

# Interpretation

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## The Socratic Founding of Economic Science

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**Abstract:** Socrates's founding of economic science has been largely unnoted, and the crucial texts (of Xenophon) have not been studied with the needed interpretative care and skill—even though the Socratic conception of what it means to conduct a proper science of economics confronts our contemporary conceptions of economic science with grave theoretical challenges. Here is presented an exegesis of the short text in which the challenges come vividly to sight. I aim to introduce *both* the *substantive* Socratic teaching of Xenophon *and*—by example—the proper *methodology* for interpreting his texts in order to elucidate the teaching intended by their author.

The political philosophizing of Socrates stands at the origins and foundations not only of political science but also of economic science. Yet the latter achievement of Socrates has been rarely noted and even less studied,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Thus, for example, Xenophon and his Socrates are never mentioned in Joseph Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954); Lionel Robbins, *A History of Economic Thought: The LSE Lectures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Murray Rothbart, *Economic Thought before Adam Smith: An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought*, vol. 1 (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2006); or Agnar Sandmo, *Economics Evolving: A History of Economic Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Xenophon is dismissed in two sentences of Steven Medema and David Wilson, *The History of Economic Thought: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2013); in Robert Ekelund and Robert Hébert, *A History of Economic Theory and Method*, 6th ed. (Longrove, IL: Waveland, 2013) Xenophon is allotted one and a half pages, in Henry Spiegel, *The Growth of Economic Thought*, 3rd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002) two pages, and in Meikle's penetrating and wide-ranging study of Aristotle's economic thought Xenophon gets only three mentions (Scott Meikle, *Aristotle's Economic Thought* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1995]). Positively grotesque is Betsy Price, *Ancient Economic Thought*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2006), which promises "analysis and insight dedicated to Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*" (2) but in fact treats that work in two pages, filled with appalling blunders indicating gross ignorance: "Socrates was rector of a school"; the *Economist* "spells out in minute detail how the wife of the master should educate the children," and is concerned with "the rural exodus and the pernicious consequences of crowding in the polis" (topics never mentioned in the work!) (153–54); "the Greek city of Colophon

this despite the fact that the Socratic conception of what it means to conduct a proper science of economics confronts our contemporary conceptions of economic science with gravely critical theoretical challenges. What follows is an exegesis of the short text—the first two chapters of Xenophon’s dialogue *The Economist*<sup>2</sup>—in which those Socratic challenges, and what is at stake in the Socratic founding of economic science, are most clearly introduced.

#### THE DRAMATIC SETTING

The comedic character<sup>3</sup> of the dialogue is signaled at the outset when Xenophon has his Socrates address by name, and thus identify, the singular character who will be Socrates’s (sole) interlocutor. For Critobulus is the most engagingly and amiably jovial, the least ponderously serious, of all the members of the Socratic circle portrayed by Xenophon. In the *Memorabilia*, we meet Critobulus as “the son of Crito” whom Socrates in mock horror advises to go into exile for a year, while describing him to the onlooker Xenophon as “a great hothead and one who will stop at nothing”—all on account of Critobulus’s having dared to kiss a beautiful, beloved boy. In a later, extended dialogue with Socrates on friendship (*Mem.* 2.6), Critobulus’s light-hearted, wide-ranging, erotic proclivities continue to be evident—and Socrates’s disapproval appears much less severe. We learn from the *Economist* (3.7) that Socrates was drawn into long, early-morning treks to attend rural comic dramas with the young man (we can assume that the expenses for good seats were paid by Critobulus, “one of the wealthiest men at Athens”).<sup>4</sup> We even learn, again from the *Symposium* (4.22), that Socrates allowed himself to

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was Xenophon’s hometown” (106). For a survey of the scanty earlier literature, see Todd S. Lowry, “Recent Literature on Ancient Greek Economic Thought,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 17 (1979): 65–86.

