

PLATO  
CLITOPHON

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION,  
TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY

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# INTRODUCTION

## I PROLEGOMENA TO THE DIALOGUE

### 1.1 Introduction

Whereas a commentary on the *Clitophon* requires no justification – for there is none in either Latin or any of the three major European languages of our time, its scale as offered here does call for an excuse. The *Clitophon* has often been dubbed a ‘riddle’, and so it is. Its authorship is dubious – a decision as to its authenticity would seem to depend mainly on the interpretation of its meaning. Its meaning is therefore a problem prior to (and more interesting than) its authorship. In this connection several questions come to one’s mind.

The *Clitophon* is mainly an attack on Socrates. Is this the Athenian philosopher who inspired a great number of thinkers, was ridiculed by Aristophanes and other comedians and was eventually put to death, or is he the literary character who plays the central part in many fourth-century philosophical texts of a genre called λόγος Σωκρατικός from Aristotle onwards?

This Socrates is said to be an expert in what is called προτρέπειν (I shall translate this throughout the book by ‘exhort’, for lack of a better equivalent). How does this statement relate to several works, called Προτρεπτικός, by pupils of the Athenian philosopher, to an interesting passage of Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (1.4.1) which is programmatic for the whole of the rest of that work, and finally to certain passages in Plato where this activity of Socrates’ is described or hinted at? As a corollary, what is the relation of these passages to Plato’s literary production as a whole?

The criticism is uttered by one Clitophon, who we are told is at the same time rather enthusiastic about the teaching of Thrasymachus. In Book 1 of Plato’s *Republic*

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this character appears as a companion and defender of Thrasymachus. To what extent is this significant for the interpretation of *Republic* 1 and *Clitophon*? What further light is shed on this problem by the similarity of statements in the *Clitophon* about the result (ἔργον) of justice to statements about justice in *Republic* 1?

Clitophon gives an extensive report of his questioning Socrates' companions and refuting them. What is this method of interrogation and refutation; how close does it come to methods observed in other Socratic literature and what are the implications of the similarity for the intention and philosophical provenance of our dialogue?

I have tried to answer these questions without any regard to the problem of authorship. Unless I have gravely deceived myself, it is possible to explain the *Clitophon* from the *Clitophon* itself; such other Socratic texts as I have deemed profitable to take into account have been used either to test the hypotheses formed on the basis of the *Clitophon* alone, or, occasionally, to answer questions for which I found no satisfactory answers in the text of the dialogue. In general, I do not think that this strictly 'ergocentric' method is imperative in Plato – on the contrary, the written work is called an εἰδότης ὑπόμνησις in the *Phaedrus*, so that in genuine dialogues a comparative method of interpretation seems to be called for. However, the authenticity of the *Clitophon* has been doubted by many eminent scholars from the early nineteenth century onwards; I have therefore left aside the attribution of the dialogue to Plato, which normally in literary analysis one is obliged to take into account. It has become a platitude to say that in cases of disputed authenticity the *onus probandi* lies with those who want to dispute it – in fact, this is far from being a dogma<sup>1</sup> – but one should not add to the bur-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the remarks in *Pseudepigrapha* 1 (*Entretiens Hardt* 18 (1971)), 12 (R. Syme); 149 (G. J. D. Aalders), where an exception is made for texts

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den by forming hypotheses based on related texts transmitted within the same Corpus.

The Introduction and the Commentary together contain my interpretation of the *Clitophon*; the questions raised above will be found treated there. Because I find the questions difficult and rather involved, the arguments for my answers take up a fair amount of space and are scattered throughout the book. Therefore I shall outline here, without further argument, such sense as I can make of this dialogue.

The *Clitophon* is essentially a condemnation not of Socrates, nor of another philosopher, but of a specific branch of Socratic literature, to wit philosophical protreptic in its pre-Aristotelian, ethical form. The speech put into Socrates' mouth is a parody<sup>2</sup> (as Aspasia's speech in the *Menexenus* is generally supposed to be), in which various motifs of this genre are used; it is a parody of thoughts, not of one particular writer. The author is careful not to hit at the core of Socratic philosophy; it is the uselessness of protreptic preaching which is the target, not its ethical values. The choice of Clitophon, admirer of Thrasymachus, as the main character suggests how dangerous protreptic can be.

belonging to a genre which as a whole is open to suspicion. If there is indeed such a genre as the Short Dialogue (section 1.4), these remarks are relevant for the *Clitophon*. – K. Dover, *Marginal Comment* (London 1994), 139 speaks of 'the disastrous principle "presumed genuine until proved spurious"', but gives no arguments for this somewhat extreme view.

