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## Socrates the Homer-lover as portrayed in Plato, Xenophon and Aristophanes

Sócrates “amante de Homero” en Platón, Jenofonte y Aristófanes

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### ABSTRACT:

Socrates is portrayed as a Homer-lover in Plato's dialogues, both explicitly through his expression of love and respect for Homer since his childhood (*Republic* 595b9-10) and implicitly through his numerous Homeric quotations and references. Similarly, Socrates frequently uses Homeric references in the dialogues that Xenophon wrote to preserve his memories. The comparative study of these authors so far suggests that the historical Socrates did use Homer often in his conversation. However, we should also consider whether that portrait matches the Socrates depicted in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, a more contemporary source than Plato and Xenophon's works. This paper examines the portrayal of Socrates in the *Clouds* and argues that here, too, we can find a reflection of his love of Homer, especially in his invocation of the Clouds in lines 265-74. It will also consider how that portrayal of Socrates can affect our view of Socrates.

**KEYWORDS:** Socrates, Homer, Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes, *Clouds*.

### RESUMEN:

Sócrates es retratado como un aficionado de Homero en los diálogos de Platón, tanto explícitamente a través de su expresión de afecto y respeto a Homero desde niño (*República* 595b9-10), como implícitamente a través de sus numerosas citas y referencias. Del mismo modo, Sócrates utiliza con frecuencia referencias homéricas en los diálogos que Jenofonte escribió para preservar sus recuerdos. El estudio comparativo de estos autores hasta ahora sugiere que el Sócrates histórico se sirvió de Homero con frecuencia en su conversación. Sin embargo, también debería considerarse si ese retrato coincide con el Sócrates representado en las *Nubes* de Aristófanes, una fuente más contemporánea que las obras de Platón y Jenofonte. Este artículo examina la representación de Sócrates en las *Nubes* y argumenta que aquí, también, podemos encontrar un reflejo de su afecto a Homero, especialmente en su invocación de las Nubes en las líneas 265-74. También se considerará cómo esa representación de Sócrates puede afectar nuestra visión de Sócrates.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Sócrates, Homero, Platón, Jenofonte, Aristófanes, *Nubes*.

Socrates is portrayed as a Homer-lover in Plato's dialogues, both explicitly through his expression of love and respect for Homer since his childhood (*Republic* 595b9-10) and implicitly through his numerous Homeric quotations and references. Similarly, Socrates frequently uses Homeric references in the dialogues that Xenophon wrote to preserve his memories. The comparative study of these authors so far suggests that the historical Socrates did use Homer often in his conversation (Yamagata, 2012). However, we should also consider whether that portrait matches the Socrates depicted by Aristophanes, a more contemporary source than Plato and Xenophon. This paper examines the portrayal of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and argues that here, too, we can find a reflection of his love of Homer and considers how that portrayal of Socrates can affect our view of Socrates.

## PLATO'S SOCRATES

Socrates' interest in Homeric poetry is evident in Plato's dialogues. As can be seen on Table I below, out of 35 canonical Platonic dialogues, 30 of them contain Homeric references. They either mention Homer or his characters by name, or quote or refer to his poems as topics of discussion, sources of information or jokes, or function as ingredients of myth,<sup>1</sup> and the majority of those references come out of Socrates' own mouth. The fact that Socrates is not the main speaker of the five dialogues without Homeric references, namely *Menexenus*, *Parmenides*, *Critias*, *Epinomis* and *Clitopho* in which the main speakers are Aspasia, Parmenides, Critias, Athenian Visitor and Clitopho respectively, makes Socrates' frequent use of Homer even more conspicuous.<sup>2</sup> This raises our curiosity as to whether the historical Socrates was also fond of Homer and could not help using Homeric references in his conversation, despite his famous criticism of Homer, especially in *Republic*.

