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THE ROLE OF WEALTH AND THE VALUE OF POVERTY
IN SOCRATIC LITERATURE:
A READING OF AESCHINES' *CALLIAS* AND *TELAUGES*

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ABSTRACT: The paper focuses on Socrates' views on wealth and poverty in Aeschines' *Callias* and *Telauges*. Given the fragmentary status of both works, I will examine the scanty surviving testimonies in relation to some parallel passages by other Socratics, in order to enrich the understanding of Aeschines' lost dialogues.

The first part of the paper addresses the theme of wealth from a 'biographical' perspective, by dealing with a set of sources attesting to Aeschines' life of poverty. In the second part of the paper the analysis focuses on the philosophical discussion regarding the problem of wealth, by tackling the peculiar view of the relationship between *πενία* and *πλοῦτος* and the related non-material conception of wealth expounded in the *Callias* and the *Telauges*. In the concluding section I will briefly examine the parallel accounts in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and *Memorabilia*, so as to reconstruct the wider debate about the problem of wealth raised within the *logoi Sokratikoi*.

KEYWORDS: Aeschines of Sphettus, *Callias*, *Telauges*, Socrates, wealth, poverty.

For all those first-generation philosophers ‘for whom Socrates was a hero’ – wrote Schaps – ‘money and wealth, and the equation of wealth with money, were problematic’¹. This apparently vague utterance makes a crucial point, as we will see, about the problem of wealth in Socratic literature. It can thus be taken as a starting point for my analysis, which aims to explore this issue by focusing on Socrates’ views on wealth and poverty in Aeschines’ dialogues – namely, in the *Callias* and the *Telauges*. Given the fragmentary status of both works, I will examine the scanty surviving testimonies in relation to some parallel passages by other Socratics, so as to enrich the understanding of Aeschines’ lost dialogues and to reconstruct, at least in part, the wider debate about the problem of wealth raised within the *logoi Sokratikoi*.

The paper first addresses the theme of wealth from a ‘biographical’ perspective, by dealing with a trait that all sources ascribe to Aeschines, and which proves to be connected to his relationship with Socrates: his life of poverty. The close analysis of a set of texts dealing with a certain ‘Aeschines son of Sellus’ – who, though poor, presented himself as a rich man – will pave the way for the examination of some fundamental accounts of Socrates’ attitude towards wealth, which represents a sort of *topos* in the Socratic dialogues.

This will allow me to shift, in the second part of the paper, from the biographical level to a philosophical discussion regarding the problem of wealth. Socrates’ ‘boasting’ about his poverty – and his peculiar view of the relationship between *πενία* and *πλοῦτος* – is based on a specific, non-material conception of wealth that is expounded in some of Aeschines’ dialogues, particularly the *Callias* and the *Telauges*.

The arguments presented by Aeschines’ Socrates bear a close resemblance to those found in other Socratic dialogues, particularly Xenophon’s account in the *Oeconomicus* and the *Memorabilia*. In the concluding section I will briefly examine these different accounts for the purpose of reconstructing the wider debate on the problem of wealth in which Aeschines’ dialogues are to be placed.

¹ See David M. Schaps, ‘Socrates and the Socratics: When Wealth Became a Problem’, *The Classical World* 96/2 (2003), 142.

I. Aeschines the ‘*pauper auditor*’

Aeschines’ poverty and his destitute way of life are emphasised by the majority of biographical sources. This aspect is mentioned especially by those testimonies dealing with Aeschines’ visit to Sicily²: Diogenes Laertius (3.36; 2.61), Hesychius of Miletus (*De vir. illustr.* 3) and the Suidas (*s.v.* σύστασις) report that he went to see Dionysius ‘because of his poverty’ (δι’ ἀπορίαν: fr. 6, 20, 28–9 P. = VI A 3–4 SSR)³; similarly, according to Philostratus (*Vit. Apoll.* 1.35, 1), ‘monetary reasons’ made him go to Syracuse (ὕπὲρ χρημάτων: fr. 26 P. = VI A 14 SSR). Moreover, we read in the *Codex Vaticanus graecus* 96 (fol. 62v) that Aeschines, ‘burdened with poverty’ (ἐπιέζετο ὑπὸ πενίας), borrowed some food from Socrates (fr. 17 P. = VI A 9 SSR), an episode also reported by Diogenes Laertius (2.62 = fr. 20 P. = VI A 9 SSR); again, Athenaeus (11.507c) describes him as a πένης (Αἰσχίνου τε πένητος ὄντος: fr. 18 P. = VI A 21 SSR) and Seneca (*De benef.* 1.8, 1–2) as a pauper auditor (fr. 12 P. = VI A 6 SSR).

Besides these sources, whose references to Aeschines of Sphettus are undisputed, it is worth considering a set of texts mentioning a certain Αἰσχίνης Σελλοῦ, which include a few verses from Aristophanes’ *Wasps* and *Birds*, a scholium to the *Birds*, and the entry σεσέλλισαι from some Byzantine lexica. It falls beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in depth the difficulties raised by their attribution to the Socratic philosopher, a matter that I have addressed elsewhere⁴. However, it is necessary here to take greater account of certain chronological problems, particularly those pertaining to Aristophanic comedies.

Aristophanes, indeed, repeatedly taunts a poor man named Aeschines, who boasts about his wealth despite his extreme destitution, but the interpretation of these

² See Karl F. Hermann, *De Aeschinis Socratici reliquiis* (Göttingen, 1850), 6–7 and note 9. The issue of poverty is also linked to another fundamental aspect of Aeschines’ life, which cannot be tackled within the confines of this paper: the teaching of rhetoric, a topic particularly dealt with by Diogenes Laertius (2.20; 2.62 = fr. 19–20 P. = VI A 7; 13 SSR). Aeschines’ destitute conditions and all the debts he incurred (see Athen. 13.611d–612f = fr. 35 P. = VI A 16 SSR) may indeed explain his need for the μισθός obtained from rhetoric lessons. On this issue see Domingo Plácido, ‘Esquines de Sfeto: las contradicciones del socratismo’, in Livio Rossetti and Alessandro Stavru, eds, *Socratica 2005: studi sulla letteratura socratica antica presentati alle Giornate di studio di Senigallia* (Bari: Levante, 2008), 125–30. Moreover, the fact that in 2.20 Diogenes mentions the Epicurean Idomeneus of Lampsacus as his source, and that in the same passage Aeschines is associated with Socrates in relation to this activity, suggests a connection between this tradition and anti-Socratic Epicurean polemics, on which see at least Anna Angeli, ‘I frammenti di Idomeneo di Lampsaco’, *Cronache Ercolanesi* 11 (1981), 41–101.

