

HERACLES AT THE Y*

Abstract: The article seeks to show that, contrary to the standard view, the ‘Choice of Heracles’ preserved at Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21–33 is not a summary or paraphrase, but is a very close approximation to the actual wording of Prodicus’ *epideixis*. The language and style are shown to be uncharacteristic of Xenophon, and the fact that Prodicus’ original was known to exist in both written and orally performed versions serves to explain why the piece is framed by language that disclaims strict accuracy in reproducing it. It is further shown that the way in which near-synonyms are used in the piece is not necessarily inconsistent with other evidence for Prodicus’ practice: it is rather the personified character Vice whose usage conflicts with that of Prodicus himself and with that of the personification of Virtue. Finally, it is proposed that the ‘Choice of Heracles’ represented the contents, not of Prodicus’ advanced teaching, but of the popular, cut-rate lecture intended for a general audience.

PRODICUS’ inspiring account of the ‘Choice of Heracles’ has been more influential than many works that we would today regard as more deserving of such distinction. The influence began to be felt already in antiquity – it is, after all, only because the story is recounted by ‘Socrates’ in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (2.1.21–33) that it survives today – and has continued until modern times. Among the ancient authors who imitated or adapted Prodicus’ fable are Philo, Ovid, Lucian, Silius Italicus, Philostratus, Dio, Clement of Alexandria and Basil.¹ More recently, the ‘Choice of Heracles’ has been the subject of, *inter alia*, paintings by Lucas Cranach, Rubens, Poussin and Delacroix, an engraving by Dürer, a masque by Ben Jonson, an oratorio by Handel, a cantata by Bach, a symphonic poem by Saint-Saëns and an opera libretto by Metastasio (set by Hasse, Paisiello and others).² The high esteem in which the piece has been held by creative artists, however, has not been shared by modern scholars. Typical is the rather dismissive verdict of Charles Kahn: ‘The rhetoric is picturesque, the morality is predictable, but the allegory became extremely influential.’³ It is, further, generally assumed that what Xenophon presents is merely a summary or paraphrase of Prodicus’ original (which, therefore, may be presumed to have been of higher literary quality and greater intellectual merit).⁴ The purpose of the present

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¹ See J. Alpers, *Hercules in bivio* (diss. Göttingen 1912); M.C. Waites, ‘Some features of the allegorical debate in Greek literature’, *HSCP* 23 (1912) 1–46, esp. 12–19; G.K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme. The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (Oxford 1972) 101–3, 162; D. Levine Gera, ‘Lucian’s choice: *Somnium* 6–16’, in D. Innes, H. Hine and C. Pelling (eds), *Ethics and Rhetoric* (Oxford 1995) 237–50. Further bibliography in W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* 1.3 (Munich 1940) 41 n.9 (‘eines der einflußreichsten Stücke der Weltliteratur’). For possible representations in the visual arts of antiquity, see C. Picard, ‘Représentations antiques de l’Apologue dit de Prodicos’, *CRAI* (1951) 310–22; *idem*, ‘Nouvelles remarques sur l’Apologue dit de Prodicos: Héraclès entre le Vice et la Vertu’, *RA* 42 (1953) 10–41.

² E. Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst* (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg 18, Leipzig and Berlin 1930); M. Reiterer, *Die Herkulesentscheidung von Prodikos und ihre früh-humanistische Rezeption in der ‘Voluptatis cum Virtute disceptatio’ des Benedictus Chelidonius* (diss.

Vienna 1957) (*non vidi*); W. Harms, *Homo viator in bivio. Studien zur Bildlichkeit des Weges* (Munich 1970); J.D. Reid and C. Rohmann, *Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300–1990s* 1 (Oxford 1993) 527–30; Galinsky (n.1) 198–9, 213–18.

³ C. Kahn, ‘Prodicus’, in E. Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 7 (London and New York 1998) 731–2.

⁴ See, for example, F. Blass, *Die attische Beredsamkeit* 1 (2nd edn, Leipzig 1887) 30–1 (‘Paraphrase’, 30); Alpers (n.1) 16–22; H. Mayer, *Prodikos von Keos und die Anfänge der Synonymik bei den Griechen* (diss. Paderborn 1913) 8–12 (‘steht fest, daß der Stil nicht prodikeisch ist’, 12); O. Gigon, *Kommentar zum zweiten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien* (Basel 1956) 60–3; M. Untersteiner, *Sofisti. Testimonianze e frammenti* 2 (2nd edn, Florence 1961) 179 (‘sebbene lo stile non sia quello di Prodicos ..., tuttavia, si può ben credere che Senofonte riproduca la sostanza del pensiero di Prodicos’); W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 3 (Cambridge 1969) 277 (‘We possess at least the content, if not the actual words, of an *epideixis* of Prodicus’); Z.P. Ambrose, ‘Socrates and Prodicus in the *Clouds*’, in J.P. Anton and A. Preus (eds), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* 2 (Albany, NY

paper is to argue that, on the contrary, Xenophon seems to have preserved a very close approximation of the actual wording of Prodicus' display-piece. Consequently, this passage should be taken much more seriously than it has been in the past as evidence for the thought and methods of the Cean sophist.⁵

The arguments that have led scholars to the conviction that Xenophon's wording cannot be taken to reflect that of Prodicus fall generally under the following heads, which we will consider in order:

- I. Xenophon explicitly introduces the account as a feeble imitation of Prodicus' original.
- II. The style of the passage does not differ from that of the rest of the *Memorabilia* or of Xenophon's works generally.
- III. The way in which synonyms are treated in the passage differs from the way in which they are treated elsewhere in the fragments of Prodicus. (This will be subdivided into specific and general objections: IIIa and IIIb.)

I

On the surface, the first argument appears to be both self-evident and conclusive. Xenophon's 'Socrates' introduces the account as follows (21): καὶ Πρόδικος δὲ ὁ σοφὸς ... ὡσαύτως περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀποφαίνεται, ὧδέ πως λέγων, ὅσα ἐγὼ μέμνημαι. And, with characteristic self-effacement, 'Socrates' concludes by saying (34), οὕτω πως διώκει Πρόδικος τὴν ὑπ' Ἀρετῆς Ἡρακλέους παιδευσιν· ἐκόσμησε μέντοι τὰς γνώμας ἔτι μεγαλειότεροις ῥήμασιν ἢ ἐγὼ νῦν.⁶ The wording (ὧδέ πως and οὕτω πως), the reference to reliance on memory and the explicit statement that the original was embellished with even more resplendent expressions seem decisive. Let us, however, consider first the expressions ὧδέ πως and οὕτω πως, which in and of themselves give the impression of introducing and concluding a mere paraphrase. It is true that, for example, Thucydides regularly distinguishes between a verbatim transcript and a paraphrase by varying the introductory and concluding verbal formulae. Thus, at 5.77 and 5.79 Thucydides preserves the actual text⁷ of two documents, a Spartan decree and a treaty between Sparta and

1983) 130 ('only a summary of what Prodicus actually wrote'); D.A. Russell (ed.), *An Anthology of Greek Prose* (Oxford 1991) 93 (Xen. 'doubtless re-works Prodicus' treatment extensively'); R.D. McKirahan, Jr, *Philosophy before Socrates. An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (Indianapolis 1994) 365 ('summarized by Xenophon'). P. Demont, 'Die *Epideixis* über die *Techne* im V. und IV. Jh.', in W. Kullmann and J. Althoff (eds), *Vermittlung und Tradierung von Wissen in der griechischen Kultur* (Tübingen 1993) 181-209, goes so far as to say (197), 'spricht sein [sc. Xenophons] Prodikos bekanntlich [!] mit Xenophons Worten über Xenophons Themen'.

⁵ Mayer (n.4) 12 excludes consideration of this passage from his treatment of 'Die Synonymik des Prodikos'. Similarly, C.J. Classen ignores the evidence of Xenophon in his otherwise excellent treatment of the linguistic studies of Prodicus: 'The study of language amongst Socrates' contemporaries', in C.J. Classen (ed.), *Sophistik* (Darmstadt 1976) 215-47, at 230-8 (an article

that originally appeared in *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 2 (1959) 33-49). J. de Romilly, 'Les manies de Prodicos et la rigueur de la langue grecque', *MusHelv* 43 (1986) 1-18, likewise relies on the evidence of Plato for Prodicus' 'obsession' with distinguishing near-synonyms, without mentioning Xenophon. According to M.E. Reesor, 'The Stoic ἴδιον and Prodicus' near-synonyms', *AJP* 104 (1983) 124-33, at 130, 'Our evidence for Prodicus' theory of language is found in Plato.'

⁶ Compare the Platonic 'Socrates', concluding the 'Defence of Protagoras' at *Theaet.* 168c: εἰ δ' αὐτὸς [sc. Protagoras] ἔζη, μεγαλειότερον ἂν τοῖς αὐτοῦ ἐβοήθησεν (the only occurrence of *μεγαλειος* in Plato).

⁷ That these are verbatim transcripts is clear from the fact that the texts are recorded in the Laconian dialect. For a discussion of some of the issues raised by these texts, see S. Colvin, *Dialect in Aristophanes and the Politics of Language in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford 1999) 65-7.

Argos, each of which he introduces with a form of ὄδε and concludes with a form of οὔτος.⁸ By contrast, he uses forms of τοιόσδε to introduce the provisions of the truce between Athens and Sparta in 425 BC (4.16.1), which he gives in indirect discourse, as well as the text of Nicias' desperate letter from Sicily to the Athenians (7.11-15), which seems to have undergone the same kind of creative treatment at Thucydides' hands as the speeches, also regularly introduced by forms of τοιόσδε.⁹

It hardly needs to be said, however, that Xenophon is not Thucydides.¹⁰ In the *Hellenica*, which implicitly represents itself as a continuation of Thucydides' narrative, Xenophon follows no discernible pattern in his use of introductory and concluding formulae when reporting speeches, whether they are given in direct discourse, indirect discourse or a combination of the two.¹¹ It is not, for example, apparent why Xenophon introduces the speech of Callicratidas to the Spartans with τοιάδε (1.6.4; cf. 3.5.7, 4.8.4, 5.2.33, 6.1.3) and his speech to an assembly of Milesians with τάδε (1.6.8; cf. 1.1.23, 1.7.16, 5.2.26, 5.2.30) or why the speech of Callias the torch-bearer is said to have begun ὡδέ πως (6.3.3; cf. 6.5.35, 7.3.7) whereas the speech of Autocles, which immediately follows it, is introduced with just ὡδε (6.3.7; cf. 2.3.24, 5.1.30). Xenophon exhibits the same indifference in his other works. In the *Anabasis* (1.7.9), for example, he introduces a question by Clearchus with ὡδέ πως and Cyrus' answer to that question with ἔφη. And in the *Cyropaedia*, all the speeches of which are equally fictitious, surely no distinction can be drawn between those speeches introduced by ὡδέ πως (2.2.15, 3.3.7) or οὐτωςί πως (2.2.11) and the rest.