TABLE I  
Homeric references in Plato (adapted from Yamagata, 2012, p. 131)

Title (genuine works)	Hom. Refs	Main Speaker	Title(doubtful works)	Hom. Refs	Main Speaker
<i>Apology</i>	8	Socrates	<i>Epinomis</i>	0	Athenian Visitor
<i>Crito</i>	1	Socrates	<i>Alcibiades II</i>	7	Socrates
<i>Euthyphro</i>	1	Socrates	<i>Clitopho</i>	0	Clitopho
<i>Laches</i>	3	Socrates	<i>Hipparchus</i>	1	Socrates
<i>Lysis</i>	1	Socrates	<i>Minos</i>	5	Socrates
<i>Alcibiades I</i>	6	Socrates	<i>Amatores</i>	1	Socrates
<i>Charmides</i>	2	Socrates	<i>Theages</i>	2	Socrates
<i>Hippias Major</i>	4	Socrates			
<i>Hippias Minor</i>	7	Socrates	<i>Letter II</i>	4	Plato
<i>Ion</i>	45	Socrates	<i>Letter VII</i>	2	Plato
<i>Protagoras</i>	9	Socrates	<i>Letter XI</i>	0	Plato
<i>Meno</i>	1	Socrates	<i>Letter XII</i>	1	Plato
<i>Euthydemus</i>	4	Socrates	<i>Letters other</i>	0	Plato
<i>Gorgias</i>	10	Socrates			

<i>Menexenus</i>	0	'Aspasia'		Spuria	
<i>Phaedo</i>	18	Socrates	<i>Axiochus</i>	11	Socrates
<i>Symposium</i>	22	Socrates	<i>Eryxias</i>	0	Socrates
<i>Phaedrus</i>	21	Socrates	<i>Demodocus</i>	0	Socrates
<i>Republic</i>	86	Socrates	<i>Sisyphus</i>	0	Socrates
<i>Cratylus</i>	16	Socrates	<i>De Iusto</i>	0	Socrates
<i>Parmenides</i>	0	Parmenides	<i>De Virtute</i>	1	Socrates
<i>Theaetetus</i>	14	Socrates			
<i>Sophist</i>	3	Elean Visitor	<i>Definitiones</i>	0	impersonal
<i>Politicus</i>	3	Elean Visitor			
<i>Philebus</i>	4	Socrates			
<i>Timaeus</i>	3	Timaeus			
<i>Critias</i>	0	Critias			
<i>Laws</i>	29	Athenian Visitor			

One of the clearest statements of Socrates' fondness for Homer is found in *Republic* X 595b9-10 where Socrates talks of his love (*φιλία*) and respect (*αἰδώς*) for Homer since his childhood, which makes him hesitate to criticise the poet and exile him from his ideal state. Even when Socrates banishes Homer from his ideal state (*Republic* X 607a), he acknowledges that Homer is a supreme poet (*ποιητικώτατον* 607a2) and goes on to use Homeric characters as the ingredients of his Myth of Er (*Republic* X 614b-621b) to conclude the dialogue. In the cases of *Ion* and *Hippias Minor*, he devotes the entire dialogues scrutinising the value of Homeric poetry as the tool of education while displaying a considerable knowledge of Homer, even outperforming the Homer experts, Ion and Hippias, respectively.

In Plato's *Apology*, after he is condemned to death, Socrates can still look forward to the pleasure of conversing with Homer (41a7), Agamemnon and Odysseus (41c1) in the Underworld. Another striking example is Socrates' dream reported in *Crito* 44a10-b3, in which a goddess-like figure<sup>3</sup> talks to him with a Homeric line *ἤματι κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐριβωλον ἴκοιο.* ('on the third day you should reach fertile Phthie.'). This is a modified quotation of Achilles' word about his intention to go home at *Iliad* IX 363, with the final word changed from *ἰκοίμην* (I should) to *ἴκοιο* (you should). Socrates interprets the woman's word as the prophecy of his death in three days' time, as the death of his body will allow his soul, his true self, to return to its true home.<sup>4</sup> If indeed he had such a dream, it is a remarkable testimony to the extent to which Homer occupied Socrates' mind, including his subconscious. We may also note that in *Phaedo* 60d2 it is said that as he approached the end of his life, Socrates composed a hymn (*προοίμιον*) to Apollo, which indicates that he is capable of writing poems in hexameter.<sup>5</sup>

## XENOPHON'S SOCRATES

It is possible that the frequent references to Homer by *Plato's* Socrates may reflect Plato's love for Homer rather than Socrates'. However, we also have Xenophon's testimony. As demonstrated by Yamagata (2012, pp. 138-140) and can be seen from Table II below, unlike Plato, Xenophon is usually sparing in his use of Homeric references in his writing, and yet his Socrates, too, uses Homeric references in the three of

the Socratic dialogues which were written with the specific aim of producing faithful portrayal of Socrates (*Apologia* 1.1, *Symposium* 1.1, *Memorabilia* 4.8.11).