<sup>2</sup> I have not tried to define this term. Though I am aware of its deficiencies, I think the following definition is satisfactory, and any rate for *Clit.*: 'Parodie ist Nachahmung mit Polemik gegen den Nachgeahmten' (R. Neumann, 'Zur Ästhetik der Parodie', *Die Literatur* 30 (1927–8) 439–41; for criticism, cf. W. Karrer, *Parodie, Travestie, Pastiche* (Munich 1977), 36–41). My use of the term is therefore much more traditional than that of some recent theoreticians, notably Bakhtin. Cf. P. Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader* (London 1994), 102–22. Bakhtin's influence is notable in A. W. Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue. Plato and the Construct of Philosophy* (Cambridge 1995), esp. 6–8; 148–9.

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Clitophon's interrogation of Socrates' companions and – to a lesser extent – of Socrates himself serves a double purpose: it proves that mere exhortation towards justice does not lead to knowledge of justice (various discussions of justice are taken over from Socratic literature, not exclusively protreptic literature; these borrowings are not meant to suggest that Socratic theories about justice are worthless); at the same time it is shown that elenchos, not exhortation, leads to insight (and thereby to knowledge).

The author's judgement on the respective effectiveness of exhortation and elenchos is identical to Plato's standpoint. The use of elenchos in the *Clitophon* is typically Platonic. Moreover, the author implies that he assents to an important aspect of Plato's concept of justice, namely that the true politician is he who renders his fellow-citizens more just. In short, the author's intention is to show that his opinion of Socratic literature conforms in every respect to the views found in Plato's literary production, which is, by implication, recommended as a better alternative for protreptic.

In the Commentary, I have endeavoured not only to elucidate questions connected with structure, intention, expression and textual transmission (in so far as these matters have not been treated systematically in the Introduction), but also to furnish material for settling the questions of authorship. I have adduced many parallels for words, phrases and constructions which in themselves needed no illustration, in order to show how these idioms relate to the usage of Plato, to whom the *Clitophon* is ascribed. As I found that, on the whole, the language of our dialogue is very similar to Plato's, I saw no point in increasing the bulk of annotations by referring (more than occasionally) to parallels found in the works of other authors of this period. It goes without saying that apart from the *TLG* CD-ROM, Brandwood's *Word Index* (but also Ast's *Lexicon*) has been an invaluable support.



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In a limited number of cases, I was unable to refrain from treating questions of grammar and lexicon on a more general scale, even though a commentary is not necessarily the best place for having one's say on such matters.

### 1.2 Summary and analysis of composition

The nineteenth-century division into chapters (Roman numerals), which was abandoned in Burnet's edition, has been reintroduced because on the whole it does justice to the structure of the *Clitophon*.

#### A. PROLOGUE (406a1–407a4)

**I.** Socrates says someone told him that, in a conversation with Lysias, Clitophon had criticised Socrates' intellectual guidance and praised that of Thrasymachus. – That is not quite right, Clitophon answers; in part I have indeed not praised you, but in part I did do so. He offers to expound his position. – Socrates gives him the opportunity, hoping to benefit from his words.

#### B. CLITOPHON'S REPORT (407a5–410b3)

(1) CLITOPHON'S PRAISE (407a5–408c4)

**(a) Introductory words (407a5–b1)**

**II.** Clitophon says that he has been struck whenever Socrates delivered a certain speech like a *deus ex machina*:

**(b) Socrates' protreptic (407b1–408b5)**

(*first part*; 407b1–e2) 'Men do not act as they should, because they focus all their attention on amassing wealth, but neglect to provide their sons, who will inherit it, with the knowledge how to use it justly; they do not find them teachers of justice, if such there be, nor have they taken care of themselves similarly in the past. They and their children have followed the traditional curriculum, and

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they are none the less vicious in matters of money – therefore present education is to be condemned. Discord in the world stems from disharmony, not musical but spiritual. When men say that injustice is the consequence not of bad education but of a free choice, they contradict themselves, as they also think that injustice is hateful to the gods. If man is mastered by his pleasures, he is so involuntarily. Consequently each individual and each state ought to care more in this respect than they do now.’

(**III.** Interrupting his report, Clitophon again states his admiration, 407e3–4.)

(*second part*; 407e5–8) ‘Those who care only for their bodies and neglect their souls act likewise: they neglect the ruling part.’

(*third part*; 407e8–408b5) ‘What one cannot handle, one should leave alone, so with the senses and the whole body; likewise, one who cannot handle his own lyre will not be able to handle his neighbour’s. Finally, one who does not know how to handle his soul had better leave it alone and cease to live, or at any rate be a slave and hand over the rule of his mind to an expert.’ These experts are identified by Socrates with those who have learned politics, which is identical to judication and justice.

(**c**) **Concluding words (408b5–c4)**

**IV.** Clitophon quite agrees with this and similar speeches and considers them very suitable for exhortation and very useful.

(2) CLITOPHON’S CRITICISM (408c4–410b3)

(**a**) **Introduction (408c4–409c1)**

Therefore he asked those companions whom Socrates esteemed most how Socrates’ exhortation is to be followed up, supposing that exhortation itself is not the goal of life. After Socrates’ fashion, he offers an analogy: one who had exhorted them to the care of the body would reproach them on the grounds that they care only for agrarian

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products instead of the arts which improve the body. Which art is it that improves the soul?

