse, needing no counsel from others, but being sufficient in himself to discriminate between them; so able to explain and settle such questions by argument; and besides, so capable of discerning character, of confuting those who were in error, and of exhorting them to virtue and honour, he seemed to be such as the best and happiest man would be. \(^{42}\)

Such a description of Socrates' speech would not allow us to accept the idea that he was helpless and aghast.

So the theory about the Divine Sign cannot be accepted from Oldfather. Even though he did not prepare any set speech, Socrates may still have delivered an excellent improvisation. The whole of the Phaedrus may be taken as a refutation of Oldfather's stand.

In it Socrates is made out to be a surpassingly good orator.

\(^{40}\) Memorabilia, IV, c.8, 5; in Xenophon's Anabasis and Memorabilia, transl. by J. S. Watson, London, Geo. Bell, 1896, 506.
\(^{41}\) Socratic Discourses by Plato and Xenophon, op. cit., 149
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 151
Socrates: But, my dear Phaedrus, I shall make myself ridiculous if I...try to speak on the same subject in competition with a master of his art. Phaedrus: ...Stop fooling me... (236 D). The implication is clear: Socrates can take care of himself in any speaking contest.

In 238 C, Socrates: Well,...does it seem to you, asto me, that I am inspired? Phaedrus: Certainly, Socrates, you have an unusual fluency. In 257 C, Phaedrus, struck by the beauty of Socrates' discourse on the lover, (which discourse, incidentally, is almost as long as the whole first speech of the Apology), breaks into praise of his friend: "But all along I have been wondering at your discourse, you made it so much more beautiful than the first; so that I am afraid Lysias will make a poor showing, if he consents to compete with it." And Lysias was primarily a speech-writer for court actions; Plato here seems to be attributing forensic ability to his teacher. This dialogue cannot be accepted as at all historical, if PA is rejected. Plato is consistent.

Nor can the picture of the perfect philosopher drawn in the Republic be forgotten. Surely that near Superman would not be caught at a loss if he were ever on trial for his life. And even though he was not describing his master exactly when he wrote this description, he must have had his teacher in mind. Oldfather will have a difficult time trying to ferret out evidence from the corpus Platonicum that Socrates was not as Plato has depicted him everywhere in the Dialogues.
The next point is against Zeller, who, even though he rejects XA as spurious and the testimony of Hermogenes in the Memorabilia as worthless, yet holds that any elaborate defence would have been out of the character of Socrates; therefore no speech like PA was given. This opinion has already been refuted in the answer to the objections drawn from the Gorgias and Theaetetus.

The motive of XA and the Memorabilia is said to be "to explain why Socrates did not make a better defence of himself in court." That motive is not evident in either of the works mentioned. They are rather written to show why Socrates adopted the lofty plane he did take, and did not cater to his jurors' low tastes. Xenophon says in his Apology (1) that others have written about Socrates' speech, "but they have not shown clearly that he had now come to the conclusion that death for him was more to be desired than life, and hence his lofty utterance (μεγαλοφωνία) appears rather ill-considered."43 This motive is quite in accord with the Gorgias and Theaetetus. There is no case for the opposition in such facts.

The last argument: Socrates was a dialectician, not an orator, and before an unsympathetic jury. He was not capable of giving ex tempore such a speech as PA, which Oldfather calls "perhaps the greatest glory of human eloquence,"44 when he had never in

43 Todd's translation, op. cit., 489.
44 op. cit., 207.
his life delivered a formal speech at all. His method of question-and-answer with one or a few persons, did not prepare him for the courtroom finesse we find in PA.

Against this last argument we say: Diogenes Laertius, whom latter on Oldfather uses as a supporter of his beliefs (while admitting that the ancient biographer is usually unreliable -- as all agree) says according to Idomeneus Socrates was ἐν τοῖς ἰητορικοῖς στίνος. The Phaedrus has already been quoted. And surely the dialectical skill of the wily old fellow stood him in good stead when he was haled into court. It may not have made an orator out of him, but it must have helped. And especially for extempore speaking. Coupled with the knowledge of rhetoric and the speech-making ability which he exhibits in Phaedrus, this dialectic skill is just what makes us ready to accept the finely-reasoned Apology as genuine. Xenophon represents him as having tried to think out a defence, before the Divine Sign stopped him; he must have had at least a general idea of what to say. But, as Xenophon makes him say in XA (3), his whole life was his preparation.

There is no reason why he would not have included his natural talent in that last statement. To be sure, he referred primarily to the moral goodness of his life; he could not, however, have disregarded his own powers of mind and body, or the help to be

45 op. cit., 151.
expected from the Sign. Besides, we need not suppose that his effort was so poor. If the Apology is true in substance, could we not expect such an able and sincere man to dress it up a bit, under the stress of excitement and enthusiasm? After all, personal conviction and love of truth are the great helps to effective speech, as they are to good sermons. And Socrates had every reason for being fervent and sincere in this one time of this life when he went before his fellow-citizens to give an account of himself. Plato did not have to do too much revising.