In fact, instances can be found, both in Xenophon and in the Platonic corpus, in which locutions like this are used to introduce quotations for which we have independent evidence. While it is true that, in every case, there are differences between the two versions of the text, those differences are of only a minor nature.¹² At *Memorabilia* 2.6.11 'Socrates' refers to the lines that the Sirens sing in Homer, ὧν ἔστιν ἀρχὴ τοιάδε τις· δεῦρ' ἄγε δῆ, πολύαιν' Ὀδυσσεῦ, μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν. This is a direct quotation of *Odyssey* 12.184, except that the manuscripts of

⁸ For similar occurrences, see 4.118-19, 5.18-19, 5.23-4, 5.47 (a treaty, fragments of which survive on stone; see *IG* 1² 86), 8.18, 8.37 and 8.58. Thucydides also quotes the text of three letters (1.128.7, 1.129.3 and 1.137.4) in the course of his excursus on Pausanias and Themistocles, introducing the first two with τάδε. While there are good grounds for doubting the authenticity of these letters to and from the Great King, there is no reason to question Thucydides' belief in their genuineness; see H.D. Westlake, 'Thucydides on Pausanias and Themistocles – a written source?', *CQ* 27 (1977) 95-110, esp. 102-3.

⁹ See Dover (*HCT* 4.385): 'although I see no adequate reason to doubt that Nicias really did write a letter, he certainly did not write what is presented to us here in characteristic Thucydidean idiom'. Similarly H.D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge 1968) 190: 'Its language and style are thoroughly Thucydidean, as is much of its reasoning.' In his famous programmatic statement at 1.22 Thucydides indicates that the speeches that he records cannot be counted on to preserve τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτῆν τῶν λεχθέντων. The pressing need for 'eine Geschichte des Citats', first identified over 100 years ago by E. Norden (*Die antike Kunstprosa* 1 (Leipzig 1898) 90 n.1), is still felt today, as V. Bers, *Speech in Speech. Studies in Incorporated Oratio Recta in Attic Drama and Oratory* (Lanham, MD et alibi 1997) 220 n.3, points out.

¹⁰ Nor is Herodotus, who introduces direct speeches indifferently with τοιάδε (e.g. 1.8.2, 1.60.4, 2.173.2), τάδε (e.g. 1.11.2, 1.30.2, 1.41.1) and ὡδε (1.115.2) and concludes them indifferently with ταῦτα (e.g. 1.33, 1.37.1, 1.41.1), τοιαῦτα (e.g. 1.9.1) and ταῦτά κη (1.98.1, 5.40.2); cf. in particular 6.69.1 ὁ μὲν δὴ τοιαῦτα ἔλεγε, ἡ δὲ ἀμείβετο τοῖσδε and 3.21.1-2 ἔλεγον τάδε ... λέγει πρὸς αὐτοὺς τοιάδε. Unfortunately, Bers's perceptive *Speech in Speech* (n.9) does not concern itself with historical or philosophical texts.

¹¹ See Table 2 (p. 189) in J. Buckler, 'Xenophon's speeches and the Theban hegemony', *Athenaeum* 60 (1982) 180-204. As Buckler notes (188), in some instances the introductory and concluding formulae for the same speech vary between forms like τοιάδε, τοιαῦτα and ὡδέ πως on the one hand and ταῦτα and τάδε on the other. Buckler's detailed and carefully argued paper is concerned only with the speeches in *Hell.* 6.3-7.5, but his conclusion (204), that 'Xenophon is subjective and inconsistent in his attitude towards speeches in this portion of the *Hellenika*', is surely valid for the *Hell.* as a whole.

¹² Similarly, in Demosthenes' (18.127) mocking quotation from Aeschines' peroration (3.260), τὰ τοιαῦτα is used in connection with something very close to the *ipsisima verba*.

Homer are nearly unanimous in beginning the line with δεῦρ' ἄγ' ἰών. In Plato's *Meno*, at 95e, 'Socrates' quotes five lines that are preserved among the verses attributed to Theognis (434-8 West).¹³ He cites them in an order different from that in which they are transmitted by the direct tradition,¹⁴ and he does not give them in a continuous quotation, but interrupts with comments of his own, introducing the (verbatim) quotation of line 434 with λέγει πως ὅτι. At *Lysis* 214a 'Socrates', speaking of 'the poets', says λέγουσι δέ πως τὰῦτα, ὡς ἐγώμμαι, ὡδί· αἰεὶ τοὶ τὸν ὁμοῖον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὁμοῖον. The quoted hexameter is nearly identical with *Odyssey* 17.218, the manuscripts of which give the line as beginning with ὡς αἰεὶ τόν.¹⁵ Jules Labarbe,¹⁶ noting that there is no mention of Homer in the Platonic context, argues that Plato is not quoting from the *Odyssey*, but from an Odyssean line that had by the fourth century taken on the status of a proverb. If Labarbe is correct, his argument suggests that the verse, so hesitantly introduced, is not merely a close approximation to the original but is in fact quoted verbatim. Again, at *Ion* 538c 'Socrates' introduces the first of four Homeric quotations (increasing in length from two to eight lines) with λέγει πως οὕτως. The quotation is, indeed, not exact, consisting as it does of *Iliad* 11.639 and the start of 640 plus the end of 630 (with παρά from 631 in place of ἐπί). But there is nothing that is not Homeric, indeed, nothing that does not derive from this one ten-line passage.¹⁷ The longer quotations that follow, as well as the earlier six-line passage from the *Iliad* that Ion quotes (537a-b), agree with the text of Homer as transmitted in the direct tradition, with variants of the sort that normally differentiate one Homeric manuscript from another. But there is nothing in the Platonic context that would indicate that Plato is suggesting a significant distinction between the one quotation introduced by λέγει πως οὕτως and the others, which are prefaced with λέγει or φησί. Rather, the misquotation is merely accidental, and with the introductory formula Plato is representing 'Socrates' as modestly disclaiming the expertise of the professional rhapsode with whom he is conversing, a disclaimer that does not need to be made more than once.¹⁸

Perhaps the most interesting example, however, is not a quotation from poetry but the text of the indictment which 'Socrates' quotes at *Apology* 24b, introducing the quotation with ἔχει δέ πως ὧδε. According to John Burnet, 'Socrates does not profess to give the exact words.'¹⁹ But with one exception he does give the exact words, only in indirect discourse and in a different order. The official text of the indictment is preserved in (the manuscripts of) Diogenes Laertius, who quotes it from Favorinus.²⁰ It contains twelve mobiles²¹ (or thirteen if one counts the repeated ἀδικεῖ), which are underlined here:

¹³ Immediately before this, at 95d, 'Socrates' quotes an earlier passage of four lines from Theognis, the first two of which (35-6 West) are also quoted by the Xenophonic 'Socrates' at *Mem.* 1.2.20 and again at *Symp.* 2.4. This would seem to indicate a predilection on the part of the historic Socrates; for a similar indication concerning a passage from Hesiod, see below, n.48.

¹⁴ The order in which they are quoted (435, 434, 436-8, that is, with two consecutive 'pentameters') is found also on an ostrakon, *P.Berol.* 12310 (P. Viereck, 'Drei Ostraka des Berliner Museums', in *Raccolta di scritti in onore di Giacomo Lumbroso* (Milan 1925) 253-5), dating to the second half of the third century BC. Presumably the ostrakon derives from a text of Plato, rather than of Theognis; so B.A. van Groningen (ed.), *Theognis. Le premier livre* (Amsterdam 1966) 175.

¹⁵ Additionally, a minority of the Homeric manuscripts preserve a variant ἐς τόν (for the Attic ὡς τόν), which is to be preferred: J. Russo in Russo, M. Fernández-Galiano and A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* 3 (Oxford 1992) 28.

¹⁶ *L'Homère de Platon* (Liège 1949) 207-10.

¹⁷ For the details, and a valuable discussion, see Labarbe (n.16) 101-8.

¹⁸ As Labarbe (n.16) 108 notes, Ion does not correct his interlocutor's lapse.

¹⁹ J. Burnet (ed.), *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito* (Oxford 1924) *ad loc.* Further in the same note Burnet says that 'the formulation of the charge put into the mouth of Socrates in this passage differs considerably' from the official version.

²⁰ That the version given at Diog. Laert. 2.40 preserves the authentic wording of the indictment is well argued by E. De Strycker and S.R. Slings (eds), *Plato's Apology of Socrates (Mnemosyne Suppl. 137, Leiden 1994)* 84-5.

²¹ For this term, which denotes essentially a lexeme that is neither prepositive nor postpositive, but can occur anywhere in a sentence, see K.J. Dover, *Greek Word Order* (2nd edn, Cambridge 1968) 12-14.

ἀδικεῖ Σωκράτης, οὓς μὲν ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζων, ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια εἰσηγούμενος· ἀδικεῖ δὲ καὶ τοὺς νέους διαφθείρων.

Apart from εἰσηγούμενος and the repeated ἀδικεῖ, Plato's text preserves the same mobiles in the same form, allowing for the adjustments necessary to accommodate indirect discourse:

Σωκράτη φησὶν ἀδικεῖν τοὺς τε νέους διαφθείροντα καὶ θεοὺς οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει οὐ νομίζοντα, ἕτερα δὲ δαιμόνια καινά.

The indictment is also quoted by Xenophon, once in the *Apology* (10) and once in the *Memorabilia* (1.1.1). In the latter instance it preserves *exactly the same words in exactly the same order* as the text of Diogenes Laertius, except that it gives εἰσφέρων for εἰσηγούμενος (which was omitted in the Platonic version). This time, however, it is not in the mouth of 'Socrates' but in that of the author himself, who introduces the quotation with ἡ μὲν γὰρ γραφή κατ' αὐτοῦ τοιάδε τις ἦν.