³ Henceforth, the numbering of the testimonies on Aeschines will follow the edition *Eschine di Sfetto. Tutte le testimonianze* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017). The corresponding number of the source in the collection *Socratis and Socraticorum Reliquiae* (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1990) is also reported when present.

⁴ See Francesca Pentassuglio, ‘Eschine di Sfetto: alcune nuove testimonianze’, *Méthexis* 29 (2017), 64–71, and *Eschine di Sfetto. Tutte le testimonianze*, 26–9; 31 ff.

testimonies is highly controversial. A first complication is due to the fact that the Aeschines presented here is called the ‘son of Sellus’ and that this appellation is not attested elsewhere. As we learn from *Vesp.* 1243–7, this Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σέλλου⁵ was a ‘well-trained and clever musician’ (ἀνὴρ σοφὸς καὶ μουσικός), and a character explicitly associated with wealth (χρήματα καὶ βίαν / Κλειταγόρα τε κάμοι / μετὰ Θετταλῶν). Along with the *Wasps*, (probably) the same Aeschines is mentioned in the *Birds*, where he is presented again as a man of great means: ‘I suppose Cloudcuckooland must be the place where the wealth (τὰ πολλὰ χρήματα) Theogenes boasts about is hidden, and Aischines’ money too’ (Aristoph. *Av.* 821 ss.; transl. by S. Halliwell).

Now, as I already had the chance to show⁶, it is possible to argue that ὁ Σέλλου is not a patronymic in Aristophanes, and thus that these verses would not be attesting to a (third)⁷ different tradition about the name of Aeschines’ father. First, it is noteworthy that, in the *Wasps* (1267), Aristophanes applies the appellation ὁ Σέλλου also to Amynias (ἀλλ’ Ἀμυνίας ὁ Σέλλου μᾶλλον οὐκ τῶν Κρωβύλων, κτλ.), who is often ridiculed for his poverty and boastfulness. Yet, we know from the same comedy that this Amynias was the son of Pronapus (74: Ἀμυνίας μὲν ὁ Προνάπου), and thus the genitive Σέλλου certainly does not indicate the name of his father. Therefore, one might argue that also in the case of Aeschines the appellation ὁ Σέλλου is not used as a patronymic, but as a nickname or a pseudo-patronymic, with further examples being found in Aristophanes⁸, and a parallel in Hipponattes⁹.

It is also worth focusing briefly on the origin of the appellation, and hence on the sense of the comic invective. We know from the *Iliad* that the Σελλοί were Zeus’ priests in Dodona and that they lived in extreme poverty:

⁵ Aeschines is given the same patronymic in *Vesp.* 323–6, while in 459 he is presented as ὁ Σελλαρτίου. The latter is to be understood, according to Meister, in the sense of Σελλοῖς ἄρτιος (‘zu Sellen passend, Sellengenosse’): see Richard Meister, ‘Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σελλοῦ’, *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* 141 (1890), 675. For a different interpretation see Douglas M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes. Wasps* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 195–6. Other comic distortions of proper names can be found, in the same comedy, in verses 342, 466, 592, and 836.

⁶ See Pentassuglio, *Eschine di Sfetto. Tutte le testimonianze*, 27–9.

⁷ The majority of sources present Aeschines as the son of Lysanias: see Suid. s.v. Σωκράτης (fr. 7 P.); Plat. *Apol.* 33e (fr. 9 P. = VI A 5 SSR); Ael. Aristid. *De rhet.* 1.66 (fr. 23 P. = VI A 10 SSR); Philostrat. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.35, 1 (fr. 26 P. = VI A 14 SSR); Phrynichus *ap. Phot. Biblioth.* cod. 61 (fr. 50 P. = VI A 33 SSR). Both the Suida (s.v. Αἰσχίνης = fr. 39 P. = VI A 25 SSR) and Diogenes Laertius (2.60 = fr. 5 P. = VI A 3 SSR) attest to a second tradition according to which Aeschines is the son of Charinus.

⁸ Cf. Aristoph. *Vesp.* 1267 (τῶν Κρωβύλου) and *Ach.* 1131 (Λάμαχον τὸν Γοργάσου).

⁹ Fr. 32.34 West (42a–b. 43 Degani): Ἐρμῆ, φίλ’ Ἐρμῆ, Μαιαδεῦ, Κυλλήνιε.

Ζεῦ ἄνα Δωδωναῖε Πελασγικὲ τηλόθι ναίων, / Δωδώνης μεδέων
 δυσχειμέρου, ἀμφὶ δὲ Σελλοὶ / σοὶ ναίουσ' ὑποφῆται ἀνιπτόποδες
 χαμαιεῦναι (*Il.* 16.234).

Zeus, lord, Dodonaean, Pelasgian, who dwell afar, ruling over wintry
 Dodona – and about you live the Selli, your interpreters, men with
 unwashed feet who sleep on the ground (transl. by A. T. Murray and
 W. F. Wyatt).

We may conclude that when Aeschines is given the appellation ὁ Σέλλου, this is probably to be understood in the sense that he has the same nature and way of life as a ‘Sellus’¹⁰. Nonetheless, while accepting this interpretation, the problem of the identification of the character remains open, and it must be acknowledged that only Meister argued in favour of the identification of this Aeschines son of Sellus with the Socratic philosopher¹¹. The only other association between the two figures can be found in the *Socratis and Socraticorum Reliquiae*, but it is quite indirect: the section of Giannantoni’s collection devoted to *Aeschines Socraticus* (VI A) includes the above-mentioned scholium to Aristophanes’ *Birds* (823a = VI A 6 *SSR*), which – according to an edition¹² posterior to that consulted by Giannantoni¹³ – mentions an Αἰσχίνης Σελλοῦ, while also reporting the same information about his poverty and boastfulness.