**V.** The man who seemed best equipped answered that this art is none other than justice. Clitophon wished to hear more than a name. Medicine has a double effect, the production of new doctors and health (of which the latter is a result of the art, not art itself), and likewise carpentry can be divided into doctrine and result. Similarly justice will on one hand produce new just men, on the other it must have a result of its own. What is the latter?

**(b) First definition of the result of justice (409c1–d2)**

This pupil answered ‘the beneficial’, others, ‘the fitting’, ‘the useful’, ‘the profitable’. Clitophon replies that all these epithets are also valid for the results of each of the arts, such as carpentry; but the meaning of these epithets will be defined by the arts in question; let the result of justice be defined similarly.

**(c) Second definition of the result of justice (409d2–410a6)**

**VI.** Finally the most elegant answer given was: to effect friendship in the cities. Friendship was said by this man to be always a good, so that the friendships of children and animals (which as a result of a debate he concluded were more often harmful than beneficial) had to be excluded: real friendship was concord. Being asked whether concord was unanimity in opinion or knowledge he rejected the former, as being often harmful. At this point those present were able to accuse him of circular reasoning: medicine, too, is concord in this sense, but unlike the arts, justice has still failed to grasp the object of its knowledge; its result is yet unclear.

**(d) Third definition of the result of justice (410a7–b3)**

**VII.** Then Clitophon asked Socrates himself, who answered that the special result of justice was harming one’s

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enemies and benefiting one's friends. Subsequently it turned out that justice never harms anyone.

### C. CLITOPHON'S VERDICT (410b3–e8)

#### (a) **Criticism (410b3–c8)**

Having endured this a long time, Clitophon has given up. He thinks that Socrates is still the best in exhorting others to justice but either he can do nothing more, like a layman who can eulogise steersmanship – this is not Clitophon's view, but either Socrates does not know what justice is or he is unwilling to impart his knowledge to Clitophon. That is why Clitophon visits Thrasymachus and others: he is at a loss.

#### (b) **Last appeal (410c8–e5)**

If Socrates is prepared to stop exhorting him and act just as if, having exhorted Clitophon to the care of the body, he were going to explain the nature of the body and the treatment pertaining to it, then let it happen. Clitophon agrees that the care of the soul is all-important and says he has uttered his criticism with this intention. He implores Socrates to do this so that he can stop partly praising, partly blaming him.

#### (c) **Summing-up (410e5–8)**

Socrates is invaluable for those who have not been exhorted; for those who have been, he is almost a stumbling-block in their attainment of the core of virtue and becoming happy.

For the relation between content (as analysed here) and form, cf. section 1.4.2(5).

Among other attempts<sup>3</sup> at schematisation of the structure

<sup>3</sup> By far the most satisfactory is that of Pavlu ('Pseudopl. Kleitophon', 3–5: 'Einleitung' (406a–407a). 'Hauptteil', divided into 'I. Was Kleitophon an Sokrates lobenswert findet' (407a–408c); 'II. Was Kleitophon an Sokrates zu tadeln findet' (408c–410b), 'Schluss' (410b–e)).

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of the *Clitophon*, that by Geffcken ('Rätsel', 436) deserves closer investigation because of the conclusions he draws from it. He considers Clitophon's report of Socrates' speech, which he denies to be ironical (section 1.5.3), to be the prooemium, constructed so as to make Clitophon appear an equitable critic; the interrogation of Socrates' pupils is the narrative part, followed by 'eine philosophierende Erörterung, die den Satz von der Nichtigkeit der blossen Protrepik endgültig beweisen soll' – I am not quite sure whether 408d1–6 or 410b6–c2 is meant; finally Socrates is addressed directly for the second time (from 410a7 onwards?), and is now 'more than once sharply criticised'. This disposition is said (437) to correspond exactly to the ἔργον τοῦ ῥήτορος as defined by Theodectes of Phaselis: προοιμιάσασθαι πρὸς εὐνοίαν, διηγήσασθαι πρὸς πιθανότητα, πιστώσασθαι πρὸς πειθῶ, ἐπιλογίσασθαι πρὸς ὀργήν ἢ ἔλεον.<sup>4</sup> The individual traits of the *Clitophon* are manifest also in Theodectes. According to Geffcken, the *Clitophon* is unmistakably an Aristotelising text, and Theodectes was a friend of Aristotle and was influenced by him. Finally, the *Clitophon* is a riddle, and

This schema is taken over by Brünnecke ('Kleitophon wider Sokrates', 451–2; cf. Blits, 'Socratic teaching'), who besides distinguishes three protreptic speeches, as Kesters (*Kérygmes*, 39–44) after him. Souilhé (163–4) places a dichotomy at 408e2; the first part is about protreptic, the second about justice. Kunert (*Necessitudo*, 4) recognises two parts, the first dealing with Socrates, the second (from 408b5) with his so-called pupils. The return to Socrates at 410a7 is explained 'non ex veritatis sed ex artis quasi scaenicae, qua in dialogo opus est, rationibus' – this solution (if it deserves the name) is rightly rejected by Pavlu (5 n. 1).