Libanius is quoted in support of Oldfather's contention, the same Libanius whose Apology of Socrates is termed a "preposterous concoction" in an earlier paragraph of his article. This Libanius lived a matter of some hundreds of years after the actual trial. And the comparison with the failure of Our Lord, Savanarola and John Hus, when these men were put on trial, is too weak to be attacked. Oldfather has gone too far afield here.

Next he gives his idea of what actually happened at the trial, and a true travesty it is. He does not say he is sure of the description, but "for purposes of stylistic convenience, I shall express (it) as statements of fact...." Socrates said something; the jury laughed and became disorderly; Socrates claimed to be innocent and wiser than they; they rioted; Socrates stood there gaping; his friends tried to speak but could do nothing, for they "were trying to speak before an irritated and jeering panel

46 op. cit., 207.
that were now quite out of hand."\(^{47}\) The jury, in this mood, condemned him.

The *Theaetetus* is cited in support of this description, but wrongly, it seems. Most of the relevant passages have been quoted, but a little repetition is in order here. In 174 C, Socrates tells his auditor, while he is speaking about the philosophical man, and particularly about Thales,

such a man, both in private, when he meets with individuals, and in public, as I said in the beginning, when he is obliged to speak in court or elsewhere about the things at his feet and before his eyes, is a laughing-stock.... For when it comes to abusing people he has no personal abuse to offer against anyone.

Now first of all, this passage cannot be meant to refer to Socrates, who by Oldfather's own assumption is quite a capable fellow in private discourses. He is speaking of the dreamy Thales here. Secondly, the reason for the philosopher's embarrassment in court is simply his inability to abuse his opponents in the usual style of the court orators. Oldfather finds no proof here.

In 175 D, something has happened. Oldfather says Socrates is represented in this apparently obscure passage as $\alpha_\delta\rho\beta_\delta\rho_\gamma_\varepsilon\nu$. Now Fowler in the Loeb edition translates the passage with the $\beta_\lambda_\rho\beta_\delta\rho_\gamma_\varepsilon\nu$ referring not to Socrates, but to the small-minded pettifogger who looks good in court, but is struck dumb when it comes to philosophical matters. Only by a mental flashback can

\(^{47}\) ibid., 209.
we attribute this participle to the master himself; surely Plato does not do so. Perhaps Oldfather wishes to attribute all the description of the stage-fright of the lawyer in philosophy, to Socrates in court; if so he is stretching the point more than the context will bear.

Diogenes Laertius is called on to confirm this account of the trial. That Mr. Oldfather is grasping at straws is simply too evident from his own line of argument. He admits that this Diogenes is almost useless as a source, even calling his work, "such a dreadful grabbag as the farrago of Diogenes...." But then he goes on to remark, "Diogenes might be excused, at least this once, for omitting something of great importance (Socrates' Apology), on the sufficient ground that there really had never been anything of the sort to include."48 Such an "argument" hardly deserves the name.

His account of the trial does not conveniently coincide with the facts. If the jury did become such a riotous mob, why did they condemn Socrates by only a 231 to 220 vote? "The only surprising thing about the verdict of 'Guilty' was the smallness of the majority in favor of it."49 If Oldfather is right, it is not merely surprising; it is absolutely incredible. Forty-five percent of them would not have been on his side at the end of his first speech. Another bit of evidence that the people were rather

49 Osborn, *op. cit.*, 189.
well-disposed to the old fellow, is that Ameipsias' Konnos, which treated him more respectfully than the Clouds, was given second prize over Aristophanes' comedy. And his urging the use of the word μεγαλεγορία by Xenophon to describe Socrates' manner, together with his opinion that the whole PA is cast in a tone of aloof and justifiably insolent contempt, does not prove his point. μεγαλεγορία may mean "vaunting" and it may mean "lofty speech" according to the new Liddell and Scott (which, it is true, evinces XA as an example of the former meaning). Perhaps Xenophon did not mean that Socrates was overbearing, but only "lofty"; Plato seems to have taken this stand. Socrates was a bit defiant in the cause of truth; he was not contemptuous. Burnet and Hackforth seem to be close to the truth in saying that Socrates' claim to state support is the μεγαλεγορία which puzzled Xenophon, along with his refusal to appeal for pity on the conventional lines.

So the question of the meaning of the word is at least open. Fowler even writes: "The high moral character and genuine religious faith of Socrates are made abundantly clear throughout this discourse. It would seem almost incredible that the Athenian court voted for his condemnation, if we did not know the fact."50 So Mr. Oldfather's idea that Socrates' contempt caused his condemnation appears to be untenable, especially when we remember that it is based on XA, which may be spurious. The professional soldier may

50 Euthyphro, etc., op. cit., 66.
have taken for contempt what was really fidelity to truth and principle.

To conclude his attack, Oldfather says that either the PA is right or the Gorgias and Theaetetus are -- not both. Both the disjunction and the conclusion may be denied. Both members of the disjunction are right; all three dialogues are right; all are consistent; all are true. "On the vexed and thorny question how far the dialogue is historical, and how far imaginative composition, we had best not say too much. The speech which Plato represents is one he heard, for he was present at the trial...."51 Mr. Oldfather, it seems, has said too much. He thinks he has found what he wanted to find; he has subjective certitude.