It would appear, then, that when Xenophon or Plato introduces a quotation with some such expression as ὡδέ πως or τοιάδε τις we are not required to assume that the quotation is merely a paraphrase or a summary. In fact, if we were fortunate enough to have a page from the works of Thales or Anaximander or Pythagoras quoted at the level of accuracy of the quotations referred to in the previous two paragraphs, we would be in a position to rewrite the early history of philosophy. We have more than a page of Prodicus introduced in this way by Xenophon's 'Socrates'. Of course, 'Socrates' is here unusually insistent upon his uncertainty in quoting, adding to his introduction ὅσα ἐγὼ μέμνημαι and concluding with the claim that Prodicus ἐκόσμησε ... τὰς γνώμας ἔτι μεγαλειότεροις ῥήμασιν ἢ ἐγὼ νῦν. But this quotation is many times longer than those referred to in the previous paragraphs, being nearly one thousand words in length in contrast to the 21 words that comprise the text of the indictment of Socrates, the next longest such quotation. In addition, the nature of the text quoted from Prodicus is such that it sets it apart from the poetic and documentary texts that we have been referring to. This is a matter that has not, I think, been sufficiently appreciated. Prodicus' narrative of the 'Choice of Heracles' is, indeed, a written text – 'Socrates' cites it as appearing ἐν τῷ συγγράμματι τῷ περὶ Ἡρακλέους²² – but it is also an *epideixis*, a display-piece that, as 'Socrates' says, using the present tense, Prodicus performs for numerous audiences: ὅπερ δὴ καὶ πλείστοις ἐπιδείκνυται. It is not, therefore, comparable to the public speeches that Thucydides (and Xenophon, in the *Hellenica*), or his source, had to reconstruct on the basis of a single oral presentation. But neither is it comparable to the Homeric and other written poetic texts whose fixed metrical form facilitated memorization.

When a prose author cites a poet, whether quoting from memory or after consulting a written text, there is something like an objective guarantee that the quotation is accurate, namely the form of the verse. Poetic quotations are familiar features in the work of fifth- and fourth-century writers of prose, being found, for example, in Herodotus, Plato, Xenophon and even Thucydides.²³ But in the case of a quotation from a prose text we cannot even know whether the

²² *Mem.* 2.1.21. This is presumably the same written work referred to by Plato, *Symp.* 177b: εἰ δὲ βούλει αὐτὸ σκέψασθαι τοὺς χρηστοὺς σοφιστάς, Ἡρακλέους μὲν καὶ ἄλλων ἐπαίνους καταλογάδην συγγράφειν, ὥσπερ ὁ βέλτιστος Πρόδικος. According to schol. *Ar. Nub.* 361 (= 84 B 1 DK) the work was entitled *Horae*: φέρεται δὲ καὶ Προδίκου βιβλίον ἐπιγραφόμενον ὦραι, ἐν ᾧ πεποίηκε τὸν Ἡρακλέα τῇ Ἀρετῇ καὶ τῇ Κακίᾳ συντυγχάνοντα ...

²³ 3.104.4-5. For Plato, see the convenient 'Index of Quotations' in L. Brandwood, *A Word Index to Plato* (Leeds 1976) 991-1003. In the orators, apparently, poetic quotations do not occur until after the middle of the fourth century, when Aeschines sets the fashion: Aeschin. 1.128-9, 144-50, 151-2, 2.144, 158, 3.135; Dem. 19.243, 245, 247, 255; Lycurg. *Leocr.* 92, 100, 103, 107, 109, 132.

author is attempting to quote verbatim unless we have independent evidence for the original. Nor am I aware of any instance before Aristotle where we have such independent evidence.²⁴ Indeed, in some cases it is a matter of heated controversy as to whether we are even dealing with citation of an actual original, as opposed to outright invention or parody. While Plato's (verbatim?) seventeen-word citation of Protagoras' famous man-the-measure statement (*Theaet.* 152a) can be confidently ascribed to a genuine work of Protagoras, scholars continue to debate the genuineness of, e.g., Protagoras' myth, the 'Defence of Protagoras' and the speech of Lysias.²⁵ The reason there is debate in the first place is the absence of any independent evidence for the existence of such works by Lysias and Protagoras. In the case of Prodicus, however, we know that he wrote a 'Choice of Heracles'; the only question is that of how close Xenophon's version is to the original. In the absence of a demonstrable parallel, either in the form of an extended verbatim quotation or a paraphrase, we do not even know whether we are entitled to expect the one or the other.

Further, the fact that what Xenophon is quoting is an *epideixis* that existed both in written and orally performed versions raises additional questions that we are not in a position to answer. What, for example, was the relationship between Prodicus' written text and the *epideixis* that he performed for numerous audiences?²⁶ What is the basis of Xenophon's familiarity with the story? Was he, for example, a witness to the conversation between Socrates and Aristippus in which Socrates repeated Prodicus' story? Or was Xenophon directly acquainted with Prodicus' account in its written form? Or did Xenophon himself hear Prodicus perform it?²⁷ If so, did he hear it only once or on several occasions? And how did *Socrates* become acquainted with the story that he is represented as repeating to Aristippus? Did he hear one or more of Prodicus' performances?²⁸ Or did he read the story?²⁹ It is disconcerting to be forced to acknowledge that we cannot even come close to answering any of these questions. But at least a recognition of the multiform character of Prodicus' story allows us to raise the possibility that this very character may have made necessary the kind of verbiage that Xenophon uses to introduce it. That is, even

²⁴ Isocrates' citations from his own work in his *Antidosis* are clearly a special case and are not relevant to our concerns here.

²⁵ *Prot.* 320c-22d, *Theaet.* 166a-68c, *Phdr.* 230e-34c. For a recent attempt to argue that the myth in *Prot.* is genuinely Protagorean, see K.A. Morgan, *Myth and Philosophy from the Presocratics to Plato* (Cambridge 2000) 132-54, and note the suggestive confirmatory argument by R.L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and his contemporaries', *JHS* 116 (1996) 86-7.

²⁶ For an excellent account of the range of possibilities, see R. Thomas, 'Prose performance texts: *epideixis* and written publication in the late fifth and early fourth centuries', in H. Yunis (ed.), *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge 2003) 162-88, esp. 180-5; similarly, *eadem*, *Herodotus in Context. Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge 2000) 254: 'Prodicus' story of the choice of Heracles, for instance, was often presented ... and circulated in a written version, though it cannot necessarily be assumed that this meant Prodicus actually read it out from the text in front of his audience.' In fact, Aristotle says explicitly (*Rhet.* 1415b15-17 = 84 A 12 DK) that whenever his audience began to nod off, Prodicus would inject a little something from his 50-drachma lecture. It is, therefore, quite likely that any given oral presentation differed both from the prepared (written?) version and from other oral presentations of 'the same' lecture. Compare the

discernible discrepancies between Demosthenes' and Aeschines' references to each other's words and the surviving written speeches: K.J. Dover, *Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1968) 168-9.

²⁷ We can assume from the wording of Pl. *Apol.* 19e that Prodicus was still alive in 399, although we do not know how far beyond that year he lived. There is no reason to have confidence in Philostratus' notice (*VS* 1.12 = 84 A 1a DK), that 'Xenophon the son of Gryllus, when he was a prisoner in Boeotia, used to listen to Prodicus'; see H.R. Breitenbach, *RE* 9A.2 (1967) 1571-2.

²⁸ So Gigon (n.4) 62. The Platonic 'Socrates' in fact claims (*Crat.* 384b) that he heard Prodicus' one-drachma *epideixis* (but not the 50-drachma one); refers to a conversation with Prodicus (*Phdr.* 267b); represents himself as having very often heard (μυρία τινὰ ἀκήκοα) Prodicus distinguishing the meanings of words (*Chrm.* 163d); and even considers himself a pupil of Prodicus (*Prot.* 341a, *Meno* 96d).

²⁹ Or hear someone give a reading of it, as 'Socrates' is said to have heard Zeno read from his writings at the home of Pythodorus (Pl. *Parm.* 127c)? For statements or implications about 'Socrates' reading, see Pl. *Phd.* 98b (Anaxagoras), *Theaet.* 152a (Protagoras), *Gorg.* 462b-c (Polus), Xen. *Mem.* 1.6.14 (τοὺς θησαυροὺς τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἐκείνοι κατέλιπον ἐν βιβλίοις γράψαντες, which 'Socrates' and his friends read together and excerpt).

if Xenophon transcribed verbatim the written text of Prodicus' fable,³⁰ he could expect that some of his contemporaries may have heard Prodicus deliver an oral performance of it, a performance that would likely have impressed its hearers as being more flamboyant than the dry and lifeless words on the page.

II

Let us, then, turn to an examination of those words, to see if any conclusions can be reached regarding the degree to which they accord with or diverge from the style of Xenophon. To begin with, we should not consider the dialect of the piece, which is manifestly Attic, as providing evidence of Xenophon's interference.³¹ The surviving works of, and quotations from, Gorgias of Leontini, Alcidas of Elaea and Thrasymachus of Chalcedon are all in Attic.³² In Greek literary texts dialect is largely a matter of genre, and the Attic dialect was as appropriate to an *epideixis* as the Ionic to a medical treatise. The matter of dialect aside, scholars have relied on generalities and overall impressions in assessing the style of the passage. Not surprisingly, they have come to differing verdicts. For example, Mario Untersteiner, noting the presence of 'echoes of Gorgias' figures of speech', concluded that the style was not that of Prodicus, whereas H.J. Rose considered that the very Gorgianic rhetoric that supposedly characterizes the passage 'belongs rather to Prodikos than to Xenophon himself'.³³ As it happens, we do not have a single direct quotation from Prodicus with which to compare this passage, so that we cannot tell to what degree it accords with the style of Prodicus. We can, however, see that some of the features of the passage do not appear to be Xenophonic. For example, the comparative *πλησιαίτερον* (23: ὡς δ' ἐγένοντο πλησιαίτερον τοῦ Ἡρακλέους) occurs only here in Xenophon, who regularly uses *ἐγγύτερ-* (11 times; cf. esp. *Anab.* 1.8.8 ὅτε δὲ ἐγγύτερον ἐγένοντο). Earlier (21) Heracles was described as having reached the age at which young men become 'independent', using a word (*αὐτοκράτορες*) that Xenophon uses elsewhere some half-dozen times, but only in connection with 'absolute' rulers or ambassadors 'plenipotentiary'. And, in general, the passage contains an unusually large number of vocabulary items not elsewhere found in the Xenophonic corpus. The passage, 976 words in length, contains 15 words that are *hapax legomena* in the works of Xenophon: *καθαρότης*, *πολυσαρκία*, *ἀπαλότης*, *διαλάμπειν*, *θαμά*,³⁴ *ἄγευστος*,

³⁰ Or rather, a portion of the written text. For, even if the Aristophanic scholiast (n.22) had not told us so explicitly (*προσκλίνει τῆι Ἀρετῆι τὸν Ἡρακλέα καὶ τοὺς ἐκείνης ἰδρωτάς προκρίνει τῶν προσκαίρων τῆς κακίας ἡδονῶν*), we would be confident that Prodicus' tale continued on, after the point at which Xenophon breaks off, to include an indication of Heracles' choice between the two women.