<sup>4</sup> *Oratores Attici* II 247 Sauppe; on the problems concerning the versions and ascription of this fragment, cf. Geffcken, 'Rätsel', 437 n. 1; Radermacher, *Artium scriptores*, 203. – Geffcken's analysis of the dialogue as a judicial accusation was foreshadowed by Brünnecke, who makes Socrates the accuser and Clitophon the defendant in a fictitious slander suit ('Kleitophon wider Sokrates', 452–7). This idea was taken over by Orwin: 'we might regard this dialogue as a kind of counter-*Apology*' ('Case against Socrates', 744). See section II.3.4 n. 272.

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Theodectes is, in his dramas, fond of riddles. Geffcken concludes (439) that Theodectes (rather than a pupil of his) is the author of the *Clitophon*.

Quite apart from the dubious quality of the remaining arguments, I am unable to make sense of Geffcken's analysis of the *Clitophon*; if the pattern of rhetorical κατηγορία is followed at all, I would suggest A as prooemium, B as a very lengthy narrative, C (a–b) as roughly equivalent to πίστις and C (c) – the closing sentence – as epilogue (section I.3.2).

### 1.3 Is the *Clitophon* unfinished?

#### 1.3.1 Historical Survey

Socrates' silence after Clitophon's plaidoyer does not seem to have caused especial surprise in antiquity. One explanation of it is known to us. It is attributed by Proclus to Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Πλατωνικός, who identified the missing fourth person of the *Timaeus* (17a1) with Clitophon: τοῦτον γὰρ ἐν τῷ ὁμωνύμῳ διαλόγῳ μὴδ' ἀποκρίσεως ἤξιῶσθαι παρὰ Σωκράτους.<sup>5</sup> This Platonist Ptolemy, who is mentioned also by Iamblichus,<sup>6</sup> again in connection with

<sup>5</sup> Procl. *in Tim.* 7b = 1.20.8–9 Diehl; apparently Clitophon was thought to have stayed away through pique (slightly different A.-J. Festugière, *Proclus, Commentaire sur le Timée* I (Paris 1966), 48 n. 6). Proclus does not think much of the identification: τὸ δὲ Κλειτοφῶντα [sc. λέγειν] παντελῶς ἄτοπον· παρῆν γὰρ οὐδὲ τῆι προτεραιίαι Σωκράτους διηγουμένου τίνα εἶπεν ὁ Κλειτοφῶν (namely in the *Republic*, 340a3–b8), *ibid.* 1.20.18–20 Diehl. An ingenious distortion of Ptolemy's view is given by Yxem ('Über Platon's Kleitophon', 13–14): the *Republic* is in fact Socrates' answer (on the premise that Ptolemy must have regarded the eighth tetralogy as a whole, so that Clitophon was in fact one of the persons to whom Socrates reported the *Republic*); ἐν τῷ ὁμωνύμῳ διαλόγῳ κτλ. is taken to mean 'not at any rate in the *Clitophon* (but in the *Republic*)'. This theory is taken over by Susemihl (508).

<sup>6</sup> Apud Stob. 1.49.39 = 1.378 W.; cf. Festugière, *Révélation*, III 218 and n. 2.

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the *Timaeus*, has been identified beyond doubt by A. Dihle<sup>7</sup> with Ptolemy al-gharib, the biographer and bibliographer of Aristotle.

There are no ancient readers known to us who explained the absence of an answer as an indication that the *Clitophon* was left unfinished. One reader at any rate says by implication that it was finished, to wit Plutarch, who was well acquainted with it,<sup>8</sup> yet writes about the *Critias* ὡς γὰρ ἡ πόλις τῶν Ἀθηναίων τὸ Ὀλυμπίειον, οὕτως ἡ Πλάτωνος σοφία τὸν Ἀτλαντικὸν ἐν πολλοῖς <καὶ> καλοῖς μόνον ἔργον ἀτελὲς ἔσχηκεν.<sup>9</sup>

From the sixteenth century onwards, the notion that Socrates' answer is lacking because the *Clitophon* is a torso becomes widespread. As far as I have been able to investigate, the first to propose this theory was Jean de Serres (in Stephanus' edition); de Serres probably advanced it to counter the hypothesis found as early as Ficino that the *Clitophon* is not authentic.<sup>10</sup> An alternative hypothesis explained Socrates' silence as due to a subsequent curtailment in the transmission: the dialogue was not *imperfectus* (de Serres) but *mutilatus*.<sup>11</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century and at times in ours, some scholars have sought

<sup>7</sup> 'Der Platoniker Ptolemaios', *Hermes* 85 (1957) 314–25; PW s.v. Ptolemaios 69), 1859–60.

