

The common 4th century B.C. view according to which Homer was regarded as a poet and a wise man, the leading and most honorable, to the point of being considered “the educator of Greece” (Pl. *Resp.* 606e-607a), is strongly supported by the Platonic dialogues. The works of Plato are the main available source to get to know not only the great pedagogical esteem for Homer, but also the several educational traditions that used or relied on Homeric poetry in Classical Athens. We are certainly used to thinking of Socrates as standing out for contesting or blaming such customs and methods provided by rhapsodes, sophists and common people (Pl. *Resp.*; *Ion*; *Hp. mi.*). But conversely, he is also often depicted quoting, alluding to or remaking on Homeric passages when presenting his own views. Socrates even claims to feel a certain friendship or reverence for the poet and declares to be charmed by contemplating things through him, whom he considers to be amongst the few deserving to be called “philosophers” (Pl. *Resp.* 595b; 607c-d; *Phdr.* 278b-279b).

The puzzling twofold nature of the Socratic attitude towards Homer, coupled with the fact that Plato would become a figure as honored as the poet was, led ancient literary criticism to focus on the Platonic use and sharing of material and techniques proper to Homeric poetry. Works like those of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Maximus of Tyre, Longinus and above all Proclus, not only pointed out the philosopher’s debt to the poet, but even considered him to be an admirer of the Homeric genius unlike anyone else, and whose emulation basically attempted to reach and outperform the pedagogical power that the legendary poet had (Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* I, 13; Max. Tyr. *Or.* 26; [Longinus]; *Subl.* XIII, 2-3; Procl., *In R.* VI, 163.13-164.7; 202.7-205.23).

With an analogous spirit, studies of contemporary Platonists suggest that the dialogues were shaped using the Homeric text, especially the *Odyssey*, as a template, and making Socrates appear as going through equivalent experiences to those of Odysseus’ “νόστος”. With respect to *Protagoras*, previous attempts focused on explicit references to books X and XI, placing the dispute with the sophist and the events at Callias’ house in the symbolic context of Odysseus’ encounter with Circe and the following journey into the underworld. I attempt to bring that reading one step further, paying special attention to the narrated character and the dramatic context for the singing of those episodes and the parallel ones in *Protagoras*.

In first place, I consider the whole dialogue refiguring the episode in the *Odyssey* that works as a dramatic frame for the singing of Odysseus’ past adventures, the arrival at Phaeacia and the reception at Alcinous’ court. I regard Odysseus’ need to sing the *Apologue* as a call for hospitality to secure a safe passage home, working as a pattern for Socrates’ need of a tale at his own appearance in Athens to fulfill and secure a philosophical education in the city. In second place, I take into consideration the metanarrative dimension of such remaking. Since Socrates’ narration comes in response to a certain “Ὁμήρου ἐπαινέτης”, a “praiser of Homer” (Pl. *Prt.* 309b1), as Odysseus’ *Apologue* is to Demodocus the “ᾄοιδός”, I examine how the dialogue could evince a dispute for pedagogical primacy amongst the different narratives and uses of poetry in Athens, a dispute that the Platonic narrative would attempt to surpass precisely by imitating Homer.

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