Only six out of fifteen works in Xenophon's corpus contain Homeric references: *Apology* (2x: 26 Odysseus, 30 Homer gave power of prophecy to some dying heroes), *Memorabilia* (11x: spoken by Socrates: 1.2.58 (two quotes), 1.3.7-8 Circe turning greedy men into pigs, 2.6.11 the Sirens' charm, 2.6.31 Scylla and the Sirens, 3.1.4 Agamemnon, 3.2.1-2 Agamemnon, 3.5.10 Erechtheus, 4.2.10 Homer's poems, 4.6.15 Odysseus; spoken by others: 1.4.3), *Symposium* (11x: spoken by Socrates: 3.6 criticises rhapsodes, 4.20 joking about the judgement of Paris, 8.23 Cheiron and Phoenix as examples, 8.30 (2 quotes) Ganymede, 8.31 Achilles and Patroclus; spoken by others: 1.16, 3.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.45), *Hellenica* (2x: 3.4.3, 7.1.34 both refer to Agesilaus' attempt to emulate Agamemnon at Aulis), *Anabasis* (1x: 5.1 Leon of Thurii refers to *Odyssey* 18.75-118) and *On Hunting* (45x). The very large number in *On Hunting* is due to the mythical exemplars mentioned in the introductory section (1.1-17), which on stylistic grounds is dated to the reign of Hadrian and therefore not considered to be written by Xenophon himself (Marchant and Bowersock, 1968, pp. xlii-xliii).

As many as ten out of eleven Homeric references in *Memorabilia* and five out of eleven in *Symposium* are put in the mouth of Socrates (Yamagata, 2012, p. 140 and p. 142). Most strikingly Xenophon reports that Socrates' 'accuser' (ὁ κατηγορῶς) said that Socrates had often quoted a particular passage from Homer (1.2.58, quoting *Il.* II.188-91 and 198-202). As in Plato's dialogues, Xenophon's Socrates frequently uses Homeric references as topics of discussion, or sources of information or jokes, though the myth-making using Homeric elements is confined to Plato's Socrates. From this Yamagata (2012) concluded that the historical Socrates probably did use Homeric references frequently in his conversation, though the composition of myths featuring Homeric elements are likely to be 'more Platonic than Socratic' (p. 144).

TABLE II  
Homeric references in Xenophon (reproduced from Yamagata, 2012, p.139)

Title	Homeric References	Main Speaker
<i>Hellenica</i>	2	Xenophon
<i>Memorabilia</i>	11	Socrates
<i>Oeconomicus</i>	0	Socrates/ Ischomachus
<i>Symposium</i>	11	Socrates
<i>Apology</i>	2	Socrates
<i>Anabasis</i>	1	Xenophon
<i>Cyropaedia</i>	0	Xenophon
<i>Hiero</i>	0	Hiero
<i>Agesilaus</i>	0	Xenophon
<i>Constitution of the Lacedaemonians</i>	0	Xenophon
<i>Ways and Means</i>	0	Xenophon
<i>The Cavalry Commander</i>	0	Xenophon
<i>On the Art of Horsemanship</i>	0	Xenophon
<i>On Hunting</i>	45	Xenophon
<i>Constitution of the Athenians</i>	0	[Xenophon]

## ARISTOPHANES' SOCRATES

That conclusion appears convincing enough as far as the image of Socrates in Plato and Xenophon are concerned. However, if the frequent use of Homer in his conversation was such a prominent feature of Socrates, we may wonder why he does not quote or mention Homer in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.<sup>6</sup> Our response to that question might be that it is because Aristophanes was using the figure of Socrates to create a caricature of the intellectuals of his day, rather than painting a faithful portrait of how the man actually was (Dover, 1968, p. xxxiii; Graham, 1996, 197, n. 9). After all there are other aspects of Socrates in this play that do not appear to match up with Plato and Xenophon's Socrates, such as providing lessons in an established school, apparently charging fees, instead of talking to anyone in public places with no money involved.