³¹ Thus Alpers (n.1) 17: 'Omnino fabulae Prodiceae, quam dialecto Ionica scriptam fuisse veri simile est, genus dicendi mutare debebat Xenophon, qui Attico utebatur sermone.'

³² For Gorgias and his influence, see Blass (n.4) 1.56, Schmid and Stählin (n.1) 1.3.63 and 96. For an excellent account of Thrasymachus and his oratory, see S.A. White, 'Thrasymachus the diplomat', *CP* 90 (1995) 307-27. It is not clear whether the Attic elements should be purged from the fragments of Diogenes of Apollonia; see A. Laks (ed.), *Diogène d'Apollonie. La dernière cosmologie présocratique* (Lille 1983) xv. According to K. Dover, *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style* (Oxford 1997) 85-6, Zeno of Elea wrote in Attic, but I am aware of no evidence that would support Dover's claim.

³³ M. Untersteiner, *The Sophists* (English trans., Oxford 1954) 207; cf. Mayer (n.4) 12: 'für uns steht fest, daß *der Stil nicht prodikeisch* ist' (Mayer's emphasis). H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature from Homer to the Age of Lucian* (4th edn, London 1950) 258 n.19. The discussion in L. Gautier, *La langue de Xénophon* (Geneva 1911) 105-8, is somewhat more substantial, but comes to the paradoxical conclusion (a) that the passage is not essentially different from the language and style of Xenophon generally, and (b) that, 'sciemment, pour des motifs stylistiques, Xénophon a semé ce morceau de termes rares et non attiques' (107).

³⁴ Editors have generally followed Dindorf's conjectural introduction of *θαμά* in place of the manuscripts' *ἄμα* at *Cyrop.* 8.8.12. But even if this final chapter of *Cyrop.* is by Xenophon (as is forcefully argued by D. Levine Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia. Style, Genre, and Literary Technique* (Oxford 1993) 299-300 and C. Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen zu Xenophons Kyropädie* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1995) 262-71), the type of pleonasm seen in *σύν + ἄμα* is not at all uncommon: T. Mommsen, *Beiträge zu der Lehre von den griechischen Präpositionen* (Berlin 1895) 546-8, and add *Soph. fr.* 314.76 Radt (*Ichn.*).

ὑποκορίζεσθαι, διαπρεπής, ὑπόβαθρον, ἀθέατος, θίασος, ἀύχηρός, παραστάτις, συλλήπτρια, ἄμοχθος.³⁵ In order to determine how many *hapax legomena* one might expect to find in a passage of just this length in Xenophon, I have examined six other passages 976 words in length, each beginning at the same position in its book as our passage. That is, the passages chosen, from each of the other books of the *Memorabilia* and from the second book of the *Hellenica*, *Anabasis* and *Cyropaedia*, all begin at the start of the twenty-first section of their respective books.³⁶ The results are given in the table below.³⁷

	Number of <i>hapax legomena</i>
1. <i>Mem.</i> 1.2.1-1.2.22	10
2. <i>Mem.</i> 3.3.6-3.4.10	8
3. <i>Mem.</i> 4.2.16-4.2.30	7
4. <i>Hell.</i> 2.1.21-2.2.9	9
5. <i>Anab.</i> 2.1.21-2.2.21	5
6. <i>Cyrop.</i> 2.1.21-2.2.2	5
average	7.33

Hapax legomena in passages comparable to *Mem.* 2.1.21-33

As can be seen, the frequency (15) of *hapax legomena* in the ‘Choice of Heracles’ is at least 50 percent higher than the largest number and more than twice the average number in the comparable passages.

But even more interesting than the frequency is the character of some of these *hapax legomena*. The first three on the above list (given in the order in which they appear in the text) are abstract nouns, a category that is naturally most at home in a ‘sophistic’ text.³⁸ And indeed our passage seems to have quite a high concentration of abstract nouns.³⁹ I have not undertaken a comparison of the frequency of abstract nouns in this passage with other passages in Xenophon, partly because of the problematic nature of the category ‘abstract noun’ and the difficulty of identifying members of the class in an objective fashion,⁴⁰ and partly because this passage, being

³⁵ The total is 16 if in fact διέσει (24; the reading of the manuscripts, but obelized by several editors) is correct. The verb διείναι is not attested elsewhere, but διαγίγνεσθαι is found in just the required meaning and with the same participial construction (Ar. *Av.* 45; Thuc. 5.16.1; Xen. *Mem.* 4.8.4); the future διαγενήσεσθαι, however, is not attested before the time of Epictetus (*fr.* 25 Schenkl) and Plutarch (*Demetr.* 49.7).

³⁶ So, for example, *Mem.* 3.1 has eleven sections and 3.2 has four, so the passage selected begins at the start of 3.3.6.

³⁷ The following are the *hapax legomena* found for each passage: 1: λίχνος, ὑπερεσθίειν, ἀλαζονικός, ἀμπεχόνη, ἐρασιχρήματος, ἀνδραποδιστής, προσβιβάζειν, διδασκαλικός, νουθετικός, ἐγκυλίνδειν; 2: ἄμμος, κυβερνητικός, ἐφάμιλλος, εὐανδρία, εὐφωσία, ἀρχαιρεσία, κατήκοος, ζημιώδης; 3: ποτέρωθι, ἀπλοΐζεσθαι, ἄσκεπος, ἀγράμματος, χαλκεύειν, τεκταίνεσθαι, σκυτεύειν; 4: παράβλημα, συμπαριέναι, δίκροτος, μονόκροτος, τειχύδριον, ἀποτομή, πενθεῖν,

εἰσπλους, μικροπολίτης; 5: συναπιέναι, ναυσίπορος, προσομνύναι, εὐθύωρος, δοῦπος; 6: ἐθελόπονος, μειονεξία, διακριβοῦν, γνώρισμα, ἀνίδρωτος.

³⁸ See Dover (n.32) 46-8; N. O’Sullivan, *Alcidamas, Aristophanes and the Beginnings of Greek Stylistic Theory* (*Hermes Einzelschriften* 60, Stuttgart 1992) 32-6.

³⁹ Note, e.g., ἡσυχία, αἰδώς, σωφροσύνη, ὑποψία, ἐξουσία, εὐδαμονία, ἀλήθεια, ἐπιμέλεια, εὐφροσύνη, ἐπιθυμία, φιλία, ἀπόλαυσις, λήθη, μνήμη. In addition, there is a striking number of neuter adjectives used substantively in this passage (e.g. τὸ ὄν, τὰ τερπνά, τὰ χαλεπά, τὰ καλὰ καὶ σεμνά, τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ, τὰ ἡδέα, τὸ χρησιμώτατον, τὰ δέοντα), for which see F. Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment* (Princeton 1975) 110-25.

⁴⁰ See A.A. Long, *Language and Thought in Sophocles. A Study of Abstract Nouns and Poetic Technique* (London 1968) 12-14; J. Lyons, *Semantics 2* (Cambridge 1977) 442-3.

concerned precisely with the personifications of Vice and Virtue, should in any event be expected to contain a large number of abstracts. Two of the abstract nouns given above as *hapax legomena*, however, are of a particular type that is relatively uncommon in Xenophon, namely those in -της, -τητος. There are 43 such words in the corpus of Xenophon's writings and they occur a total of 73 times; that is, there are 43 'lexemes' and 73 'tokens'.⁴¹ Words of this class make up a very small fraction of Xenophon's work, but they are unusually well represented in our passage. Three of the 43 lexemes can be found in our passage (in addition to the *hapax legomena* καθαρότης and ἀπαλότης, νεότης – which appears four times elsewhere in Xenophon – occurs twice). In other words, over 5 percent of the tokens occur in 0.3125 percent of Xenophon's writings.⁴² The four tokens in -της, -τητος make up 0.41 percent of the 976 tokens in our passage, but the total of 73 tokens of such words makes up only 0.023 percent of the Xenophontine corpus. Further, words in -της, -τητος occur in the testimonia relating to Prodicus in ways that may suggest a particular connection with him: *fr.* 17 DK (= Pl. *Lach.* 197b-d) gives θρασύτης, a word that occurs only four times elsewhere in Plato, as a word of the sort that Prodicus distinguishes from other near-synonyms, while *frr.* 11 and 16 DK (= Pl. *Crat.* 384b and *Euthd.* 277e) associate Prodicus specifically with the pursuit of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης in such a way as to indicate that this was the expression Prodicus himself used in referring to his own practice.⁴³

A concern with ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης is also at issue in the case of two other *hapax legomena* in the 'Choice of Heracles'. The words παραστάτις and συλλήπτρια are feminine counterparts of words that Xenophon uses elsewhere in their masculine forms (παραστάτης and συλλήπτωρ). The feminine forms are attested before Xenophon, but only in verse (*Soph. Trach.* 889, *OC* 559; *Ar. fr.* 895 K-A) and, while there is nothing to connect them specifically with Prodicus, they are of a type that figures prominently in Aristophanes' parody of sophistic fastidiousness over language. At *Clouds* 658-66 'Socrates' ridicules Strepsiades for using ἀλεκτρυών (rather than the farcical ἀλεκτρύαινα) to refer to a hen. Some commentators regard this as a parody of Protagoras who, according to Aristotle, distinguished the three grammatical genders.⁴⁴ But Charles Willink has made a very good case for the 'Socrates' of *Clouds* as an amalgam of (the popular perceptions of) Socrates and Prodicus, whom Sir Charles well characterizes as 'the arch-sophist' and 'the sophist *par excellence*'.⁴⁵ And in fact the ἀλεκτρύαινα-passage may be intended to recall Prodicus specifically. The passage begins (658-9) ἀλλ' ἕτερα δεῖ σε πρότερα τούτου μανθάνειν, / τῶν τετραπόδων ἅττι' ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς ἄρρενα. In their comments on the latter line both A.H. Sommerstein (Warminster 1982) and W.J.M. Starkie (London 1911) note that ὀρθῶς suggests a reference to Prodicus who, as we have seen, was famous for his concern with ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης. In addition, Starkie refers to *Birds* 690-2, where the word ὀρθῶς appears (twice) in association with the name of Prodicus.⁴⁶ And, as a parallel to 658 δεῖ σε πρότερα

⁴¹ For this terminology, see Dover (n.32) 26.