Regardless of this, the main argument against the identification remains the chronology of Aristophanes’ comedies, and particularly of the *Wasps*¹⁴. This proves, indeed, incompatible with the little we know about Aeschines’ life: if we hold, on the basis of the biographical sources at our disposal, that Aeschines’ birth is to be placed around 435 BCE¹⁵, then he was certainly too young to be defined as an ἀνὴρ σοφὸς καὶ μουσικός in 422 BCE, when Aristophanes’ *Wasps* was first staged. Unless we re-assess

¹⁰ See MacDowell, *Aristophanes. Wasps*, 178; Giuseppe Mastromarco and Piero Totano, eds, *Commedie di Aristofane*, vol. 2 (Torino: Utet, 2006), 204, note 177. In this regard, Meister argued that the genitive ὁ Σέλλου is used here as an equivalent of the adjective Σέλλιος (‘*der Sellische*’) and hence that it is to be interpreted as a ‘*quasi patronimisches Genitiv*’, just like ‘son of heros’ (‘*Heldensohn*’) is employed in place of ‘heroic’ (‘*heldenhaff*’): see Meister, ‘Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σελλοῦ’, 675.

¹¹ Meister, ‘Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σελλοῦ’, 676.

¹² *Scholia in Aristophanem*, sumptus suppeditante Instituto Batavo scientiae purae (N.W.O.), pars II: *Scholia in Vespas; Pacem; Aves et Lysistratam*, fasc. III: *Scholia vetera et recentiora in Aristophanis Aves*, edidit D. Holwerda (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1991).

¹³ *Scholia graeca in Aristophanem cum prolegomenis grammaticorum*, varietate lectionum optimorum codicum integra, ceterorum selecta annotatione criticorum item selecta, cui sua quadam inseruit Fr. Dübner (Parisiis: A. Firmin Didot, 1877). The edition is flawed and presents a much shorter version of the scholium.

¹⁴ In this regard, I am indebted to Michele Corradi for his valuable observations during the discussions at the conference, and for his extremely helpful comments on the earlier version of the paper. They made me tackle the chronological problem more seriously and re-think the issue of the identification of Aeschines ‘son of Sellus’ with the Socratic philosopher. Also the following interpretation of the scholium and of the testimonies provided by the Byzantine lexicographers depends on this re-assessment of the question.

¹⁵ See Pentassuglio, *Eschine di Sfetto. Tutte le testimonianze*, 24–5.

the fundamental dates of Aeschines' biography, these chronological considerations undeniably militate against the identification of Aeschines 'son of Sellus' with the pupil of Socrates¹⁶.

Now, despite all this, we can still draw some useful information about the problem of wealth both from the scholium to the *Birds* and from the Byzantine lexica. These sources are worth quoting at length:

Schol. in *Aristoph. Av.* 823a α (fr. 15 P. = VI A 6 SSR): τά τ' Αἰσχίνου γε ἅπαντα: καὶ οὗτος πένης, θρυπτόμενος καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ πλούτῳ, καὶ λέγων ἑαυτὸν πλούσιον. ἦν δὲ Αἰσχίνης Σελλοῦ. ἔλεγον δὲ ἐκ μεταφορᾶς τοὺς τοιοῦτους Σελλοὺς, καὶ τὸ ἀλαζονεύεσθαι δὲ σελλίζειν.

823a. β: ὅτι καὶ ὁ Αἰσχίνης οὗτος πένης ἦν θρυπτόμενος καὶ λέγων ἑαυτὸν πλούσιον. ἦν δὲ καὶ Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σελλοῦ, ὃς ἦν ἀλαζών. ἔλεγον δὲ ἐκ μεταφορᾶς τούτου καὶ τὸ ἀλαζονεύεσθαι σελλίζειν.

823a. α: All the wealth of Aeschines: he was poor too, even though he showed reluctance when it came to wealth and claimed he was rich. And Aeschines was the 'son of Sellus'. By extension, people like him were called 'Selloi' and the act of boasting 'styling oneself a Sellus'.
823a. β: because this Aeschines was poor too, even though he rejected (wealth) and claimed he was rich. And Aeschines was the 'son of Sellus', who was a boaster. By extension, the act of boasting was also defined as 'styling oneself a Sellus' (my translation).

Suid. s.v. σεσέλλισαι (fr. 16 P.): μάτην ἐπῆρσαι. ἀπὸ Αἰσχίνου τοῦ Σελλοῦ, ὃς ἦν κομπαστῆς καὶ ἀλαζών ἐν τε τῷ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ ἐν τῷ προσποιεῖσθαι πλουτεῖν. Λυκόφρων δ' ἀπέδωκε τὸ σελλίζεσθαι ἀντὶ τοῦ ψελλίζεσθαι. ὁ γὰρ Αἰσχίνης πένης ὢν ἐθρύπτετο ἐπὶ πλούτῳ, λέγων ἑαυτὸν πλούσιον. ἦν δὲ Αἰσχίνης Σελλοῦ. ἐκ μεταφορᾶς δὲ ἔλεγον τοὺς τοιοῦτους Σελλοὺς καὶ τὸ ἀλαζονεύεσθαι σελλίζειν¹⁷.

'To style oneself a Sellus': to exalt oneself vainly. This comes from Aeschines 'son of Sellus', who was a charlatan and a boaster in discussions and in pretending to be rich. Lycophron used the expression 'styling oneself a Sellus' instead of 'speaking vaguely'. Indeed, Aeschines, though poor, claimed that he was rich. And Aeschines was the 'son of Sellus'. By extension, people like him were called 'Selloi' and the act of boasting 'styling oneself a Sellus' (my translation)¹⁸.