This apparent lack of Homeric references coming out of the sophist-like Socrates may tally with the Platonic data that there are fewer Homeric references in Plato's dialogues in which a sophistic character is a leading speaker, such as in *Parmenides* with Parmenides as the main speaker (no Homeric reference), *Sophist* and *Politicus* in which the 'Elean Visitor' is the main speaker (three Homeric references each), whereas Socrates-led dialogues can feature Homer more frequently (e.g. *Republic* 86, *Ion* 45, *Symposium* 22, *Phaedrus* 22) (Table I). On the other hand, as is often pointed out, the caricature or parody of the subject does not work unless it has recognisable resemblance to the original. If the real Socrates was in the habit of frequently using Homer in his conversation to the extent that it was regarded as his 'signature', as it were, we need to consider why Aristophanes did not make him do so. Or did he?

Prompted by this question, I have re-read the play specifically searching for Homeric elements, and I believe I have found some. Although Socrates does not quote exact passages from Homer, he does use several expressions which can be regarded as Homeric in his invocation of the *Clouds* (269-274; tr. Sommerstein, 1991):

### ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἔλθετε δῆτ', ὦ πολυτίμητοι Νεφέλαι, τῶδ' εἰς ἐπίδειξιν  
 εἴτ' ἐπ' Οὐλύμπου κορυφαῖς ἱεραῖς χιονοβλήτοισι κάθησθε,  
 εἴτ' Ὠκεανοῦ πατρὸς ἐν κήποις ἱερὸν χορὸν ἴστατε Νύμφαις,  
 εἴτ' ἄρα Νείλου προχοαῖς ὑπάτων χρυσέαις ἀρύτεσθε πρόχοισιν,  
 ἢ Μαιώτιν λίμνην ἔχετ', ἢ σκόπελον νιφόεντα Μίμαντος.  
 ὑπακούσατε δεξάμεναι θυσίαν καὶ τοῖς ἱεροῖσι χαρεῖσαι.

### SOCRATES

Yea, most glorious *Clouds*, come to display yourselves to this man:  
 whether ye now sit on the holy snow-clad peaks of Olympus,  
 or call the Nymphs to a holy dance in the gardens of father Ocean;  
 or whether again at the mouths of the Nile yet draw of its waters  
 with golden ewers,  
 or haunt Lake Maeotis or the snowy crag of Mimas:  
 hearken to me, accepting my sacrifice and rejoicing in these holy  
 rites.

This is arguably the part of the play in which Socrates speaks in the least sophistic manner, without philosophical argument. In this scene he is invoking the *Clouds* whom he worships as new deities. He lists a choice of possible locations of the goddesses, indicated with 'whether... or...' (εἴτε... εἴτε ... εἴτε... in 270, 271 and 272 and ἢ... ἢ ... in 273), which are found in prayers both in Homer and in general.<sup>7</sup> Sommerstein (1991) compares this passage to Glaucus' prayer to Apollo at *Il.* XVI.514-516 (tr. Verity 2011):

κλυθι, ἄναξ, ὃς που Λυκίης ἐν πίονι δήμῳ  
 εἰς ἢ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ· δύνασαι δὲ σὺ παντοσ' ἀκούειν  
 ἀενέρι κηδομένῳ, ὡς νῦν ἐμὲ κῆδος ἰκάνει.

Hear me, my lord, you who are somewhere in the rich land  
of Lycia, or in Troy! Wherever you are, you are able to hear  
a man in torment, as now torment has come over me;

The expression *Ολύμπου κορυφαῖς* ('peaks of Olympus' 270) also appears three times in Homer in the singular form *κορυφή ... Οὐλύμπιοιο* (*Il.* I.499, V.754, VIII.3). The epithet *χιονοβλήτοισι* ('snow-clad' 270) does not appear in Homer in this form, but there are two occurrences of formulae denoting 'snow-clad Olympus' using synonymous epithets, namely *Ολυμπον ἀγάννιφον* in *Il.* XVIII.186 and *Οὐλύμπου νιφόεντος* in *Il.* XVIII.616. Moreover, Aristophanes' Socrates uses the latter in its accusative form *νιφόεντα* in line 273 as the epithet of another mountain, i.e. Mt. Mimas. It seems evident that this passage is heavily indebted to Homer's description of Olympus.