⁴² The quotation from Prodicus comprises 976 tokens; the total number of tokens in Xenophon is 312,317. I have used the figure for Xenophon provided by the 'Perseus Greek Vocabulary Tool' (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/vocab?lang=greek>), which gives a slightly more accurate count than that given (321,305) by the 'Thesaurus Linguae Graecae', for reasons explained in L. Berkowitz and K.A. Squitier, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae Canon of Greek Authors and Works* (3rd edn, New York and Oxford 1990) xxvii.

⁴³ E. Heitsch, *Die Entdeckung der Homonymie* (*AAWM* 1972, 11, Mainz 1972) 28-9; O'Sullivan (n.38) 17-18.

⁴⁴ *Rhet.* 1407b6-8 = 80 A 27 DK. Diels-Kranz even print *Nubes* 658-79 as 80 C 3 ('Imitation'). In their commentaries on *Clouds* K.J. Dover (Oxford 1968) and G.

Guidorizzi (Milan 1996) refer to Protagoras; see also G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge 1981) 68-9.

⁴⁵ C.W. Willink, 'Prodikos, "meteorosophists" and the "Tantalos" paradigm', *CQ* 33 (1983) 25-33. At line 361 the chorus names Prodicus as the only one τῶν νῦν μετεωροσοφιστῶν apart from Socrates to whose request they would respond. Aristophanes seems here to be reflecting the existence of a personal relationship between the historical Socrates and Prodicus that he could expect his audience to recognize; see H. Gomperz, *Sophistik und Rhetorik* (Leipzig and Berlin 1912) 93-6.

⁴⁶ For possible further associations between this passage from *Birds* and Prodicus, see W. Nestle, 'Die Horen des Prodikos', *Hermes* 71 (1936) 151-70, reprinted in Classen, *Sophistik* (n.5) 425-51, at 158 = 434 and 162 = 440-1. If Nestle is correct to derive (151-3 = 425-7) the

τούτου μανθάνειν Starkie quotes Pl. *Euthd.* 277e πρῶτον γάρ, ὡς φησι Πρόδικος, περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος μαθεῖν δεῖ. All of this suggests in the strongest possible way that Aristophanes at *Clouds* 658-66 is parodying a doctrine of Prodicus', which must have been widely known, namely that one should use specifically feminine formations when such exist (as was the case with παραστάτις and συλλήπτρια).

III

While none of this proves, or could prove, that *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-33 is a verbatim transcript of Prodicus' tale, whether in its oral or written version, it does show that Xenophon has preserved at least some of the vocabulary of the original.⁴⁷ And it is in the area of vocabulary that we find the strongest reason for regarding this passage as representing a very close approximation to Prodicus' actual wording. For even the most casual reader cannot help being struck by the seemingly gratuitous profusion of near-synonyms with which the passage is adorned. It is, after all, the careful discrimination of near-synonyms that most notably characterizes the portrait of Prodicus that Plato presents in his dialogues and, in fact, some of the same groups of near-synonyms appear in the 'Choice of Heracles' and in the Platonic (and other) testimonia. So, at *Protagoras* 337c (= 84 A 13 DK) Plato represents Prodicus as distinguishing between εὐφραίνεσθαι and ἡδεσθαι and, according to Aristotle (*Top.* 112b22-3 = 84 A 19 DK), Πρόδικος διηγεῖτο τὰς ἡδονὰς εἰς χαρὰν καὶ τέρψιν καὶ εὐφροσύνην. In the 'Choice of Heracles' we find εὐφραίνεσθαι and εὐφροσύνη, ἡδεσθαι, ἡδύς (11 times) and ἡδονή, χαρίζειν and χαίρειν, τέρπειν and τερπνός. Later in the same dialogue (*Prot.* 340a = 84 A 14 DK) 'Socrates' suggests that the distinction between ἐπιθυμεῖν and βούλεσθαι is a distinction of the sort that Prodicus likes to make and Stobaeus (4.20b.65 = 84 B 7 DK) quotes Prodicus as defining ἔρωσ as 'ἐπιθυμία doubled'. In the 'Choice of Heracles' we find ἐπιθυμεῖν (4 times), ἐπιθυμία and βούλεσθαι (5 times). At *Charmides* 163a-d (= 84 A 18 DK) 'Socrates' says that he has heard Prodicus make countless distinctions of the sort that Critias has just made among the words ποιεῖν, πράττειν and ἐργάζεσθαι.⁴⁸ In the 'Choice of Heracles' we find ποιεῖν (3 times), πράττειν (5 times), ἐργάζεσθαι, ἔργον (5 times) and ἐργάτης. Many of these words, of course, are very common, and one would not be surprised to see them, even in such concentrated form, in any passage from any author.⁴⁹ But in many cases these and other near-synonyms occur in the 'Choice of Heracles' in such a way as to suggest that a particular point is being made. So, for example, the personification of Vice is said (22) 'to examine (κατασκοπεῖσθαι) herself frequently, to pay attention (ἐπισκοπεῖν) to whether anyone else was observing (θεᾶται) her, and repeatedly to stare (ἀποβλέπειν) at her own shadow'. She goes on (24) to assure Heracles that, if he associates with her, he will spend his time 'pondering what delightful (κεχαρισμένον) food or drink you might discover, in what sight or sound you might take pleasure

title of Prodicus' work from the personified Horae who are connected with Aristaeus (for whose local cult on Prodicus' native Ceos see W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (2nd edn, Berlin and New York 1997) 125-7), we may see in Prodicus' work an inspiration for Aristophanes' chorus in *Clouds*, assuming that his *Horae* predates 423. In Homer (*Il.* 5.749-51 = 8.393-5) the Horae have charge of the thick cloud that covers the entrance to Olympus.

⁴⁷ So Gomperz (n.45) 101-2 n.225a.

⁴⁸ Critias supports his distinction between ἐργάζεσθαι and ποιεῖν in part with reference to a quotation from Hesiod (*Op.* 311 ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος). This quotation comes from the same context as the quotation (*Op.* 287-92) that introduces the 'Choice of Heracles'

and, in fact, it is the same quotation with which 'the accuser' challenges 'Socrates' at *Mem.* 1.2.56-7 and which 'Socrates' explains in a way that implicitly distinguishes between ἐργάζεσθαι and ποιεῖν. It would appear (a) that this Hesiodic passage provided the text on which Prodicus based his sermon (so Nestle (n.46) 164-5 = 443-4; E. Dupréel, *Les Sophistes. Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias* (Neuchâtel 1948) 121). and (b) that the historical Socrates was influenced both by the Hesiodic text and the use to which Prodicus put it.

⁴⁹ Obviously there is no need to point out occurrences of εἶναι and γενέσθαι, which Prodicus distinguishes at Pl. *Prot.* 340b.

(τερφθείης), ... consorting with which *paidika* you might experience the greatest joy (μάλιστα ὦν εὐφρανθείης)'. And in a lengthy string of injunctions (28) the personification of Virtue instructs Heracles to cultivate (θεραπευτέον) the gods, to benefit (εὐεργετητέον) his friends, to serve (ὠφελήτέον) the city, etc.⁵⁰

Attention was drawn to this feature of the 'Choice of Heracles' as long ago as 1828, when Leonhard Spengel pointed out that many of the same near-synonyms appear both here and in the discriminations that Plato and Aristotle assert were made by Prodicus.⁵¹ But more recent scholars have objected that the way in which near-synonyms are used in the Xenophontine passage differs from genuine Prodician practice. Before we examine this objection, we should make explicit the tacit assumption that underlies it, namely that Xenophon must be considered unreliable in this regard, whereas other sources, primarily Plato, can safely be depended upon to preserve evidence of Prodicus' method.⁵² Needless to say, this is an assumption that is exactly analogous to the assumption, long since discredited, that one can resolve the 'Socratic problem' by deciding which source or sources for Socrates' teaching are to be followed and which are to be dismissed as unreliable. As we will see, however, there is good reason why the practice represented in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* differs from that illustrated in our other sources and, as we will further see, there is no need to regard the two portraits of Prodicus in action as incompatible.

We can divide the objections to Xenophon's representation of Prodicus' practice into objections of a general and specific nature. According to Friedrich Blass, what we find in general in the 'Choice of Heracles' is merely the frequent juxtaposition of near-synonyms, whereas what characterizes Prodicus' genuine practice is not just the *use* but the *discrimination* of near-synonyms, accompanied by an *explanation* of what distinguishes one word from another.⁵³ According to Hermann Mayer, the specific usage of the terms εὐφραίνεσθαι (εὐφροσύνη), ἡδεσθαι (ἡδονή), χαρίζεσθαι (χαίρειν) and τέρπειν (τερπνός) in Xenophon (see above) is inconsistent with the way in which Prodicus actually distinguished among these words, as we can tell from the testimony of Plato and Aristotle and the scholia to those authors.⁵⁴ In addition, some scholars seem to be under the impression that Prodicus' preferred method involved distinguishing between two members of a *pair* of near-synonyms. While no one has made this the basis for an argument against accepting the 'Choice of Heracles' as reflecting Prodician practice – it could equally well be used to argue against acceptance of evidence provided by Plato, Aristotle and Stobaeus⁵⁵ – it is sometimes referred to as a forerunner of the later Platonic practice, exhibited especially in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, of diairesis or dichotomous division.⁵⁶ But there is no compelling evidence that Prodicus distinguished between near-synonyms exclusively or even primarily in pairs. The assumption that he did so seems rather to be a prejudice influenced by the either/or character of the choice faced by the protagonist in Prodicus' most memorable account.