¹⁶ As far as the Aeschines mentioned in the *Birds* is concerned, we do not run into the same chronological difficulties. Nonetheless, the character is generally identified with the Aeschines 'son of Sellus' of the *Wasps*: see Mastromarco and Totano, *Commedie di Aristofane*, 204; Zachary P. Biles, and S. Douglas Olson, eds, *Aristophanes. Wasps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 193: 'cf. *Av.* 823, where what must be the same Aeschines is ridiculed for being poorer than he claims'.

¹⁷ Cfr. Phot. s.v. σεσέλλισαι: μάτην ἐπῆρσαι. ἀπ' Αἰσχίνου τοῦ Σελλοῦ, ὃς ἦν κομπαστῆς καὶ ἀλαζών ἐν τε τῷ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ ἐν τῷ προσποιεῖσθαι πλουτεῖν. Λυκόφρων δ' ἀπέδωκε τὸ σελλίζεσθαι ἀντὶ τοῦ ψελλίζεσθαι.

¹⁸ Cf. Hesych. Alex. s.v. σεσέλλισαι: 'Styling oneself a Sellus': there is a certain Aeschines, called 'son of Sellus', a boaster in discussions and in pretending to be rich; extremely poor, so that anyone else like him

In all likelihood, scholiasts knew nothing about this character, and thus the alleged information about Aeschines ‘son of Sellus’ may be of autoschediastic origin. Nonetheless, we cannot exclude that what lies at the root of the story invented by the scholiasts is a conflation between the Aristophanic character and Aeschines of Sphettus, who – as we will see – in his dialogues had extensively dealt with the issues of wealth and poverty, in terms that are not far from the scholium.

Interestingly, on the basis of the name ‘Sellus’ Phrynichus coined the verb σεσέλλισαι, again in relation to Aeschines, who boasted about his wealth despite being extremely poor (fr. 10.1: ἄγαμαι, Διονῦ, σοῦ στόματος, ὡς σεσέλλισαι). This is exactly the idea that we find in the explanation of the verb by the Byzantine lexicographer. If we combine the testimony of the scholium with the information provided by the entry σεσέλλισαι of the Suidas, Photius and Hesychius of Alexandria, it is possible to obtain a coherent portrait of the character these sources refer to: Aeschines the ‘son of Sellus’ was someone extremely poor (Hesych. Alex. s.v. σεσέλλισαι: πενόμενος δὲ καθ’ ὑπερβολήν) who in discussions boasted (*ibid.*: ἀλαζῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι) and claimed that he was rich (Schol. in Aristoph. Av. 823: λέγων ἑαυτὸν πλούσιον).

Although we cannot rely on explicit textual evidence (the scholia *never* mention the name of Aeschines of Sphettus), it may be supposed that the erudite tradition has erroneously identified the Aristophanic Aeschines with the Socratic philosopher, and that the scholiasts used some Socratic material (particularly from Aeschines) in order to explain Aristophanes’ verses. This was probably due to a certain resemblance with the conception of wealth expounded in Aeschines’ works. Indeed, besides the information about Aeschines’ poverty, these testimonies introduce a crucial element: the ‘son of Sellus’, though poor, presented himself as a rich man (as we read in the scholium to the *Birds*) or even ‘pretended to be rich’ (as the Suidas and Hesychius report). More significantly, according to the same scholium, he showed a certain reluctance towards wealth (θρυπτόμενος καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ πλούτῳ).

Now, this peculiar view of the relationship between wealth and poverty seems to underlie a non-material conception of πλοῦτος that leads us to Aeschines’s dialogues, and that represents the core of the following investigation. The apparent paradox of presenting oneself as a rich man although living in poverty may be properly understood

is said to <style himself a Sellus> (Αἰσχίνης τις ὑπῆρχε Σελλοῦ καλούμενος, ἀλαζῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ ἐν τῷ προσποιεῖσθαι πλούτειν, πενόμενος δὲ καθ’ ὑπερβολήν, ὡς τοὺς παραπλησίους τούτῳ καλεῖσθαι <σεσέλλισαι>).

in the light of a peculiar conception of wealth that is not only expounded by Socrates in the *Callias* and the *Telauges* (see section II), but also recalls the figure of Socrates – particularly as described in Xenophon’s Socratic writings.

It is important, in this regard, to mention some anecdotal evidence showing that Aeschines’ poverty became a specific topic of conversation between Socrates and his ‘pupil’. According to an anecdote reported for the first time by Seneca, while other pupils used to offer Socrates gifts, Aeschines – pauper auditor – claimed that he could not find anything to give him, and that in this respect only he felt poor. Therefore, he decided to present Socrates with the only ‘thing’ he had: himself (*itaque dono tibi, quod unum habeo, me ipsum*). With this offer – Seneca finally observes – ‘Aeschines outdid Alcibiades [...] and the generous gifts of all the wealthy young men’ (*De benef.* 1.8, 1-2 = fr. 12 P. = VI A 6 SSR; transl. by M. Griffin and B. Inwood)¹⁹.

Now, Socrates’ attitude towards wealth is a recurring theme in Socratic writings. As is well known, Plato’s Socrates invokes his poverty in front of the judges as evidence that he has devoted his life to practising διαλέγεσθαι, without charging any money for wisdom (*Apol.* 23b–c; 31c; 38b; cf. *Resp.* 1.338b). Equally renowned is Aristophanes’ account in the *Clouds*, where Socrates and his companions are defined by Phidippides as ‘the quacks, the pale-faced wretches, the bare-footed fellows’ (vv. 102–3: τοὺς ἀλαζόνας τοὺς ὠχρῶντας τοὺς ἀνυποδήτους)²⁰. Moreover, in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* Socrates himself tells Ischomachus: πένης καλοῦμαι (11.3), and – even more explicitly – in *Memorabilia* 1.2, 58–9 the philosopher places himself among the πένητες. What seems particularly relevant here, beyond Socrates’ economic status²¹, is how he conceives the problem of wealth, and thus the reason why (according to some sources) he knowingly chose poverty.