<sup>8</sup> He twice paraphrases *Clit.* 407c6–d2 with express mention of Plato: 439c and 534e. If Περὶ παιδῶν ἀγωγῆς is authentic, the beginning of the protreptic speech (407b1–4) was quoted literally by him (4e).

<sup>9</sup> *Sol.* 32.2; I see no reason for Madvig's τὸ Ἀτλαντικόν: the *Critias* is referred to with its regular sub-title.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. P. O. Kristeller, 'Marsilio Ficino as a beginning student of Plato', *Scriptorium* 20 (1966) 41–54 at 44 n. 12.

<sup>11</sup> So A. Boeckh, *In Platonis qui vulgo fertur Minoem eiusdemque libros priores De Legibus* (Halis Saxonum 1806), 11 (cf. Souilhé, 171 n. 1): Boeckh does not subscribe to this idea himself; he adduces Ptolemy and Plutarch (cf. supra) as proof that even the most ancient MSS had no more text than ours have.

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to reconcile themselves to Platonic authorship by having recourse to the idea of an unfinished sketch, found after Plato's death among his papers.<sup>12</sup> To name just a few: Boeckh,<sup>13</sup> Grote,<sup>14</sup> Th. Gomperz,<sup>15</sup> A. E. Taylor,<sup>16</sup> O. Wichmann.<sup>17</sup>

Usually, this theory is connected with the supposition that the *Clitophon* was originally intended as a prooemium to the *Republic*, but that half-way Plato changed his mind and used the alleged dialogue 'Thrasymachus' instead.<sup>18</sup> An interesting alternative was put forward recently by E. de Strycker:<sup>19</sup> Plato abandoned the *Clitophon* because he had expressed the same ideas better in the *Euthydemus*.

As the *Clitophon* itself gives, in my opinion, enough in-

<sup>12</sup> In itself, there is no objection to this possibility: when D. L. says that according to some the *Laws* were transcribed by Philip of Opus ὄντας ἐν κηρῶνι (3.37), hardly anything can be meant but a publication of a (finished or nearly finished) book found among Plato's 'papers' – it does not matter whether or not we believe the story, but those who spread it around obviously did not think it absurd (cf. for the problem G. Müller, *Studien zu den platonischen Nomoi* (Munich 1951), 8–11 and (unduly sceptical) van Groningen, 'ΕΚΔΟΣΙΣ', 13). Secondly, the *Critias* is not likely to have been published during Plato's life – an unfinished *Clitophon* would provide a parallel for it.

<sup>13</sup> *Index Lectionum der Universität Berlin 1840*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Plato*, III 19–26. 'The case against Sokrates has been made so strong, that I doubt whether Plato himself could have answered it to his own satisfaction' (21).

<sup>15</sup> 'Platonische Aufsätze, I', *SAWW* 114 (1887) 763.

<sup>16</sup> *Plato 12*: either unfinished or spurious.

<sup>17</sup> *Platon, Ideelle Gesamtdarstellung und Studienwerk* (Darmstadt 1966), 150–1.

<sup>18</sup> So most scholars quoted in the previous notes; cf. also F. Duemmler, *Zur Composition des platonischen Staates* (Basel 1895), 5 n. 1 = *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig 1901), I 232 n. 1: after replacing *Clit.* by *Republic* I, Plato decided to publish the former as a provoking prelude to the *Republic*; K. Joël, 'Der λόγος Σωκρατικός', 64–5; H. Maier, *Sokrates*, 285–6 n. 2; D. G. Ritchie, *Plato* (London 1902), 25.

<sup>19</sup> *De kunst van het gesprek* (Antwerpen–Amsterdam 1976), 10; cf. de Strycker–Slings, *Apology*, 133 n. 17.



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dications to decide whether or not it is finished, I shall treat the question without having regard to its authorship.

### 1.3.2 *The problem*

The *Clitophon* as we have it certainly does not give the impression of being an unfinished text. The closing sentence μή μὲν γὰρ προτετραμμένωι σε ἀνθρώπωι ὃ Σώκρατες ἄξιον εἶναι τοῦ παντός φήσω, προτετραμμένωι δὲ σχεδὸν καὶ ἐμπόδιον τοῦ πρὸς τέλος ἀρετῆς ἐλθόντα εὐδαίμονα γενέσθαι (410e5–8) provides everything we should expect from it: it recapitulates the appreciation of Socrates' activities as expounded by Clitophon in the two major sections of the dialogue, yet it does so in slightly stronger language than Clitophon had used before – this is to be expected in a peroration (ἄξιον . . . τοῦ παντός; σχεδὸν καὶ ἐμπόδιον); it ends up in a beautiful climax in the last clause τοῦ πρὸς τέλος ἀρετῆς ἐλθόντα εὐδαίμονα γενέσθαι, in which the key-word εὐδαίμονα comes as a sort of shock: although in fact the whole dialogue had been concerned with the way one achieves happiness, the word-group εὐδαίμων, -μονία etc. was not used before (cf. also Comm. ad loc.); there is besides a clear, though seemingly artless, antithetical structure. Apart from that, the last sentence is tied up inextricably with the last but one (cf. Comm. on 410e5 γάρ), in which the prologue is repeated almost word for word (406a2–3 ὅτι Λυσίαι διαλεγόμενος τὰς μὲν μετὰ Σωκράτους διατριβὰς ψέγοι . . . a6–7 τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἔγωγε οὐκ ἐπήνουν σε, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐπήνουν – 410e4–5 ἵνα μὴ καθάπερ νῦν τὰ μὲν ἐπαινῶ σε πρὸς Λυσίαν . . . τὰ δὲ τι καὶ ψέγω). The end of the text clearly looks back to the beginning.<sup>20</sup>