The concept of *Ωκεανού πατρός* ('father Ocean') in 271 also features in Homer as the progenitor of all the gods at *Il.* XIV.201, *Ωκεανόν τε, θεῶν γένεσιν, καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν* ('Oceanus, first father of the gods, and their mother Tethys'; tr. Verity 2011). Incidentally Plato makes Socrates quote this Homeric line in full in *Theaetetus* 152e7, bringing the images of the two versions of Socrates, Aristophanes' and Plato's, closer.

*προχοαῖς* ('mouths of a river') in 272 is also a Homeric word, occurring at *Il.* XVII.263, *Od.* 5.453, 11.242 and 20.65,<sup>8</sup> the last of which refers to the mouths of Oceanus (*προχοῆς ... Ωκεανοῖο*). *προχοῆς* appears in the same number and case in its Attic form *προχοαῖς* in 272, and Oceanus occurs in the line just above (271) in Socrates' invocation. Rather like the case of the epithet 'snow-clad' transferred from Olympus to another mountain, this may be a case of a Homeric word transferred from Oceanus to another river.

Looking at the invocation as a whole, there is another possible echo in Plato's *Phaedrus*, where Socrates playfully invokes the Muses before composing his speech on love (237a7-b1; tr. Rowe 1988):<sup>9</sup>

Ἀγετε δῆ, ὦ Μοῦσαι, εἴτε δι' ᾧδῆς εἶδος λίγειαι, εἴτε διὰ γένος  
μουσικὸν τὸ Λιγύων ταύτην ἔσχετ' ἐπωνυμίαν, "ἔμ μοι λάβεσθε"  
τοῦ μύθου, ὃν με ἀναγκάζει ὁ βέλτιστος οὐτοσὶ λέγειν, ἴν' ὁ ἑταῖρος  
αὐτοῦ, καὶ πρότερον δοκῶν τούτῳ σοφὸς εἶναι, νῦν ἔτι μᾶλλον δόξῃ.

Come then, you Muses, clear-voiced (*ligeiai*), whether you are called that  
from the nature of your song, or whether you acquired this name  
because of the musical race of the Ligurians, 'take part with me' in the  
story which this excellent fellow here forces me to tell, so that his friend,  
who seemed to him to be wise even before, may seem even more so  
now.

Here is the same pattern of 'whether... or...' (εἴτε... εἴτε...), and the invocation of the Muses is reminiscent of poets, especially Homer.<sup>10</sup> Socrates also jokingly speaks of invoking the Muses in Plato's *Euthydemus* (275c-d) and *Republic* (VIII 545-e), and unspecified 'gods' in *Timaeus* (27c) (Capra, 2014, p. 44, n. 69). It makes one wonder whether Plato was influenced by Aristophanes' *Clouds* passage or the real Socrates did often invoke the Muses or other deities poetically like this before his important speeches, or both. Moore (2015, pp. 545-551) convincingly demonstrates how Plato's *Phaedrus* constantly alludes to Aristophanes' *Clouds*. It is perfectly possible that in this passage, too, Plato is reacting to Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates.<sup>11</sup>

The context in which Socrates' invocation of the Clouds occurs is also significant in considering its style. The charm of this 'Homeric' invocation has been praised for its remarkable lyricism, figurative language (such as the golden pitchers), poetic words (such as *προχοή* and *νιφόμενος*), and 'a majestic rhythm' (Fisher, 1984, pp. 88-89). However, it has often been overshadowed by the parodos of the Chorus of Clouds thus invoked (275-290, 300-313), which has received much more critical attention and praise. Segal (1969) famously called it 'one of the most beautiful lyrical passages of Attic literature' (p. 169), with its mainly dactylic, dignified, metre.<sup>12</sup> We should rather give credit to Socrates' invocation for inducing the Chorus to sing the elevated song in response to his Homeric poetry. Here we find again, as seen in Plato, the image of Socrates

who is fond of Homer and capable of creating a ‘Homeric’ conversation with heavenly beings who duly respond to him with ‘dactylic’ verse.