⁵⁰ The string continues with πειρατέον εὖ ποιεῖν, θεραπευτέον, ἐπιμελητέον. Other pairs of near-synonyms in close proximity include δοκεῖν and φαίνεσθαι (22), πορίζεσθαι and παρέχειν (25), κερδᾶναι and ὠφελείσθαι (25), ἐπίστασθαι and μανθάνειν (28).

⁵¹ L. Spengel, *ΣΥΝΑΓΩΓΗ ΤΕΧΝΩΝ sive Artium Scriptores* (Stuttgart 1828) 57-8.

⁵² This assumption is made, but not examined, by the authors of the works cited in n.5 above and by Untersteiner (n.33) 213-16; Kerferd (n.44) 70; O'Sullivan (n.38) 17 and others.

⁵³ Blass (n.4) 30-1. Blass is quoted approvingly by K. Joël, *Der echte und der xenophontische Sokrates* 2 (Berlin 1901) 130-1, who is in turn quoted approvingly by Alpers (n.1) 19-20, Mayer (n.4) 11 and Untersteiner (n.4) 178. In characteristically perverse and polemical

fashion (and at astonishing length; see pp. 125-560 [*sic!*]), Joël attributes the 'Choice of Heracles' not to Prodicus or even to Xenophon, but to Antisthenes.

⁵⁴ Mayer (n.4) 22-5; similarly Alpers (n.1) 19-20.

⁵⁵ See Pl. *Prot.* 358a (ἡδύ, τερπνόν, χαρτόν), Arist. *Top.* 112b22-3 = 84 A 19 DK (χαράν, τέρψιν, εὐφροσύνην), Stob. 4.20b.65 = 84 B 7 DK (ἐπιθυμίαν, ἔρωτα, μανίαν).

⁵⁶ See H.D. Rankin, *Sophists, Socratic and Cynics* (London 1983) 51; Heitsch (n.43) 24; de Romilly (n.5) 16; *eadem*, *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens* (English trans., Oxford 1992) 235. For the conviction that binary opposition is characteristic of Prodicus' treatment of near-synonyms, see W. Wößner, *Die synonymische Unterscheidung bei Thukydides und den politischen Rednern der Griechen* (diss. Berlin 1937) 8-9; Classen

IIIa

Recognizing, then, that there is no need to assume that genuine Prodician practice required near-synonyms to be treated in pairs, let us examine first the specific and then the general objection against Xenophon's representation of Prodicus' practice. Mayer and Alpers (see n.54) both point out that the distinctions implicit in *Memorabilia* 2.1.24 (τί ἂν κεχαρισμένον ἢ σιτίον ἢ ποτὸν εὔροις, ἢ τί ἂν ἰδὼν ἢ ἀκούσας τερφθείης ἢ τίνων ὀσφραϊνόμενος ἢ ἀπτόμενος, τίσι δὲ παιδικοῖς ὀμιλῶν μάλιστ' ἂν εὐφρανθείης) are incompatible with the distinctions among the underlined words or words from the same roots as attested elsewhere for Prodicus. Here, *χαρά* is associated with food and drink, *τέρψις* with the faculties of sense-perception and *εὐφροσύνη* with sexual gratification, whereas Alexander Aphrodisiensis (*in Top.* 112b21 = p. 181.2-5 Wallies) and Hermias (*in Phdr.* 267b = p. 238.22-39.2 Couvreur) record Prodicus as making different distinctions among these same words. Further, the Xenophontine Prodicus himself (*Mem.* 2.1.33) applies *χαρά* inconsistently to the young enjoying the praise of their elders and the Platonic Prodicus (*Prot.* 337c) distinguishes between *εὐφραίνεσθαι* and *ἡδεσθαι* as, respectively, intellectual and bodily enjoyment. This objection, however, cannot be seriously sustained. Apart from the fact that it reveals the widespread and unjustifiable prejudice against Xenophon by preferring the testimony of authors who lived in some instances seven centuries after Prodicus to the testimony of a contemporary, it ignores the fact that Alexander, Hermias and Plato are not consistent with one another.⁵⁷ For, according to Alexander and Hermias, Prodicus considered *χαρά*, *τέρψις* and *εὐφροσύνη* all as species of the genus *ἡδονή*,⁵⁸ whereas according to Plato Prodicus apparently distinguished *εὐφροσύνη* and *ἡδονή* as differing only with regard to their objects. Further, Alexander reports Prodicus as defining *εὐφροσύνη* as ἡ διὰ λόγων ἡδονή while according to Hermias he defined it as ἡ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἡδονή.

Clearly it cannot be shown by these means that Xenophon misrepresents Prodicus' method of treating near-synonyms. But what about the inconsistency within the passage itself? At 2.1.24 *χαρά* is associated with the enjoyment of food and drink, at 2.1.33 with the more respectable, even morally praiseworthy, delight in the approval of one's superiors. (These are the only occurrences of words from this root in the passage.) As it happens, those who have pointed to this as an inconsistency are guilty of an error that no serious scholar would make when dealing with a work of dramatic literature or with a Platonic dialogue, namely the attribution to a work's author of that which is expressed by one of his characters. In fact, neither of these occurrences is attributed by Xenophon to Prodicus. Rather, they are put by Xenophon's Prodicus into the mouth of two different characters, the personifications respectively of Vice and Virtue.⁵⁹ It is Vice, therefore, and not Prodicus who applies *χαρά* to the enjoyment of food and drink. Virtue's usage, on the other hand, is actually consistent with the definitions of *χαρά* that Alexander (*εὐλογος ἔπαρσις*) and Hermias (*ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡδονή*) attribute to Prodicus. Likewise, it is Vice who uses *εὐφροσύνη* in ways that are neither consistent with the usage elsewhere attributed to Prodicus nor self-consistent, first (24) applying it to sexual gratification and then (29) using it as the generic term for pleasure in general.⁶⁰

(n.5) 231-2 ('two names ... contrasting pairs ... two similar words ... two at a time'), 234 n.68 ('there are no certain examples of a tripartite διαίρεσις which can be ascribed to Prodicus'); and especially J.-P. Dumont, 'Prodicus: De la méthode au système', in B. Cassin (ed.), *Positions de la sophistique* (Paris 1986) 221-32.

⁵⁷ See C.C.W. Taylor, *Plato. Protagoras, translated with notes* (rev. edn, Oxford 1991) 137-40 for a full and detailed discussion of the inconsistencies involved.

⁵⁸ This is supported by the Aristotelian text (*Top.* 112b22-4) on which Alexander is commenting.

⁵⁹ As far as I am aware, this fundamental point has been noted only by J.C. Rijlaarsdam, *Platon über die Sprache* (Utrecht 1978) 203.

⁶⁰ According to Hermias, Alexander and Aristotle (n.58), Prodicus prescribed rather the use of *ἡδονή* as the generic term, a practice to which Virtue adheres in her use of the words *ἡδονή* (once), *ἡδεσθαι* (once) and *ἡδύς* (11 times).

Not only is the personification of Vice an inherently unreliable authority on the proper use of words, she herself (in Prodicus' tale) embodies a violation of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης. For, after her initial address to Heracles, the first question he asks her is, 'What is your name (ὄνομα)?' to which she replies, 'My friends refer to me as Eudaimonia, but those who hate me call me by the pet-name Kakia' (οἱ μὲν ἐμοὶ φίλοι, ἔφη, καλοῦσί με Εὐδαιμονίαν, οἱ δὲ μισοῦντές με ὑποκοριζόμενοι ὀνομάζουσι Κακίαν). Unlike Virtue, whose one and only name accurately represents her nature, Vice is known by two, incompatible names. Further, she will later (29) use the word εὐδαιμονία to refer, not to herself, but to the goal toward which she hopes to lead Heracles. She even employs two different verbs (καλοῦσι, ὀνομάζουσι) in the same sentence to refer to the act of naming her. And her use of ὑποκοριζόμενοι has caused ancient lexicographers and modern scholars alike to raise their collective eyebrows.⁶¹ Her idiosyncratic and inconsistent use of language, faithfully reproduced by Xenophon, is surely a deliberate feature of Prodicus' representation of her, and is confirmed by her erratic behaviour in contrast to that of her equable rival. For, Prodicus tells us, when the two women approached Heracles, Vice hastened ahead so as to address the young man first, whereas Virtue maintained a consistent, and undoubtedly dignified, pace.⁶²

IIIb

The difference between Virtue's 'proper' use of language and Vice's violations of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης is implicit, nor does the narrative of the 'Choice of Heracles' provide Prodicus' explanations of how words *ought* to be used. This is the essence of the general objection to taking this narrative as an accurate representation of Prodicus' method. For, as we have seen (n.53), scholars are reluctant to accept as genuinely Prodician a narrative that fails to include an explicit explanation of the way in which one word is to be distinguished from a near-synonym. In this regard, George Kerferd is typical in pointing instead to a passage like Plato, *Protagoras* 337a-c (= 84 A 13 DK) as providing a fair sample of Prodicus' practice.⁶³ There Prodicus justifies his distinction between κοινός and ἴσος by explaining that the former involves fairness and impartiality while the latter denotes merely equivalence, and he explains that the difference between ἀμφοισβητεῖν and ἐρίζειν is that the former is appropriate to a discussion between friends and the latter to a disagreement between hostile parties. But those who insist that the inclusion of explanations is an invariable element of Prodicus' method assume that Prodicus' practice was itself invariable and consistent. All the evidence we have, however, points to the fact that Prodicus expressed himself in a variety of media and at a variety of levels. Both Plato and Aristotle refer to Prodicus' range of lectures at different prices,⁶⁴ and Xenophon introduces the

⁶¹ Valckenaer (*apud* Pierson's edn of Moeris) deleted the offending word and Ruhken (*ibidem*) transposed it to precede καλοῦσί με. LSJ, following the consensus of ancient lexicographers and scholia, give it a meaning unique to this occurrence in Xenophon: 'reversely, call something good by a bad name' (s.v. 1.3, with no adjustment in the 1996 *Revised Supplement*).

⁶² 2.1.23 ἵεναι τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον. In this way Prodicus has skilfully made a virtue (so to speak) of necessity; cf. W.J. Froleyks, *Der ΑΓΩΝ ΛΟΓΩΝ in der antiken Literatur* (diss. Bonn 1973) 135 and (for the convention that, in a fictionalized debate, the figure that the author wishes to commend speaks second) 386.

⁶³ Kerferd (n.44) 70; similarly Mayer (n.4) 37; O'Sullivan (n.38) 17; de Romilly, *Great Sophists* (n.56) 74-5; Rankin (n.56) 50; Reesor (n.5) 130-1.