<sup>2</sup> In translating *oikonomikos* as “economist,” I follow John Ruskin, *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, vol. 1, *The Economist of Xenophon* (London: Ellis and White, 1876). All references to texts of Xenophon will be to standard chapters and subsections, as first divided in the edition of Edward Wells, *Xenophontis Opera Graece et Latine*, 8 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1690–96). Translations are my own, from the Greek of various critical editions, supplemented where necessary by inspections of photos of the manuscripts. So far as I know, the sole translation into English that is sufficiently accurate for intensive analysis is that by Carnes Lord in Robert Bartlett, *Xenophon: The Shorter Socratic Writings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> See Leo Strauss, *Xenophon’s Socratic Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), esp. 191–92; John Stevens, “Friendship and Profit in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*,” in *The Socratic Movement*, ed. Paul Vander Waerdt (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 227; and Leah Kronenberg, *Allegories of Farming from Greece and Rome: Philosophical Satire in Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 217.

be “dragged around” by Critobulus to wherever the latter would be able to contemplate his beloved beauty, Kleinias. In the *Symposium* (4.24) Socrates reports that because of Critobulus’s intoxication with his boyfriend Kleinias, “his father handed him over to me, so I might be able to help in some way.” It was doubtless in large part on account of Socrates’s friendship with his lifelong comrade Crito, and in response to the latter’s anxious concern about his son’s erotic frivolities and escapades, that the philosopher undertook to educate Critobulus in his responsibilities and requirements as a wealthy household head.

This is the dramatic context of the dialogue of the *Economist*—a context which, we soon learn, is not without some comical risk to Socrates, of becoming entangled in a care for Critobulus’s household that goes way beyond what the philosopher is willing to undertake (2.9–18). We may conclude that Socrates’s intimacy with the devil-may-care Critobulus mixed the fulfillment of friendly educative duty with affectionate pleasure: Critobulus was a rather good-looking, generously rich, and amiably jocund young n’er-do-well with whom Socrates had fun, while trying to help the young fellow, especially for the sake of the young man’s father. Xenophon has made it abundantly clear (see esp. *Mem.* 4.1.1–2) that Socratic fun is always leavened with provocation to deep and serious thought for onlookers. And by his very first word in the *Economist*, as well as subsequently, our author indicates that he is (fictively) presenting himself, as a young man, in the role of an eyewitness to the dialogue. Xenophon invites us to join him, vicariously, as the appreciative audience of what was a deeply illuminating and singularly beneficial comic performance.

#### ECONOMICS AS A UNIVERSAL SCIENCE

Xenophon recalls Socrates having opened the dialogue by asking Critobulus if “household management” (*oikonomia*) is “a name for some science” (*epistēmē*), as are the words “skilled doctoring,” and “skilled bronze working,” and “skilled wood working.” Conceiving household management in this unconventional way,<sup>5</sup> as a science or craft, conduces to thinking of it as something one needs to learn from an expert teacher or teachers. Socrates would seem to have been taking the first step on a path that would bring

<sup>5</sup> On the controversial unconventionality of applying the term “science” (*epistēmē*) in this context, see Aristotle, *Politics* 1252a15 and 1253b18. The fact that Critobulus unhesitatingly answers in the affirmative—though with a hint of awareness that what he is affirming is unusual (“to me at least it seems so”)—indicates that he has already fallen under the influence of Socrates in this way of thinking.

Critobulus to realize his need for such an education. But Xenophon immediately lets us see that Critobulus had not grasped the radical implication of this uncommon perspective on household management. For when Socrates next characterized, more conventionally, as “arts” (*technōn*) the other three forms of expertise that he had adduced, and asked if, even as “we” could “say what the work or function of each of these arts” is, so “we” would “also be able to say, in the case of household management, similarly what the work or function of it is,” Critobulus fell back on common opinion: “it is opined, at any rate (said Critobulus) that it belongs to a good household manager [*oikonomou agathou*] to manage well *his own* household” (1.2). A gentleman is conventionally supposed to mind his own business (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1142a1–2); his concern as household manager is supposed to be primarily and chiefly the well-being of his own household—to which concern he is presumed to be motivated by deep love of his own.