Besides, even if one does not accept Geffcken's analysis

<sup>20</sup> Pavlu, 'Pseudopl. Kleitophon', 5; Geffcken, 'Rätsel', 430 n. 1.

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of the *Clitophon* as a rhetorical κατηγορία in all details (section I.2), its disposition (exordium – narrative – accusation proper – epilogue), in which the introductory conversation corresponds, in my opinion, to the exordium of a judicial speech, shows a reasonable similarity to the pattern of a normal law-court accusation; consequently this disposition indicates a finished whole.

Now, these considerations in themselves do not disprove the possibility that something like a speech for the defence was originally intended by the author,<sup>21</sup> for even if Clitophon's accusation was intended to be answered, we should still expect it to be framed in the way it is and to end the way it does.

Therefore, we shall do better to start with hypothetical questions. If an answer by Socrates was intended, how was it prepared for – if at all – in the text of the dialogue that was actually written down? How would the figure of Socrates in such an answer correspond to the characterisation in the text? What would Socrates have been able to say in order either to deny the charge or to accept and explain it? These are questions which cannot be answered without giving at the same time an interpretation of the *Clitophon*. On the other hand such an interpretation is possible only

<sup>21</sup> This point is overlooked by Brünnecke ('Kleitophon wider Sokrates', 453), the only scholar who has adduced fundamental arguments against the torso theory (Roochnik, 'Riddle', 135–6 argues against individual hypotheses based on the assumption). – We may safely discount the possibility of mutilation of the text posterior to its publication in a more complete form (section I.3.1) even if Boeckh's argument (n. 5 to that section) does not hold water. If the mutilation was mechanical, the chances of its occurring right at the place where Clitophon's *requisitoire* ends are infinitesimal; if it was intended, we have to imagine a fanatically anti-Socratic reader cutting away, say, half of his copy of the *Clitophon* so as to provide it with an anti-Socratic tenor. Furthermore, we have to assume that it was precisely this copy or one of its descendants which eventually found its way into the Corpus Platonicum, unchecked against other copies. I shall not waste more words on the possibility.

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if we are certain that the text as it stands responds to the author's intention. In answering them we are entering a special case of the hermeneutic circle.

(1) Socrates' reaction to Clitophon's opinion of him is foreshadowed in what he says after Clitophon has offered to give a detailed account of what he had praised and criticised in Socrates' διατριβαί: Ἄλλ' αἰσχρὸν μὴν σοῦ γε ὠφελεῖν με προθυμουμένου μὴ ὑπομένειν· δῆλον γὰρ ὡς γνοῦς ὅπῃ χείρων εἰμὶ καὶ βελτίων τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσω καὶ διώξομαι, τὰ δὲ φεύξομαι κατὰ κράτος (407a1-4). What Socrates says is in effect this: 'In offering to report your praise and blame you have offered to make me a better man [ὠφελεῖν; cf. Comm. ad loc.]. For, of course, if I have learnt about my better and weaker points, I shall strengthen the former and abandon the latter.' Socrates makes two assumptions (cf. section 1.5.2), one typical of him (knowledge of what is good leads automatically to doing what is good), the other highly ironical: Clitophon's praise and blame (οὐκ ἐπήϊουν – καὶ ἐπήϊουν, 406a5) correspond infallibly to Socrates' weaker and stronger points (χείρων – βελτίων). With this second assumption Socrates makes it impossible in advance to defend himself: Clitophon is the one who knows in what respect his διατριβαί deserve praise and blame, and all that is left to Socrates is to listen demurely. In this interpretation, Socrates has no option but to remain silent: he has – ironically – placed Clitophon above himself (as he does with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, Euthyphron, Hippias etc.) and he cannot break the irony (he never does).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Irony is mainly or exclusively a trait of *Plato's* Socrates (cf. W. Boder, *Die sokratische Ironie in den platonischen Frühdialogen* (Amsterdam 1973), 23-5) and our author at any rate handles the dialogue in Plato's way (section 11.4); I therefore feel justified in making this general observation, based on undoubtedly authentic dialogues, even if the authorship of this dialogue is dubious.