⁶⁴ See nn.26 and 28 (one drachma and 50 drachmas). The pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus* (366c) gives figures of 4 obols (δμοίρου) and 2 and 4 drachmas. It is surprising that this author, whose familiarity with the Platonic corpus is so intimate, gives figures incompatible with Plato's. I am reluctant to believe that he has independent evidence and I incline to the view, rather, that he is slyly devaluing Prodicus' performance (which is further devalued by containing Epicurean doctrines). The author of this dialogue seems to have had a mischievous sense of humour, one which would have pleased Plato himself; he represents Prodicus (368c) as denigrating agriculture, which appears to have been the main object of praise in Prodicus' *Horae* (see Nestle (n.46) 168 = 448). Otherwise, the portrait of Prodicus in the *Axiochus* seems to be an amalgam of what can be found in Pl. *Prot.* and Xen. *Mem.*: his *epideixis* opens with a quotation from

'Choice of Heracles' as existing in both oral and written manifestations. It is entirely reasonable to assume that the oral versions of this and Prodicus' other *epideixeis* differed from one another depending on the character of the audience, and by any standard the audience to which the Prodicus of Plato's *Protagoras* addressed himself was exceptional. His performance took place in the privacy of the house of Callias, son of Hipponicus, one of the wealthiest men in Greece and the man 'who paid out more money to sophists than all the rest put together' (Pl. *Apol.* 20a). Callias' guests on this occasion included Agathon, Alcibiades, Charmides, Critias, Hippias, Protagoras and Pericles' two sons. It is not at all surprising that, in a context like this, Prodicus should be represented as sharing some of the more 'advanced' features of his sophistic skill. Here, in the presence of his professional rivals Hippias and Protagoras, he literally cannot afford to withhold his wisdom, for fear of appearing to be their inferiors in front of potential clients. And, in fact, *all* the passages in which Prodicus is represented as giving explanations for the distinctions he draws between near-synonyms are to be found in similar contexts. For all of them come either from the *Protagoras* itself or they are attributed to Prodicus by 'Socrates' in private conversation with Crito, Meno or Critias (*Euthd.* 277e, *Meno* 75e, *Chrm.* 162e-63d). In other words, all the evidence we have for Prodicus giving explanations for his distinctions between near-synonyms derives from contexts involving conversations within a small circle of Prodicus' fellow-sophists and their wealthy followers. In contrast, the 'Choice of Heracles' was intended for a broader and more general audience, as is clear from Xenophon's reference to the σύγγραμμα ... ὅπερ δὴ καὶ πλείστοις ἐπιδείκνυται (*Mem.* 2.1.21).

Rosalind Thomas pertinently asks in this connection, 'Why go to the fifty-drachma lecture if you can get hold of a text?'⁶⁵ The obvious answer is that the text in question must be that, not of the 50-drachma lecture, but of the one-drachma lecture. In other words, Prodicus' one-drachma *epideixis*, into which category the 'Choice of Heracles' is likely to have fallen, was what is now referred to in US advertising as a 'teaser'.⁶⁶ Performances of an *epideixis* before a popular audience and the availability of a written text of the *epideixis* could be effective means for a sophist to advertise his skill widely, but he needed to withhold some, or even much, of his expertise if he wanted to induce potential 'customers' to pay for the more advanced training.⁶⁷ To judge from his success,⁶⁸ Prodicus was a skilful businessman as well as an accomplished professor. He aroused the interest of prospective clients with his ability as a publicist, but he also guarded his 'intellectual property' in such a way as to maximize profits. It was surely widely known that his speciality was the drawing of fine distinctions between words that seem to be all but identical in

Epicharmus (366c; cf. *Mem.* 2.1.20); it takes place at the house of Callias, the scene of his appearance in Pl. *Prot.*; 'Socrates' will report ταῦτα ἃ μνημονεύσω (366d; cf. *Mem.* 2.1.21 ὅσα ἐγὼ μὲμνημαι); the *epideixis* is concerned with the 'stages of life', which may in fact be what the title of Prodicus' *Horae* refers to; one of those stages is that at which a young man considers τίνα τις τοῦ βίου ὁδὸν ἐνστήσεται (367a; cf. *Mem.* 2.1.23 ἀποροῦντα ποίαν ὁδὸν ἐπὶ τὸν βίον τράπηι); the overall theme of the *epideixis*, the denigration of life, represents a clever appreciation of the 'underworld' associations that Plato heaps upon Prodicus at *Prot.* 315c-16a (in addition to the quotations from the Odyssean *katabasis* and Prodicus' location in a store-room, note that the buzzing of his voice, τῆς φωνῆς βόμβος, has spectral associations; cf. *Soph. fr.* 879 Ραδτ βομβεῖ δὲ νεκρῶν σμήνοϋς). Finally, there is a delightful irony in that the overall theme, which sounds as though it comes from Hegesias ὁ περσιθάνατος (*Diog. Laert.* 2.86, 93-6), is put into the mouth of Prodicus, whose 'Choice of Heracles' is used by

'Socrates' in an (apparently vain) attempt to reform Aristippus, to whose Cyrenaic school Hegesias belonged. For the relationship between *Axiochus* and Prodicus, see esp. Gomperz (n.45) 105-10.

⁶⁵ Thomas (n.26) 185.

⁶⁶ 'An advertisement meant to arouse curiosity, sometimes by withholding part of the material information', *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* (2nd edn, 1934). Compare Gomperz (n.45) 111 n.241: 'Im allgemeinen würden wir uns vorstellen, sie [sc. *epideixeis*] hätten für die Sophisten mehr die Bedeutung einer Reklame für die entgeltlichen Unterrichtskurse gehabt als die einer an sich selbst gewinnbringenden Erwerbstätigkeit.'

⁶⁷ For a similar situation in the medical profession in the fifth and fourth centuries, see L. Dean-Jones, 'Literacy and the charlatan in ancient Greek medicine', in Yunis (n.26) 97-121, at 120-1.

⁶⁸ See Willink (n.45) 30-1 for the wealth and ἀβρότης of Prodicus.

meaning, and so, in his popular lecture on the ‘Choice of Heracles’ he displayed a profusion of near-synonyms, leaving his audience to marvel at his erudition and to wonder how these words ought to be distinguished. Some of the audience members will have been so intrigued (and so wealthy) that they were willing to spend one-seventh of an average labourer’s annual income to be enlightened by the man whom ‘Socrates’ ironically calls πάσσοφος ... καὶ θεῖος (Pl. *Prot.* 315e). The general audience will have included Socrates, who could thus repeat Prodicus’ *epideixis* for the benefit of Aristippus the Cyrenaic, as reported in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*. The price of the general lecture, one drachma, is the same as the maximum price mentioned by ‘Socrates’ in Plato’s *Apology* as what the young could expect to pay for the teachings of Anaxagoras, purchasing them ἐκ τῆς ὀρχήστρας (26d). No one has yet produced an argument that allows us to decide whether the reference is to the purchase of those teachings in written form or in the form of admission to an oral performance.⁶⁹ In any event, the substance will have been the same, since it appears that the oral performance would have consisted of the author either reading out the written text or repeating it from memory.⁷⁰

We can be reasonably confident, then, that Socrates was among the members of the audience for Prodicus’ general lecture. But Plato goes out of his way to let us know that his mentor was not privy to Prodicus’ more advanced teaching. He does this by having ‘Socrates’ claim explicitly that he has heard Prodicus’ one-drachma, but not the 50-drachma lecture, the one that would have taught him the truth about the correctness of words (τὴν ἀλήθειαν περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος, *Crat.* 384b). He also does this by letting us know that ‘Socrates’ was unable to hear the private conversation that Prodicus was engaged in with Agathon, Pausanias and a few others in the house of Callias, although ‘Socrates’ claims that he was longing to hear what the great man said (*Prot.* 315e-16a). Later, however, Prodicus and Hippias and their followers are prevailed upon to join the general conversation involving Socrates, Protagoras and the rest (317c-d). In the course of this conversation Prodicus does actually give some explanations of the distinctions between near-synonyms,⁷¹ and ‘Socrates’ says that Prodicus ‘regularly upbraids’ him when he uses δεινός as a term of approbation, on the grounds that whatever is δεινός is bad (341a-b). This apparent contradiction, between Plato’s representation of a ‘Socrates’ who on the one hand is seemingly quite familiar with Prodicus’ most advanced teachings and who on the other has heard neither the 50-drachma *epideixis* nor the private conversation in Callias’ makeshift guest room, has to do, I think, with the problems inherent in the dialogue-form. For even if *Socrates* had not attended Prodicus’ 50-drachma lecture, surely *Plato* was conversant with its substance, either from having heard the lecture himself or from his close acquaintance with others who had.⁷² And, if Plato wishes to parody or refute someone’s teaching, he has to represent the characters of his dialogue, especially ‘Socrates’, as being familiar with that teaching. That it is his

⁶⁹ The Orchestra (a place, according to Timaeus’ *Lexicon*, s.v., ἐπιφανῆς εἰς πανήγυριν) was located in the middle of the Agora, near the Altar of the Twelve Gods and the statue of the Tyrannicides: J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (New York 1971) 3 and fig. 29. The two most recent commentators on the *Apology* differ in their views of what could be purchased there for a drachma: E. Heitsch (Göttingen 2002) 111 n.199, ‘Die Orchestra, bei der man Bücher kaufen konnte ...’; De Strycker and Slings (n.20) 308, ‘There is no suggestion whatsoever of the young men buying books.’

⁷⁰ Thomas (n.26) 180.

⁷¹ 337a-c: ἀμοιβητεῖν/ἐρίζειν, κοινός/ἴσος, εὐδοκιμεῖν/ἐπαινέσθαι, εὐφραίνεσθαι/ἡδεσθαι; at 340b, however, no explanations are given for the distinctions βούλεσθαι/ἐπιθυμεῖν and γενέσθαι/εἶναι.