Challenging this conventional gentlemanly opinion on the basis of the nature of science, Socrates asked if it is not the case that “he who is a scientific knower [*epistamenos*] of skilled carpentry” would be able to do the relevant work for another, even as for himself; and “in the same way, wouldn’t the skilled household manager [*oikonomikos*]<sup>6</sup> be able, “if he should wish,” to “manage well the household of another, even as his own, if someone turned it over to him?” In assenting, Critobulus once again showed that he was aware of departing from common opinion—and this time he addressed Socrates by name, thus indicating the distinctively “Socratic” character of this unusual perspective on the matter (1.3).

We see that Socrates as political philosopher has an understanding of skilled household management in which the component of scientific knowledge (of how to achieve what is good, or well done, for any and every given household) eclipses the love of one’s own,<sup>7</sup> thus reversing the normal gentlemanly perspective. The scientific art as such aims only incidentally at the benefit of the expert’s own household. And the love of one’s own household contributes little or nothing to the expert’s scientific knowledge of how to manage well even his own household.

<sup>6</sup> This is the first appearance in the dialogue of the word that stands as the title. The word would appear to be the original source of our modern term “economics” (Todd S. Lowry, *The Archaeology of Economic Ideas: The Classical Greek Tradition* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987], 247; Ekelund and Hébert, *History of Economic Theory and Method*, 9).

<sup>7</sup> Strauss, *Xenophon’s Socratic Discourse*, 93.

But Socrates was not naively or abstractly ignoring the love of one's own as essential *motivation* to the *practical implementation* of the universal scientific knowledge. This became clear when the philosopher proceeded to ask a concluding question: Therefore, is it not possible, for “one who has scientific knowledge of this art [*tēn technēn tautēn epistamenōi*], if he himself happens not to have riches [*chrēmata*], to manage the household of another”—and “*get paid?*” (1.4). Socrates seemed to presume that an expert's putting into practice his knowledge of the scientific art would not be disinterested, and, moreover, that the gratification that derives intrinsically from the skilled practice, and in addition from repute and gratitude for such skilled practice, would not be sufficient motivation. Socrates spoke as if the knower of the science of household management seeks, from the practical implementation of his knowledge, an extrinsic reward that contributes to the needed financial resources of his own household. So Socrates by no means entirely jettisoned Critobulus's conventional characterization of a “good household manager.”

#### THE SCIENTIFIC MEANING OF RICHES

Socrates's suggestion of a skilled household-manager-for-hire struck a vibrant chord in Critobulus: “By Zeus! And it is big pay (said Critobulus) that he would gain, if he were able, in taking over a household, to disburse the needed expenditures and, by making a surplus, increase the household!” (1.4; and see also 1.6 end). Did not Critobulus glimpse a solution to his troubled household budget—and to his own problematic disinclination to spend the requisite time and energy on managing his household (see 2.9–12)? Was not a hope stirred or reawakened in him that his indigent but wise friend Socrates might contribute to that solution—even if only by helping him to find and to hire someone else who would be a surplus-producing, skilled household manager (consider *Mem.* 2.8 and 2.10)?

Socrates did not respond to or give any encouragement to such hopes. On the other hand, he did not challenge the assumption of Critobulus that the goal of a skilled household manager is “increasing” the household. Socrates did, however, ask his young interlocutor to reflect on what exactly is encompassed, “for us,” in “whatever things of the household [*oikos*] one has acquired [*kektētai*] outside the habitation [*oikia*].” Critobulus at once proclaimed his own expansive (some might say all-too-Athenian-imperialist) view: “by me, at least (declared Critobulus) it is opined that all things, even if not in the same city, belong to the household, as many as one acquires” (1.5).

When questioned further, however, our young householder quickly and emphatically conceded that this needs correction, to avoid what he regarded as the “laughable” error of including in the valuable household the increase of the “many enemies” that—“By Zeus!”—some “acquire.” He declared that what he means by “acquisitions/possessions” (*ktēmata*) are what is *good* (*agathon*), “by Zeus!”—that is, “beneficial” (*ōphelima*). Critobulus certainly does not mean—“by Zeus!”—what is bad (*kakon*), that is, “harmful” (*blaptonta*). When Socrates concluded that Critobulus seemed to be “calling the things that are beneficial, for each, ‘possessions,’” his young interlocutor emphatically agreed, and added: “and the harmful things, I, for my part, believe to be loss [*zēmian*] rather than *riches* [*chrēmata*]!”<sup>8</sup>

Socrates asked if this does not entail that a horse that someone might buy, *not knowing how* to use, with the result that the purchaser hurt himself by falling off, would *not* be his “riches.” Critobulus assented, though with a note of surprise: “No—if indeed riches, at any rate, are good.”