The most telling testimony in this sense is that provided by Xenophon’s Socratic writings, which may be read in parallel with the sources on Aeschines as the ‘son of Sellus’ just examined. Indeed, the same paradox of presenting oneself as a rich man while having no resources applies to Socrates both in book 2 of the *Oeconomicus* and in several passages of the *Memorabilia*. In the *Oeconomicus*, Socrates is asked to provide

¹⁹ The same anecdote can be found in Diogenes Laertius (2.34), who reports a shorter version of the story: ‘Aeschines said to him, ‘I am a poor man and have nothing else to give, but I offer you myself’ (πένης εἰμι καὶ ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν ἔχω, δίδωμι δέ σοι ἐμαυτόν), and Socrates answered, ‘Nay, do you not see that you are offering me the greatest gift of all?’’ (fr. 13 P. = VI A 6 SSR; transl. by R. D. Hicks).

²⁰ Even more strikingly, in the *Birds* Aristophanes coins a new verb from the name of Socrates (ἐσωκράτουν) to label those who had long hair and ‘went dirty like Socrates’ (1280–3).

²¹ On this topic see Schaps, ‘Socrates and the Socratics: When Wealth Became a Problem’, 141.

advice on how to increase one's belongings, and replies to Critobulus: 'I certainly think I have no need of more money and am rich enough (οὐδέν μοι δοκῶ προσδεῖσθαι χρημάτων, ἀλλ' ἰκανῶς πλουτεῖν). But you seem to me to be quite poor, Critobulus, and at times, I assure you, I feel quite sorry for you' (2.2; transl. by O. J. Todd). The paradoxical character of Socrates' statement clearly emerges in what follows: when Critobulus asks how much his property would fetch at a sale, he answers it 'might readily sell for five minae' (2.3). Therefore, the wealth Socrates boasts about is not of a material kind: as he further clarifies, 'my property is sufficient to satisfy my wants, but I don't think you would have enough to keep up the style you are living in and to support your reputation, even if your fortune were three times what it is' (2.4).

A peculiar view of wealth begins here to emerge. In particular, it follows from the idea of the 'inner' nature of true wealth: *a)* the actual poverty of the so-said 'rich', who are constantly unsatisfied and, conversely, *b)* the actual wealth of those who never lack what is necessary to meet their needs, despite having little or no resources. Therefore, men are truly 'rich' when they don't feel the need for what they don't possess and are capable of limiting their needs and hence of satisfying them with minimal material resources. This is the same conception underpinning some assertions Socrates makes in the *Memorabilia* (1.2, 1; 1.3, 5–8; 1.6, 2–10)²², and also the same theory expounded – according to the scanty testimonies at our disposal – in Aeschines' *Callias* and *Telauges*.

II. Aeschines

II.1. The *Callias*

Closer attention should now be paid to the *Callias*, and in particular to the discussion about πλοῦτος that is supposed to represent the core of the dialogue. The starting point to reconstruct the content of the work is the testimony provided by the pseudo-Socratic epistle VI (fr. 114 P. = VI A 74 SSR) and by Plutarch's *Life of Aristides* (25.4–9 = fr. 115 P. = VI A 75 SSR). The epistle gives a detailed account of a Socratic discussion about the problem of wealth, which already Hirzel had traced back to Aeschines' *Callias*²³. In particular, the reference to a dispute between a father and a son who squanders all his money (in paragraphs 7–8) may be connected to the διαφορά

²² Cf. *Mem.* 1.2, 5; 14; 1.5, 6 and *Cyr.* 1.5, 12; 1.6, 17.

²³ See Rudolf Hirzel, *Der Dialog. Ein literarhistorischer Versuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1895), 135.

(‘quarrel’ or ‘contrast’)²⁴ between Callias and his father Hipponicus mentioned by Athenaeus (5. 220b–c = fr. 113 = VI A 73 *SSR*).

The focus of our investigation is the discussion on the theme of wealth led by Socrates, who expounds a view based on the paradoxical equivalence between *πενία* and *πλοῦτος* and on the idea of the inner nature of true wealth.

He establishes an opposition between the ‘rich’ who are never satisfied with what they have, and whose condition leads to an incessant increase of their needs, and those ‘true rich’ whose limited resources suffice to fulfil their necessities (2–3). Throughout the text, Socrates pursues the ideal of freely chosen ‘poverty’, thereby objecting to those who identify *εὐδαιμονία* with wealth. This is why Socrates claims later on (5 ff.) that he will not bequeath his sons any riches and yet they will not lack what is necessary. Sure enough, he left them a *παράδειγμα παιδεύσεως*, by showing that being wise is the sole source of happiness (*μίαν ἀρχὴν εὐδαιμονίας ἐγὼ νομίζω φρονεῖν εὖ*; 5) and so that only the *ἀγαθός* may live happily.

As for the content of the *Callias*, we can infer from the epistle that the following view was held in the dialogue: true *εὐδαιμονία* is solely based on *εὖ φρονεῖν*, and such a goal is more easily attainable by a *πένης* like Socrates than by a rich man, who always risks misusing his wealth. Put differently, while a poor man can easily achieve *ἀρετή* and thus become *ἀγαθός*, a rich man is hindered – for example – by *κόλακες*, who are ‘dangerous to be around’ (*ὀμιλῆσαι δεινοί*; 6). Therefore, the starting point of the dialogue might have been the issue of the foundation of, and conditions for, true *εὐδαιμονία*, perhaps – as in the case of Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* – in relation to the apparent paradox that a man like Socrates, while appearing to be a *διδάσκαλος κακοδαιμονίας* to Antiphon, claims to have reached *εὐδαιμονία* (*Mem.* 1.6, 2 ff.).

A similar discussion is echoed in Plutarch’s account on the trial against Callias²⁵, who was accused of having exploited his cousin Aristides on several occasions, by taking advantage of his own authority, and of having then left him living in poverty, in a ratty cloak and with no resources (despite being the *πλουσιώτατος Ἀθηναίων*: 25.4).