⁷² Plato singles out Agathon, for example, as one of those present in the inner sanctum of Callias’ house and, while the love-epigram (*AP* 5.78 = *FGE* ‘Plato’ III Page) purportedly composed by Plato for Agathon is undoubtedly a product of the early Hellenistic period, it does at least attest to a tradition that, plausibly enough, makes the two men friends. See W. Ludwig, ‘Plato’s love epigrams’, *GRBS* 4 (1963) 59-82, who convincingly shows (68-72) that this poem cannot be an epigram by the philosopher Plato about Plato’s relationship with the tragic poet Agathon. Aristotle’s notice (n.26) that Prodicus would insert bits from his 50-drachma lecture into his one-drachma lecture could derive only from someone familiar with the contents of both. If Prodicus did not himself make this claim in his writings, a likely source for this information is Aristotle’s teacher Plato.

intention here in the *Protagoras* to parody Prodicus' teaching is clear from the fact that 'Socrates' rather blatantly violates Prodicus' doctrines shortly after they have been promulgated: at 343d 'Socrates' mischievously uses as though they were exact equivalents two words (ἀμφισβητεῖν and ἐρίζειν) that Prodicus had carefully distinguished at 337b; at 343c he applies εὐδοκιμεῖν, which Prodicus had at 337b differentiated from ἐπαινεῖσθαι as involving no deceptiveness, to Simonides' disingenuous (ἄτε φιλότιμος ὢν ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ) attempt to distinguish himself at the expense of the wise Pittacus; and at 342e he goes out of his way to use δεινός as a term of approbation, by injecting it into a gratuitous simile. A more accurate representation of Plato's attitude toward 'the correctness of words' is put into the mouth of 'Socrates' at *Theaetetus* 184c ('for the most part it is a mark of good breeding when words and phrases are used with a certain nonchalance and when they are not rigorously scrutinized') and into the mouth of the Visitor from Elea at *Statesman* 261e, praising the younger Socrates for his indifference to a distinction between two terms ('if you maintain your lack of fanaticism over terminology, you will turn out to be better supplied with wisdom for your old age').⁷³

CONCLUSION

Prodicus is known to have given both public *epideixeis* for a general audience and more specialized (and higher-priced) instruction to those who could afford it. The 'Choice of Heracles' is likely to have been among the former, both because of its seemingly 'popular' character and because it was available as well in a written form which could, therefore, circulate in a manner over which the author had no control.⁷⁴ It was intended as an advertisement for Prodicus' more advanced and extensive teaching, displaying Prodicus' command of language but withholding detailed explanations. Socrates heard it and was much taken with it, repeating it for the benefit of Aristippus, as recorded in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.⁷⁵ The version that is preserved by Xenophon is likely to be a very close approximation to Prodicus' original but, since that original existed in one written and several oral versions that must have differed from one another in various ways, it was necessary for Xenophon's 'Socrates' to supply a disclaimer of absolute faithfulness to Prodicus' exact wording. One of the features of the 'Choice of Heracles' that would have appealed to Socrates is its praise of Virtue. This would also have appealed to the conventional and old-fashioned (and wealthy) fathers of the boys likely to be Prodicus' customers. Appropriately, Prodicus' tale concerns a boy who has reached the crucial stage of life at which he must make a choice between following those who would seduce and corrupt him and pursuing a course of life involving traditional values. The implication, of course, is that Prodicus' higher-priced instruction will direct the young man along the latter path. But, in his introductory lecture Prodicus must be careful not to divulge too many specifics and, above all, he must avoid anything that might appear controversial.

⁷³ *Theaet.* 184c τὸ δὲ εὐχερὲς τῶν ὀνομάτων τε καὶ ῥημάτων καὶ μὴ δι' ἀκριβείας ἐξεταζόμενον τὰ μὲν πολλὰ οὐκ ἀγεννές; *Plt.* 261e κἂν διαφυλάξῃς τὸ μὴ σπουδάζειν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, πλουσιώτερος εἰς τὸ γήρας ἀναφανήσῃ φρονήσεως; cf. Rijlaarsdam (n.59) 134.

⁷⁴ The written version that survives in *Xen. Mem.* is somewhat truncated, apparently lacking any introduction and omitting the presumable conclusion in which Heracles decided to follow Virtue, but is even so roughly comparable in length to Gorgias' seemingly complete *epideixis*, *In Praise of Helen* (82 B 11 DK): the 'Choice

of Heracles' is 73 percent the length of Gorgias' *Helen* (although it is only 39 percent as long as Gorgias' *Palamedes*).

⁷⁵ And ensuring thereby its survival. Later writers know the piece from its appearance in *Xen. Mem.*: Cicero (*Off.* 1.118) refers to *quod Herculem Prodicus dicit, ut est apud Xenophontem*; Philostratus declines to characterize Prodicus' style, 'since Xenophon provides a satisfactory transcription' (*VS* 1.12 p. 496, Ξενοφώντος αὐτὴν ἱκανῶς ὑπογράφοντος); and Athenaeus even attributes the 'Choice of Heracles' to Xen. (510c) or Socrates (544d).

We know, however, that at least one aspect of Prodicus' teaching is likely to have been controversial, for he was notorious in antiquity for his atheism.⁷⁶ And yet there is no hint of atheism in the 'Choice of Heracles'. On the contrary, 'the gods' are mentioned frequently and prominently.⁷⁷ What is more, they are referred to only by Virtue; they are ignored entirely by Vice, who is concerned solely with ease and enjoyment. This would seem to constitute another instance of incompatibility between the 'Choice of Heracles' and what is known about Prodicus from other sources. But in fact Albert Henrichs has noted that, while Prodicus was known among later writers (Persaeus, Philodemus, Cicero, Sextus Empiricus, Minucius Felix, Themistius) for his rationalizing account of the origin of the gods, there is no evidence that his contemporaries considered him an atheist.⁷⁸ For Henrichs this is puzzling in the extreme: 'No reader of Aristophanes, Plato or Xenophon would ever guess that Prodicus had denied the existence of οἱ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων νομιζόμενοι θεοί ... I do not see how we can ever hope to explain this mysterious silence of the sources.' Surely Plato and (if he were aware of it) Xenophon could be expected to suppress any mention of atheism on the part of someone with whom Socrates was known to be on friendly terms and about whom he had positive things to say. But the silence of Aristophanes, who has no hesitation about branding Socrates as an unbeliever, cannot be explained in this way. If the foregoing account, however, is correct we can readily dispel the mystery.⁷⁹ The seemingly pious and conventional 'Choice of Heracles' is a sample of what the general public would know about the teachings of Prodicus. In the course of it the personification of Virtue explains truthfully, μετ' ἀληθείας, that the gods dispense benefits to mankind (although not without πόνος and ἐπιμέλεια). But it was only to the select few who could afford to hear the 50-drachma *epideixis* that Prodicus would reveal, along with much else, the nature and the origin of these benefactors of mankind. According to our sources, Prodicus explained that early man first honoured as gods the fruits of the earth and such other things as benefited them and provided nourishment; later they accorded the same divine status to those (presumably humans) who discovered things useful to mankind's livelihood. There appears to be a hint of this in the wording of Xenophon's text, although its implications could only be recognized by someone familiar with Prodicus' theory concerning the origins of religion.

⁷⁶ See 84 B 5 DK and, more fully, Prodicus *fr.* 5 Untersteiner (n.4); Phld. *Piet.*, part 1, lines 520-5 Obbink; *P.Herc.* 1428 cols. ii 28-iii 13 and *fr.* 19 (from part 2 of *De Pietate*), with extensive discussion in A. Henrichs, 'Two doxographical notes: Democritus and Prodicus on religion', *HSCP* 79 (1975) 93-123, at 107-23, and 'The atheism of Prodicus', *CronErc* 6 (1976) 15-21. The late tradition (schol. Pl. *Resp.* 600c = Suda Π 2365) that Prodicus was condemned to death by the Athenians and forced to drink hemlock for corrupting the young (no mention is made of atheism in this connection) is unreliable and should not be accepted.

⁷⁷ The first mention of the gods hints at an etymology deriving the word θεός from the root of the verb τίθημι (ἥπερ οἱ θεοὶ διέθεσαν τὰ ὄντα διηγήσομαι μετ' ἀληθείας, 27). The same etymology is found in Herodotus, who says of the Pelasgians: θεοὺς δὲ προσωνόμασάν σφεας ἀπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου ὅτι κόσμῳ θέντες ... (2.52.1). W. Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos* (2nd edn, Stuttgart 1942) 507, suggests that Hdt. took this etymology from Anaxagoras, comparing 59 B 12 DK πάντα διεκόσμησε νοῦς, where, however, neither θεός nor τίθημι appears.

⁷⁸ Henrichs, 'Atheism' (n.76) 21, from which the following quotation is taken.

⁷⁹ A. Henrichs, 'The sophists and Hellenistic religion: Prodicus as the spiritual father of the Isis aretologies', *HSCP* 88 (1984) 139-58, at 142, (rightly) finds it hard to imagine how the 'Choice of Heracles' fitted into a work that rationalistically explained the origins of religious worship. But must we assume that Prodicus' atheism was expounded in his *Horae* – Galen (84 B 4 DK) attributes a Περὶ φύσεως to him – or even in writing at all? It is true that Philodemus (84 B 5 DK) quotes Persaeus as approving τὰ περὶ (τοῦ) τὰ τρέφοντα καὶ ὠφελούντα θεοὺς νενομίσθαι καὶ τετειμησθαι πρῶτον ὑπὸ Προδίκου γεγραμμένα. But we cannot be sure that Persaeus himself referred to 'what was written by Prodicus' (as opposed to, e.g., 'what Prodicus said'). And even if he did refer to 'writings', we cannot know how much was explicit and how much was (perfectly justifiable) interpretation. See the sensible remarks of Charles Kahn, 'Greek religion and philosophy in the Sisyphus fragment', *Phronesis* 42 (1997) 247-62, at 261: 'Prodicus' theory admits more than one interpretation ... Later doxographers may have correctly diagnosed the atheism latent in his theory, but there is no hint of any legal charge of impiety being lodged against Prodicus. Living in Athens, Prodicus was perhaps also being cautious.'

The string of injunctions that Virtue addresses to Heracles (*Mem.* 2.1.28) consists of eight verbal adjectives, carefully distinguished from one another according to their object. In this series only one term is repeated: ‘... if you wish the gods to be favourable to you, you must cultivate (θεραπευτέον) the gods, ... if you wish the land to bear plentiful fruit, you must cultivate (θεραπευτέον) the land’. We may assume that, in the more advanced course, Prodicus explained how θεραπευτέον differs from εὐεργετητέον and how εὐεργετητέον in turn differs from ὠφελιτέον and, finally, why it is appropriate to use θεραπευτέον both with the gods and with the land as its object.

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