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Some other features of the text reinforce what may be concluded from the sentence 407a1–4. Clitophon’s praise of the protreptic speech is unmistakably ironic (407a6 πολλάκις ἐξεπληττόμην ἀκούων; 408b6–7 λόγοις ... παμπόλλοις καὶ παγκάλως λεγομένοις; section 1.5.3). It is hard to see why the author should have worked in the irony if he intended to make Socrates wash himself clean of the allegations.

In the summing-up and the epilogue Clitophon makes a ‘last appeal’ to Socrates to start telling him all about the care of the soul, despite the dilemma stated previously by him ἢ οὐκ εἰδέναι σε ἢ οὐκ ἐθέλειν αὐτῆς ἐμοὶ κοινωνεῖν (410c5–6). The sentence ἐπεὶ εἴ γ’ ἐθέλεις σὺ τούτων μὲν ἤδη παύσασθαι πρὸς ἐμὲ τῶν λόγων τῶν προτρεπτικῶν, οἷον δέ ... καὶ νῦν δὴ ταύτων γιγνέσθω (410c8–d5) and the clause καὶ σου δεόμενος λέγω μηδαμῶς ἄλλως ποιεῖν (e3) seem to me to indicate that Clitophon is not quite serious in stating the dilemma – he may just have used it to incite Socrates to stop exhorting him and others and get down to business. It is, however, obvious that if Socrates did get down to business, Clitophon’s attack would have been implicitly justified; so curiously enough these words, which on the surface seem to point towards an answer, in fact preclude such an answer.

(2) With these remarks we have already approached the second question, namely how an answer by Socrates would square with the character of Socrates as outlined in the text. There are in fact two quite different characters parading under that name (section 1.5.2). The first is the Socrates sketched by the author in the opening conversation: formal in his first, ironical in his second ῥῆσις. The second is Socrates the preacher, depicted by Clitophon, who moreover states expressly that Socrates had uttered a statement about justice which on closer examination had proved untenable (410a8–b3). These two characters can coexist within the framework of one dialogue so long as

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they remain on separate levels (see section 1.5.1), but they cannot occur at the same level without either of them proving false. Such a confrontation would be bound to take place if Socrates were to answer the charge. This answer would belong to the direct dialogue, so it would be up to the ironical Socrates of the prologue, who forgoes any claim to knowledge, to defend the exhorter,<sup>23</sup> who has made a false statement about justice, and who has therefore made himself guilty of what is elsewhere called ἐπο-  
 νειδιστος ἀμαθία (*Apology* 29b1–2). I doubt if even a clumsy writer would fail to realise the impossibility of this task.

(3) As to the content of such a defence, an ironical Socrates who admits to knowing nothing and goes on to explain his way of philosophising (like the one in the *Theaetetus*) would clash with the one who humbly places himself under Clitophon's guidance, even if it were possible for him to explain away the deficiencies of the pompous preacher who is lacking in knowledge. True, Clitophon leaves open the possibility that Socrates, though admittedly a good exhorter, does not possess knowledge of the subject towards which his exhortations are directed: νομίσας σε τὸ μὲν προτρέπειν εἰς ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν κάλλιστ' ἀνθρώπων δρᾶν, δυοῖν δὲ θάτερον, ἢ τοσοῦτον μόνον δύνασθαι, μακρότερον δὲ οὐδέν (410b4–7) ... ἢ οὐκ εἰδέναι σε ἢ οὐκ ἐθέλειν αὐτῆς ἐμοὶ κοινωνεῖν (c5–6). This may have been intended as an opening for a defence. What beneficial function could have been attributed to an exhorter without knowledge? Plato's *Apology* provides the answer: there Socrates repeatedly testifies to his lack of knowledge and rather suddenly appears as an exhorter (29d4–e3). But this time the exhortation is inseparably tied

<sup>23</sup> When Brünneke says ('Kleitophon wider Sokrates', 456) that the Socrates of this dialogue could only have answered the charge with a new protreptic, he fails to distinguish between the two levels.

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up with the expulsion of conceit, in other words with elenchos (29e3–30a3); section 11.3.3). Could this combination of absence of knowledge, exhortation and elenchos have been used in the *Clitophon* as a defence of Socrates? The answer is no. Clitophon himself does not possess knowledge and does not pretend to possess it, so elenchos is pointless in this case. What is more, there *is* elenchos in the *Clitophon*, but it is directed *against* Socrates and his companions, and Clitophon is the one who uses it (section 11.4).

There is only one answer left to Socrates once Clitophon has finished: an admission of guilt and a promise to mend his ways accordingly. But as this promise has already been made (τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσω καὶ διώξομαι, τὰ δὲ φεύξομαι κατὰ κράτος 407a3–4), Socrates had to remain silent: any answer would have been trivial. Socrates' silence is not a sign of superiority (cf. Ptolemy, section 1.3.1) or of a fundamental difference between him and Clitophon, which makes discussion impossible (so Roochnik, 'Riddle', 140–3) – he has been beaten at his own game. The structure of the *Clitophon* was therefore intended from the beginning.