²⁴ There is no agreement among scholars about how the term should be interpreted: see Friedrich G. Welcker, ‘Unächtheit der Rede des Lysias gegen den Sokratiker Aischines’, *Rheinisches Museum* 2 (1834), 422; Hermann, *De Aeschinis Socratici reliquiis*, 14; Hirzel, *Der Dialog. Ein literarhistorischer Versuch*, 135, note 2; Heinrich Krauss, *Aeschinis Socratici Reliquiae* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1911), 91, note 163.

²⁵ Even though the author does not expressly cite Aeschines, already Welcker and Hermann argued that Plutarch’s account preserved a portion of the *Callias*; see Welcker, ‘Unächtheit der Rede des Lysias gegen den Sokratiker Aischines’, 427 and note 29, and Hermann, *De Aeschinis Socratici reliquiis*, 12.

To respond to this charge, Callias claims he often proffered aid to Aristides, who always refused to accept it by replying that ‘it more became him to be proud of his poverty than Callias of his wealth’ (25.5; transl. by B. Perrin). In Aristides’ following words we find an explicit reference to the issue of ὀρθὴ χρῆσις: while it is easy to find those ‘who use wealth well or ill’ (εὖ τε καὶ κακῶς χρωμένους) – states Aristides – it is rare ‘to find a man who endured poverty with a noble spirit’ (*ibid.*).

By combining Plutarch’s account with the epistle, it may be argued that the discussion about the value of wealth was inserted in a wider debate on the issue of ὀρθὴ χρῆσις, just as in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* (1.7 ff.; 13 ff.). It can therefore be supposed that a more general question lies in the background of the dialogue, such as: under what circumstances is something to be considered ‘good’, and hence to bring benefits? More particularly, we may imagine a discussion on the ὀρθὴ χρῆσις of wealth and on the issue of whether wealth could make one happy.

It should be noted, however, that this topic is dealt with from different perspectives in the two sources: while the pseudo-Socratic epistle stresses the risks and the pernicious consequences of a misuse of wealth (making the way of life of a πένης like Socrates preferable), Plutarch’s passage suggests the idea that, while anyone can make good or bad use of wealth, only a few people succeed in bearing poverty ‘in a noble way’ (γενναίως), especially among those who cannot be ‘otherwise than poor’ and are ashamed of the fact (πενίαν αἰσχύνεσθαι). That is not, however, the case of Socrates, nor that of Aristides who, like a ‘second’ Socrates, has chosen to live in poverty and proudly proclaims his way of life.

Ultimately, it may be argued that Aeschines meant to represent various types of poverty, through a comparison between as many figures of ‘poor’ people which, as we will see, finds clearer expression in the *Telauges*. At any rate, we only know the conclusion of such a (possible) discussion on the issue of ὀρθὴ χρῆσις: neither poverty nor wealth in themselves make one happy, as it all depends on the use one makes of both.

II.2. The *Telauges*

The issues addressed in the *Callias* partly overlap with the content of the *Telauges*, which seems to focus on a complementary topic: that of πενία.

We are informed about the figure of *Telauges* and the other characters of the dialogue by Proclus and Herodicus (*apud* Athenaeus). In particular, Proclus (*In Plat.*

Cratyl. 21 p. 8, 26–8 = fr. 125 P. = VI A 83 *SSR*) refers that Hermogenes was mocked by Aeschines ‘for being dominated by money’ (ὡς χρημάτων ἥττων); moreover, he did not take care of his companion Telauges and let him be ‘unkempt’ (ἀθεράπευτον)²⁶. Secondly, we know from Athenaeus (5.220a = fr. 126 P. = VI A 84 *SSR*) that in the same dialogue Aeschines ridiculed Critobulus because of his ignorance and coarseness, and that he also attacked ‘Telauges himself for paying a fuller half an obol per day to rent the robe he wore, and for wrapping himself in a sheepskin, fastening his shoes with rotten rope’ (transl. by S. D. Olson).

It is not possible within the limits of this paper to examine in depth all the characters who are mentioned here along with Telauges, and who engage in conversation with Socrates also in Plato’s and Xenophon’s works²⁷. What we may argue is that the issue of Hermogenes’ poverty triggered a wider discussion about the way of life and unkemptness of the so-called ‘Pythagorists’²⁸. The sources clearly seem to indicate that Aeschines portrayed Telauges as a ‘unkempt’ man (ἀθεράπευτος) who – according to Athenaeus – fastened his sandals with worn laces and regularly wore a κώδιον, or fleece²⁹. With regard to this item of clothing, it is worth mentioning an anecdote reported by Marcus Aurelius, where Socrates himself is presented as a κωδιοφόρος (11.28) who wears a coarse fleece as a garment (that is to say, as a ἱμάτιον), just like the κωδιοφόρος Telauges depicted by Aeschines. The sense of this mockery may lie in the fact that the reason behind this mode of dress differs in the two cases: Socrates, according to Marcus Aurelius’ account, made use of a κώδιον because of his poverty *and* because he did not care about ‘exterior’ things such as clothing; Telauges, on the contrary, used it to show off his ideal of self-sufficiency. Now,

²⁶ According to Dittmar this scene is to be placed at the beginning of the dialogue, when Hermogenes introduces his friend Telauges to Socrates. His function, therefore, would be simply to introduce the main character of the dialogue, and then participate in the following conversation with a minor role: see Heinrich Dittmar, *Aischines von Sphettos. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte der Sokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912), 227. Mársico believes instead that the scanty testimonies do not allow us to determine what kind of role Hermogenes played in the *Telauges*: see Claudia Mársico, *Los filósofos socráticos, Testimonios y fragmentos*, vol. 2: *Antístenes, Fedón, Esquines y Simón* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 2014), 421, note 105.

²⁷ For a wider analysis of the characters, I will refer to Pentassuglio, *Eschine di Sfetto. Tutte le testimonianze*, 207–11.

²⁸ This hypothesis had already been put forward by Dittmar, *Aischines von Sphettos. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte der Sokratiker*, 229.