To be sure, Socrates’ ‘Homeric’ prayer in the *Clouds* is ‘mock-heroic’, out of place in the comic context,<sup>13</sup> and is a parody as much as his sophist-like persona in the rest of the play. Marianetti (1993) sees a parody of the initiation of the Eleusinian Mysteries in the ‘initiation’ scene (254-260) in the *Clouds* (p. 16). Moreover, Socrates’ action of summoning the Clouds itself puts him in the position of the ‘Cloud-Gatherer’ (νεφέλληγερέτα), one of the epithets of Zeus in Homer. In discussing why Clouds make up the chorus for the play, Konstan (2011) explains, ‘They represent the comic Socrates’ interest in meteorology, of course; they serve too as nature deities, like the Vortex which, as Socrates will later explain, has replaced Zeus as the chief divinity in the physicists’ pantheon... For it is basic to the characterization of Socrates in *Clouds* that he is passionately interested in cosmology.’ (p. 78). To this we may add that Socrates is also passionately interested in Homer and therefore making him a ‘Cloud-Gatherer’ creates a particularly biting satire of the Homer-loving Socrates, who denies the existence of Zeus (367) and usurps the god’s function. All of this might have fuelled the accusation of blasphemy at Socrates’ trial.

We must also take into account that *Clouds* is not the only play by Aristophanes that features Socrates. As Capra (2018, pp. 64-65) points out, the playwright’s references to Socrates span over a quarter of a century. Socrates is mentioned in *Birds* (1282, 1555), *Frogs* (1491) and possibly in his first play *Banquettiers*, too (Capra, 2018, p. 64), indicating Aristophanes’ interest in and knowledge of the philosopher. There is a passage which places Socrates in a Homeric context in the Chorus’ song at *Birds* 1553-1564 (tr. Henderson, 2000):

πρὸς δὲ τοῖς Σκιάποσιν λίμνη  
 τις ἔστ’, ἄλουτος οὐ  
 1555 ψυχαγωγεί Σωκράτης.  
 ἐνθα καὶ Πείσανδρος ἦλθε  
 δεόμενος ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν ἢ  
 ζῶντ’ ἐκείνον προὔλιπε,  
 σφάγι’ ἔχων κάμηλον ἀμνόν  
 1560 τιν’, ἧς λαίμοις τεμῶν  
 ὡσπερ οὐδυσσεὺς ἀπήλιθε,  
 κάτ’ ἀνήλθ’ αὐτῷ κάτωθεν  
 πρὸς τὸ λαίμα τῆς καμήλου  
 Χαιρεφῶν ἢ νυκτερίς.

Far away by the Shadefoots  
 lies a swamp, where all unwashed  
 1555 Socrates conjures spirits.  
 Pisander paid a visit there,  
 asking to see the spirit  
 that deserted him in life.  
 For sacrifice he brought a baby  
 1560 camel and cut its throat,  
 like Odysseus, then backed off;  
 and up from below arose to him,  
 drawn by the camel’s gore,  
 Chaerephon the bat.

It has been pointed out that this is a parody of ‘Nekyia’ in *Odyssey* Book 11 and also influenced by Aeschylus’ play *Psychagogoi* (Ψυχαγωγοί) which is itself based on *Od.* 11.<sup>14</sup> The reference to Odysseus in line 1561 certainly points to his action in *Odyssey* 11.35, except that the sacrificial victim here is a camel (κάμηλον) instead of sheep (μῆλα). The references to the *psychagogos* in 1555 and the bat in 1564, however, seem to evoke the ‘second Nekyia’ in *Od.* 24, where Hermes leads (ἄγε, 5) the souls (ψυχάς, 1) of the suitors



into Hades and they are described with a simile of bats (24.6-9). This passage can therefore be seen as another example from Aristophanes' play in which Socrates is playing the part of a divine figure in a mock-Homeric scene, here acting as a *psychagogos* (or Psychopompos)<sup>15</sup> to a bat-like character.<sup>16</sup> This parallel seems to provide further support for the interpretation of Socrates' role as the 'Cloud-gatherer' in the *Clouds* and Aristophanes' intention to associate Socrates with Homer.