But when Socrates submitted that “therefore the earth is not riches for a human being” who suffers loss in cultivating it (Socrates did not say the loss is a result of lack of knowledge), Critobulus for the first time dug in his heels a bit. He agreed only that “the earth is indeed not riches, if instead of providing nourishment it provides famine [*peinēn*].” Presumably Critobulus had enough worldly wisdom to have noted a persisting benefit of land to its owner, even if the (Zeus-sent)<sup>9</sup> weather puts a farm temporarily “in the red”—so long as starvation is not in the offing (1.8; cf. 5.18–20).

Socrates blithely moved on, bypassing this demurrer, and ignoring the gesture toward grave (theological) limitations on the decisive value of human expertise: “Therefore isn’t it *the same* with herd animals?—If someone through *not knowing how* to use herd animals suffers loss, the herd animals wouldn’t be riches for him?” When Critobulus assented, Socrates drew the seemingly rather otiose conclusion that “you then, it looks like, hold the beneficial things to be riches, and the harmful not.” The young man naturally assented (1.9). Only after having thus built a certain momentum with his

<sup>8</sup> 1.6–7: *ktēmata* connotes possessions or acquisitions in general, while *chrēmata* connotes all properties “whose value can be measured in monetary terms” (Aristotle so defines the latter term in *NE* 1119b26).

<sup>9</sup> Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, 257: “references to the weather are scattered throughout the *Oeconomicus*”; the Attic “climate and amount of rainfall fluctuate widely. Rain can vary from double the normal maximum to one-third of it; four to six dry years may be followed by one to ten rainy ones. Regional variation is enormous.... Of course Zeus, as weather-god, was often the recipient of offerings and prayers.”

student did Socrates propose a conclusion that is much more general, and radical (and controversial or even dubious, since it does not follow from, and indeed is drawn into question by, their dialogue concerning the earth and what that dialogue gestured toward): “Then the same belongings [*onta*] are riches for the one who knows how to use each of them, but for the one not knowing, not riches”—and Socrates adduced the example of “flutes,” which he claimed are “no more than worthless stones for the one not knowing” how to use them.

Critobulus reasonably objected:<sup>10</sup> “Unless he found a buyer [*apodidoito*] for them!” Socrates treated as a friendly amendment this pregnant introduction of what Adam Smith and his great successors, building from Aristotle’s *Politics* 1257a6ff., were to call “exchange value.” Socrates asked, “Is this then evident to us: that for those finding a buyer, the flutes are riches, but not if they don’t find a buyer, and keep them as possessions—that is, for those who do not know how to use them?” Critobulus’s sense of paradox was evident in his slightly qualified assent. However, Critobulus then felt a need to reformulate their conclusion: “Now if they are not offered for sale [*pōloumenoi*],<sup>11</sup> the ‘flutes’ are not riches—for they are of no use; but offered for sale, riches” (1.11). Critobulus appeared to think of “riches” as including an exchange value, distinct from use value, that is aimed at an accumulation of buying power (money). Certainly Critobulus sensed that markets are more resilient, the exchange value of commodities more durable (as unsold “inventory”), than Socrates seemed to be allowing in what we see is his insistent argument for the decisive importance of human knowledge of *use* value.<sup>12</sup>

Xenophon’s authorial intervention at this point (1.12) signals the momentousness of what Socrates says next, in massive qualification of Critobulus’s

<sup>10</sup> With Pierre Chantraine, *Xénophon Économique* (Paris: Budé, 1971) and Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, ad loc. I follow the attribution discerned by Theodor Thalheim, “Zu Xenophons Oikonomikos,” *Hermes* 42 (1907): 630–42; see also B. A. van Groningen, “Xenoph. Oecon. I 10–11,” *Mnemosyne* 9 (1941): 257.