²⁹ Socrates’ mocking is to be understood in the light of the specific use of the κώδιον provided for by Athenian customs, which limited the use of fleeces to the domestic sphere: see Pollux *Onomast.* 7.16; Hesych. Alex., *Etym. Magn.* and Suid. s.v. κώδιον; Aristoph. *Ran.* 1478; *Plut.* 166; *Eq.* 400; Schol. in *Aristoph. Eq.* 400; Plutarch. *Vit. dec. orat.* 842c (cf. *Vit. Ages.* 12); Plat. *Prot.* 315d; Diog. Laert. 2.139; Iambl. *Vit. Phyt.* 216.

precisely a certain ‘fanaticism’ of the ‘Pythagorists’ might be the target of Socrates’ criticism in the dialogue.

The testimonies at our disposal suggest that Aeschines aimed to represent different kinds of *πενία* through Telauges and Hermogenes: on the one hand, the ‘Pythagorist’ who voluntarily chooses to live in poverty (presumably flaunting his lifestyle); on the other hand, someone who is poor in spite of himself. Within this context, the figure of Critobulus was somehow inserted, a man who lives in a condition of *ῥυπαρότης*, despite his outer beauty³⁰. It is plausible that this figure of a rich man who lacks the real *κάλλος*, and hence finds himself in a condition of moral poverty (the opposite of Socrates), was introduced in the dialogue as a third ‘type’ along with Hermogenes and Telauges.

In this framework, the main rival of Socrates was probably Telauges himself, with his ideal of *Bedürfnislosigkeit* being expressed through the display of a poverty he had deliberately chosen. Against this view, Socrates may have expounded a different idea of self-sufficiency and freedom from want, which could be close to that stated in the *Callias* and also to that expressed by Xenophon’s Socrates. Such an opposition seems at least to be echoed in a passage by Marcus Aurelius (7.66 = fr. 128 P. = VI A 87 *SSR*) that raises the problem of the criterion for determining whether Telauges was morally better than Socrates. This might suggest that Aeschines compared the two different views of self-sufficiency embodied by Socrates and Telauges, with one of the two characters (i.e. Socrates) criticising the other.

The same context is reflected by the two brief fragments preserved by Priscian within his explanation of the verb *ἀπολαύω* (*Institut. grammat.* 18.189 = fr. 129 P. = VI A 88 *SSR*). The reference to the notions of *διάνοια* and *σπουδαιότης* indeed seems to fit well with the debate just outlined: Socrates, in particular, may have affirmed, against Telauges, the idea that *διάνοια* and *σπουδαιότης* are the only requirements for being a *καλὸς κάγαθός*; and that one’s external way of life does not factor into the equation, even when it is marked by poverty. It is not poverty in itself, or a flaunted disdain for outward appearance, which guarantees that a life is morally ‘good’. Again, as in the *Callias*, we may argue that the case of Telauges offers Socrates a good starting point for a wider discussion on *ὀρθὴ χρῆσις* (similar to that conducted in Plato’s *Euthydemus*:

³⁰ For a parallel, see the words Socrates addresses to Critobulus in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* (6.16): ἐνίου ἐδῶκον καταμανθάνειν τῶν καλῶν τὰς μορφὰς πάνυ μοχθηροῦς ὄντας τὰς ψυχὰς.

277e; 280e–282b); in other words, the other side of the ‘correct use’ of wealth turns out to be the ‘correct use’ of poverty. Particularly telling in this respect is an anecdote about Socrates reported by Diogenes Laertius (2.36): ‘When Antisthenes turned his cloak so that the tear in it came into view, ‘I see’, said he, ‘your vanity through your cloak’ (διὰ τοῦ τρίβωνος τὴν κενοδοξίαν)’ (transl. by R. D. Hicks).

It may be concluded that Aeschines focused the *Telauges* on the issue of poverty in all its various facets; by featuring a wide-ranging discussion about *πενία*, the dialogue presents a thematic overlap with the *Callias*. More particularly, we might imagine that in the dialogue Aeschines presented a sort of ‘ladder’ leading to the Socratic ideal – embodied only by Socrates himself – via a series of ‘steps’ represented by the positions of the other characters, from the farthest (Critobulus) to the closest (Hermogenes).

III. Parallels

The debate on the problem of wealth, which in some respects also involves Democritus (B 77 D.–K.), represents a *topos* in Socratic literature, especially in Xenophon’s works on Socrates. The *Oeconomicus*, in particular, allows us to draw a close comparison as regards for the general conception of wealth expounded by Socrates and the issue of ὀρθὴ χρῆσις³¹.

At the beginning of the work, Socrates leads Critobulus to admit that not everything a person owns can be defined as κτήματα, and Socrates’ interlocutor finally concedes that only ‘things that are beneficial to a person’ can be called ‘property’ (1.7). In this reply, Critobulus changes the term used by Socrates (κτήματα) to χρήματα, ‘possession’ or ‘money’, a slight fudge which is unlikely to be accidental: for it allows Socrates to play on the etymology of the term χρήματα (from χράομαι) so as to argue that nothing, not even money (ἀργύριον: 1.12–13), is χρήματα for a person who does not know how to use it; conversely, even enemies may be of benefit to those who know how to take advantage of them (1.14).

This position can be read in parallel with Socrates’ argument in the *Memorabilia* (1.2, 1; 1.3, 5; 1.6, 1–10): Socrates’ reluctance to value πλοῦτος is based on the principle that wealth is not actually a matter of money at all, but a matter of knowledge and especially of self-control. In this respect, I shall make a quick reference to a famous passage of the work (1.6, 1–10) where Socrates identifies εὐδαιμονία with μηδενός

³¹ For an in-depth investigation of Socrates’ position on wealth in the *Oeconomicus*, see Schaps, ‘Socrates and the Socratics: When Wealth Became a Problem’, 142 ff., which I closely follow here.