That his ideas are not based entirely on objective evidence, his own words show:

As for myself, I have never believed that the Apologies were thoroughly realistic anyway, for they required more of my historical imagination than it could possibly bear. ... The loss of a pretty but incredible illusion is more than compensated for by the recovered peace of a scholarly conscience.52

He may be at peace with his scholarly conscience, but the consciences, scholarly and otherwise, of many others cannot be in a similar state if his article goes unchallenged.

Our conclusion is that of Lane Cooper in his recent book.

51 op. cit., 44.
52 op. cit., 210.
Mr. Oldfather's position is untenable; Socrates is vindicated as the true speaker of the Apology of Plato.

The main march of the Apology, and its division into one main section and two smaller ones, we may take to be historical. Some omission of redundant words and the like we may assume. The perfect verbal transitions and smooth advance from item to item, beneath the surface of apparent casual naturalness, all that can be done to turn nature into art -- somewhat more than a speaker does in revising his own composition -- we may probably attribute to Plato.53

53 Cooper, op. cit., 44.
CONCLUSION

We have reached our conclusion already, settling our problem to our satisfaction, so that this need be no more than a summing-up of the whole question. Mr. Oldfather's line of arguments does not stand up under examination, nor does his support from the article of Dr. Comparz amount to a great deal. Every one of his main proofs against this thesis has been refuted. A moderate interpretation of the Apology and all of Plato's works regarding their historicity, has been proposed. In this interpretation many scholars concur, and their opinions have been given all through this paper.

The Taylor-Burnet theory has been used all through this thesis, none as a guiding norm than as an explicit support of our arguments against Mr. Oldfather. Although the treatment of their theory seems to be confined to the one chapter, in reality their viewpoint and many of their arguments have permeated the whole thesis. They may not be moderates (although Mr. Burnet in particular seems to be very open-minded), but in combatting such an extreme view as that of Oldfather, the other extreme is very useful as a corrective norm.
Our proofs have been drawn primarily from the sources which Mr. Oldfather cites in support of his theory. Dr. Gomperz and he rely heavily on the Gorgias and Theaetetus; we have seen that those very dialogues are strong supports for anyone desirous to refute them. They go to the PA to draw from it evidence showing that Socrates could not have made such a speech; we have seen evidence from it which goes far toward proving that he must have made just such a speech -- surely not the exact one which Plato has given to us, but at least one containing the main lines of defence, and certainly the spirit of the one which we have. It is quite Socratic; it is quite consistent with what we know of Socrates in the other dialogues.

We have seen the arguments from Xenophon's works in favor of Mr. Oldfather; we have seen refutations of these arguments, drawn from those same works and from scholars who do not accept them as reliable. We have seen Oldfather claiming that Socrates was no speaker; we have seen the Phaedrus, which alone is a strong contradiction of his entire position. We have looked into the matter of the Socratic μεταλλακτική, and found that it presented no insurmountable difficulty. And above all, we have examined the "tone" of PA, and found that, far from proving it alien to Socrates in court, it is a very conclusive point of evidence in favor of its being close to his actual words.

No, the Apology fits in with the rest of Plato's works as the logical outcome of the life and habits of the Master of Irony.
Plato has taken care to make Socrates meet only people whom he did meet or could meet there in Athens. He has represented him as the man whom the Athenians really did know.

The picture seems consistent and not inherently improbable; it shows a perfectly understandable sort of man, with features not to be confused with those of Plato himself, and too concrete and distinctive to be a mere peg on which to hang opinions that Plato wishes to recommend. ¹

No, we need not believe that the grizzled old man made a show of himself when he finally was put up in front of the people whom he had been trying to help for so long. We need not believe that the man whom one of the world's greatest men calls the greatest man he ever knew, was put to shame while he was bearing witness to his own ideals and his whole life. We do not believe in holding to fanciful impossibilities merely because they are pleasing to our esthetic sense; but when a beautiful human story is also tenable after critical investigation, then we must not sacrifice the beautiful thing just because its beauty makes it unusual. The Apology of Socrates is unusual; it is unusually beautiful. But instead of rejecting it for that reason, let us thank God for it -- for creating such a man. Then we can have both Mr. Oldfather's peace of conscience and our own enjoyment of that wonderful speech -- not as just a rhetorical effort on Plato's part, but as the outpouring of one of the greatest hearts which has ever striven and suffered for the good of others.

¹ Rogers, op. cit., 81.
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The thesis submitted by David Joseph Bowman has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classics.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies that fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Dec. 1, 1946

Signature of Adviser