Despite all the parody and distortion, it is a fair assumption that we have in *Clouds* a portrait of Socrates 'with all his idiosyncrasies', as Nussbaum puts it (1980, p. 72), and this portrait partially overlaps with those painted by Plato and Xenophon, displaying his habit of using Homer in his conversation, sometimes seriously, sometimes jokingly and sometimes poetically. Moreover, we have credible evidence that Plato consciously responded to Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates in *Clouds* in his dialogues, including *Phaedrus*. The similarity of Socrates' joking prayer to the Muses in *Phaedrus* to Socrates' invocation of the Clouds in Aristophanes' comedy makes it likely that they reflect some aspects of the real Socrates, which are recognisable through each mock-Homeric context. Along with Plato and Xenophon Aristophanes seems to provide us with additional evidence that the historic Socrates was a Homer-lover.

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## NOTES

- 1 Cf. Tarrant (1951) for different categories of Plato's use of Homeric and other literary references. See also Table I, reproduced from Yamagata (2012, p. 131), for the number of Homeric references per work in the Platonic corpus. For Plato's use of Homer more generally, see Hunter (2012, pp. 38-108) and the literature cited in Yamagata (2020, pp. 22-23).

- 2 Cf. Table I and Yamagata (2012, p. 131). Cf. Labarbe (1949) for a survey of Homeric quotations and paraphrases found in Plato.
- 3 The female figure in white may be Persephone. Cf. McPherran (2003, pp. 82-82) cited in Bussanich (2006, p. 212).
- 4 For the Orphic background to this thought, cf. Burnet (1924, pp. 257-258) on 44b2.
- 5 Cf. Rowe (1993, p. 120) on 60d1 for the interpretation of the passage.
- 6 I owe this point to Gholam Reza Esfahani.
- 7 Cf. Sommerstein (1982, on 272-273), who refers to Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 292-298 and Aristophanes, *Frogs* 659 and 664ff along with *Il.* XVI.514-516; see also Dover (1968, p. 134) on 263-274, regarding the features of prayer found in Socrates' invocation of the Clouds, including the list in the form of εἶτε... εἶτε...
- 8 Cf. van Leeuwen (1968, p. 54) on 272 and Mitchell (1838) on 271, for occurrences of προχογή in Homer and other poets.
- 9 Cf. Ryan (2012, p. 137) on 237a7-b1, on the irony hidden in the elevated tone in this prayer.
- 10 Cf. Rowe (1988) on 237a7-b1.
- 11 See also Rashed (2009), who demonstrates how Plato's *Phaedo* responds to *Clouds*' portrayal of Socrates.
- 12 Cf. Silk (1980, pp. 106-107); Robson (2009, p. 157); Olson (2021, p. 102) on 275-90: "The vocabulary is relentlessly poetic, with numerous decorative touches: the song is supposed to 'sound beautiful' (or at least 'mock-beautiful')".
- 13 Fisher (1984, p. 89); see also Silk (2000, pp. 168-175), who analyses the mixture of high poetic style and comic effects that undermine it.
- 14 Cf. Dunbar (1995, pp. 710-711) *ad* 1553-1555; Moore (2013, p. 41); Platter (2014, p. 150): "The raising of ghosts by Socrates may go back to Aristophanes' representation of the students of the *Phrontisterion* in *Clouds*, whose pallor is noticed by Strepsiades (184-6; cf. also 1171), while the manipulation of souls suggests a link with the *Phaedrus* (261a), where rhetoric is described as a τέχνη ψυχαγωγία τις."
- 15 Cf. Aeschylus' *Psychagogos* fr. 273a, line 8 (Sommerstein, 2008, p. 270), where Hermes is called the "escort of the dead" (πομπὸν φθιμένων).
- 16 Moore (2013, p. 41) points out that Caerephon is called a bat earlier at 1296, in another passage associated with Socrates (1281-1283).