δεῖσθαι. After saying that ‘he was so frugal that it is hardly possible to imagine a man doing so little work as not to earn enough to satisfy the needs of Socrates’ (1.3, 5), in book 1 Xenophon has the philosopher put forward a line of argument similar to that of the *Oeconomicus*. In a conversation with Antiphon, who considered him a ‘teacher of unhappiness’ (κακοδαιμονίας διδάσκαλος) living ‘worse than a slave’, Socrates highlights the benefits of his moneyless way of life (1.6, 1–8).

It should then be pointed out that further parallels can be drawn with Antisthenes’ argument in Xenophon’s *Symposium*, with special regard to the provocative praise of wealth pronounced in chapter 4 (34–44). Here I can only touch upon Antisthenes’ λόγος, which immediately follows Charmides’ speech and carries the view conveyed there to the extreme: while the previous speech was aimed at describing the freedom recovered after the loss of riches (4.29–32), Antisthenes goes so far as to state not only that a person who owns nothing is not to be considered poor (as Charmides argued), but also that such a person shall esteem him- or herself as the richest. It is worth mentioning Huss’ opinion that the fundamental opposition between Antisthenes’ and Charmides’ speeches (‘being proud of one’s own wealth’ vs. ‘being proud of one’s own poverty’) may have been drawn from Aeschines’ *Callias*³².

The end point of the speech is, once more, τὸ μηδενὸς προσδεῖσθαι, that ‘having no needs’ that Niceratus wishes to borrow from Antisthenes (4.41)³³. Moreover, the arguments Antisthenes puts forward to assert the ‘inner’ nature of true wealth bear a close resemblance to the position upheld by Socrates in book 2 of the *Oeconomicus*. Indeed, here Critobulus seems to be in the same condition as Charmides before his fall into poverty (*Symp.* 4.30), and Socrates opposes his view by endorsing the kind of wealth that Antisthenes is proud of: he shows that someone is to be judged *rich* not on the basis of his possessions but on the basis of his ability to make correct use of them. The two speeches on wealth, therefore, show some close similarities, also from a linguistic point of view³⁴; to some extent, they overlap: in both cases ‘inner’ wealth is

³² See Bernhard Huss, *Xenophons Symposium. Ein Kommentar* (Stuttgart-Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1999), 22.

³³ From a similar perspective, Antisthenes feels compassion (οἰκτίρω: 4.37) for those rich citizens who consider themselves so poor that they strive to have more, just like Socrates feels compassion (οἰκτίρει: 2.4; οἰκτίρω: 2.7) for Critobulus, who seems to embody precisely that kind of Athenian citizen Antisthenes takes pity on.

³⁴ Furthermore, Brancacci places Antisthenes’ χρησις τῶν ὀνομάτων, which concerns the ‘correct use’ of things, names and judgements, within the wider debate on ὀρθὴ χρησις: see Aldo Brancacci, *Oikeios logos. La filosofia del linguaggio in Antistene* (Bibliopolis: Napoli, 1990), 75. I will leave aside here any comparison with the pseudo-Platonic *Eryxias*, on which see at least Georg Gartmann, *Der*

associated with moral freedom and social freedom, the former being the precondition and the latter the goal.

Sure enough, Xenophon was not the only author to address these issues. In Plato's *Euthydemus* Socrates argues that no good can be truly such without knowledge (278e–282d), and that wealth, strength, honor, etc. are even pernicious to the ignorant (218c–d). A further, well-known parallel can be found in Socrates' argument in the *Lysis* (207d–210d, particularly 208e). Nonetheless, it should be noted that only in Xenophon is the notion of ὀρθὴ χρῆσις explicitly (and exclusively) bound to the problem of wealth.

What emerges is a complex network of references connecting several *logoi Sokratikoi* with regard to the topic of πλοῦτος, which turns out to be connected to the fundamental issues of self-sufficiency and freedom from want³⁵. The parallels between Aeschines' *Callias* and Xenophon's Socratic writings, in particular, are so many and of such kind that we may suppose, following Dittmar, that the *Callias* was a crucial source for the composition of Xenophon's *Symposium*, and that to some extent it also inspired the first two chapters of the *Oeconomicus* and *Memorabilia* 1.6 (which Dittmar considered to be the source of the pseudo-Socratic epistle VI, together with the *Callias*)³⁶.

To conclude, the sources suggest that the view of wealth expounded in Aeschines' dialogues may be traced back to Socrates' teaching and heritage, both from a biographical point of view and from a 'doctrinal' one, namely with respect to the philosophical position that this choice of poverty implies.

As Schaps has pointed out, Socrates' attitude represented a radical departure from previous ideas about wealth, and the following generation of philosophers was the first to conceive wealth as a 'problem'³⁷. While previously the judgement of ancient authors about wealth had been 'fundamentally unequivocal and uncomplicated'³⁸, by

pseudoplatonische Dialog Eryxias (Diss. Bonn, 1949), and Renato Laurenti, ed., *Pseudo Platone. Erissia* (Bari: Laterza, 1969), particularly 62–3.

³⁵ See Rainer Nickel, 'Das Verhältnis von Bedürfnis und Brauchbarkeit in seiner Bedeutung für das kynostoische Ideal der Bedürfnislosigkeit', *Hermes* 100 (1972), 42–6.

³⁶ Dittmar, *Aischines von Sphettos. Studien zur Literaturgeschichte der Sokratiker*, 209.

³⁷ See Schaps, 'Socrates and the Socratics: When Wealth Became a Problem', particularly 131; 133; 140–4.

³⁸ See Moses I. Finley, *L'economia degli antichi e dei moderni* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2008), 35–6. This was true, according to Schaps, both for the archaic age in general and for the dramatists: see Schaps, 'Socrates and the Socratics: When Wealth Became a Problem', 134–9 and 139–40. What prevailed was the idea that material wealth was both necessary and good.

the end of the fifth century it was being replaced by a more skeptical view of wealth. The problem ‘is it good to be rich?’ was posed in a new way, and the first generation of Socratics had to integrate this idea of wealth into their views and philosophical theories. This is why – to go back to the opening question of our analysis – for all of them, for the first time, money and wealth, and even the very equation of wealth with money, became problematic.

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