

Socratic *Atopia* in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*

Many critics of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* have seen its hero as a dull expositor of conventional wisdom and found no trace in it of Socrates' characteristic *atopia*. But as traditional as this Socrates is in his theoretical commitments, his advice to companions diverges from conventional expectation in three distinct ways.

First, Socrates dispenses advice on familiar subjects in a peculiarly scholastic manner, notably in conversations such as the reprimand of his son (II.2) and his correction of friends' dining etiquette (III.14),

Second, he uses harsh speech mitigated by indirection to convince his companions to follow his advice. Whereas the elenchus of Plato's Socrates employs equivocation to force interlocutors into professing positions they are ashamed to hold, Xenophon's Socrates uses disparaging analogies to trap his companions into shameful characterizations of their actions, such as "I treat my brother worse than I would treat a dog" (II.3.9).

Third, Socrates advises his friends to take actions that offend the aristocratic self-conception even though they promote traditional moral views. In this manner, Socrates advises Aristarchus to put free women to work for wages (II.7), persuades Eutherus to "endure slavery" voluntarily (II.8), and convinces Crito to hire his own sycophants (II.9).

While maintaining the *atopia* characteristic of Socrates and essential to his carnival heroism, Xenophon uses him to promote his own ideas for the reform of aristocratic manners within a framework of traditional morality.