### 1.4 The *Clitophon* as a Short Dialogue

#### 1.4.1 *The question of genre*

One of the first things that strike the reader of the *Clitophon* is that it is so short. While this has some obvious advantages for the commentator, it also presents him with the problem of generic difference. If we take the epic genre as an analogon, we observe that in the course of Greek literature a subdivision develops for which bulk is the criterion. The most plausible hypothesis about the length of the oral epic before Homer's time is that it did not last much longer than the average listener could toler-

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ate;<sup>24</sup> maybe the poems of Hesiod and the data about the number of books of various epics of the Cycle give us an idea. If this is right, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were considerably longer than previous epics used to be. At this point a decision must be made: is the difference in length an irrelevant factor or does it go hand in hand with a number of structural differences, for instance a more complicated plot, more attention to character, more, lengthier and better-structured speeches etc.? If the answer is affirmative and the differences are significant, it is useful to assign the new lengthy epics to a special sub-genre, which is now well-known under the name of Monumental Epic. One of the most important criteria is the possibility of compression. We are told that long South Slavic epics can be compressed into one-sixth of their actual length without great damage;<sup>25</sup> the Homeric epics cannot. Therefore the latter are monumental, the former are just long.

A similar case can be made for *Republic* and *Laws* as Monumental Dialogues rather than abnormally long dialogues. Perhaps also the unfinished trilogies *Sophist* – *Politicus* – ‘*Philosophus*’ and *Timaeus* – *Critias* – ‘*Hermogenes*’ might be fruitfully analysed as belonging to this sub-genre.<sup>26</sup> It is not the place here to enter into details.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> This may have fluctuated considerably according to the occasion, the composition of the audience and, of course, the quality of the singer. Cf. A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge (Mass.) 1960), 14–17, on the South Slavic parallels.

<sup>25</sup> D. Wender, ‘Homer, Avdo Mededović, and the elephant’s child’, *AJPh* 98 (1977) 327–47 at 339.

<sup>26</sup> This is true *a fortiori* if M. W. Haslam is right in claiming that *Sophist* and *Politicus*, and *Timaeus* and *Critias*, are single dialogues that were split up in the course of the transmission of Plato, ‘A note on Plato’s unfinished dialogues’, *AJPh* 97 (1976) 336–9.

<sup>27</sup> Among the most prominent features of the monumental dialogue would be: full treatment of the subjects encountered and related ones, even when this would appear unnecessary – e.g. the proof of immortality in *Republic* 10: mention of immortality is of central importance to the *Republic* (it is the precondition of one of the rewards

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As a counterpart of the Monumental Epic we are confronted with the Epyllion. It is not easy to find the common denominator for the various representatives of this sub-group (most of them are partly or wholly unknown to us), the more so because we shall be tempted to introduce as typical features of the Epyllion what are in fact general characteristics of Hellenistic narrative poetry. Fortunately, there is no need to pursue the matter further, but for one aspect. The Epyllion is often considered an invention of Hellenistic poets, and the creation of the sub-genre typical of that era. There is no compelling reason for thinking so.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the Hesiodic collection of Ἡοϊά is little else than a string of epyllia, the *Aspis* belongs here, and some Homeric Hymns are closely related (one may also think of narrative choral songs like Bacchylides 17).

As an analogy to the Epyllion, Carl Werner Müller has

of justice), but a proof is superfluous after what had been said earlier about the theory of forms; frequent digression within the discussion, after which the main line of thought is resumed; virtual absence of arguments *ad hominem*; virtual absence of those short-cuts which are created by making a partner willingly grant a highly debatable point; virtual absence of elenchos as purification, cf. section 11.3.1 (even in the case of Thrasy machus); absence of concentric reasoning (section 11.5.1); frequent deliberations about questions of method; frequent reflections about the results that have been achieved so far. Most of these features are closely connected which each other; some of them will be typical of other dialogues as well – especially *Phlb.*

<sup>28</sup> I agree with M. L. West ('Erinna', *ZPE* 25 (1977) 95–119, esp. 116–19) that Erinna, whose Ἡλακκία belongs to the sub-genre, is certainly not an 'unsophisticated teenage girl'; I disagree when he thinks it necessary to assume that 'Erinna' was really a pseudonym of a mature poet, though I can see his point and he has an unknown ancient authority (cf. Ath. 283d) behind him; but when he brings down the *floruit* of Olymp. 107 (352–48 BCE) which we have on the authority of Origenes (= Hieronymus and Syncellus) to 'the end of the fourth century or very early in the third' he is biased; besides, Erinna was imitated by Anyte and Nossis (West, 114 and n. 36) and commemorated by Asclepiades (xxviii G.–P.) – all of whom belong to the late fourth or early third centuries.