<sup>11</sup> For Xenophon’s characteristic indication of the distinct meanings of the two different verbs for market transaction see Carel Cobet, *Novae Lectiones quibus continentur observationes criticae in scriptores graecos* (Leiden: Brill, 1858), 647 (commenting on *Mem.* 2.5.5, where the two verbs also occur): “*pōlein* dicitur qui emtorem quaerit, *apodidosthai* qui reperit.”

<sup>12</sup> Todd S. Lowry, review of *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, by S. B. Pomeroy, *Southern Economic Journal* 63 (1997): 828: “Xenophon’s discussion of use value and exchange value is worth Xeroxing and circulating to introductory economics students.” Takeshi Amemiya, *Economy and Economics of Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 2007), 118: “a strikingly original theory of values...much more profound than what one can learn from a college course on the principles of economics.” See also George Bragues, “Socrates on Management: An Analysis of Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*” (working paper, 2007), 10, [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=997057](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=997057).

reformulation: “If, that is, one has (scientific) *knowledge* of offering for sale” (*ên epistētai ge pōlein*); and Socrates then explained the paradoxical sort of “knowledge” he had in mind. For he turned out to mean<sup>13</sup> not “salesmanship,” or knowledge of how to work the market shrewdly to maximize exchange value and hence buying power, but instead knowledge of use value (again): “If one were to offer to sell in return for what one would not know how to use, then, not even in being offered for sale are they riches—according to *your* argument,” Socrates rather puckishly added.

One might suppose that Socrates was thinking of barter; but Critobulus knew better, and his reply expressed his provoked astonishment: “You seem to be saying, Socrates, that not even the cash [*to argurion*] is riches, if someone doesn’t have knowledge of how to use it!”

Socrates retorted: “But *you* also seem to me to agree with this—that things from which one is able to benefit are riches!” (1.13). Socrates proceeded to give compelling illustrative evidence for his paradoxical scientific-economic thesis that cash as such, or accumulated buying power, is not riches: he adduced the case of a man harmed—physically, spiritually,<sup>14</sup> and financially—by using (a large sum of) cash to purchase a courtesan.<sup>15</sup> We may suspect that this is calculated to hit home especially with the erotically wayward Critobulus; certainly his assent was not only emphatic but idiosyncratic, equating such a mistress with a poisonous hallucinogenic<sup>16</sup> (wisdom gained from bitter experience?). And at this point Socrates evidently felt in a position to issue a major, paradoxical imperative of the science of economics or household management as he conceives it. Addressing Critobulus by name for the first time since the opening, Socrates said: “So let the cash, if one does not know how to use it, be thrust far away, Critobulus, given that it is not riches!” (1.14).

<sup>13</sup> Pace Strauss, *Xenophon’s Socratic Discourse*, 95.

<sup>14</sup> Wayne Ambler, “On the *Oeconomicus*,” in Bartlett, *Xenophon: The Shorter Socratic Writings*, 106n: “Socrates’ concern for what is beneficial to our souls is indicated in 1.13 and 23.”

<sup>15</sup> *Hetaira*: for the meaning of this term, in contrast to *pornē* (whore), see the lively portrait of the very wealthy *hetaira* acquaintance of Socrates, Theodotē, in *Mem.* 3.11. Cf. Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 89–92, and Pomeroy *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, 220: “According to Ps.-Dem. 59.29, the purchase price of a young but experienced slave *hetaira* was 3,000 drachmas.” For comparison, from Xenophon’s *Ways and Means* 4.23 one can calculate that the average price of a healthy male slave to work the silver mines was 180 drachmas. Evidence from inscriptions suggests that the average price for a woman slave auctioned in Athens was the same: Kendrick Pritchett and Anne Pippin, “The Attic Stelai: Part II,” *Hesperia* 25 (1956): 277.

<sup>16</sup> *Huoskuamon* = “henbane” or *Hyoscyamus niger*; for the chemical formula and toxicology see Klaus Meyer, *Xenophons “Oikonomikos” Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Marburg: Kaesberger, 1975), ad loc., referring us to Louis Lewin, *Phantastica: Die betäubenden und erregenden Genussmittel; für Ärzte und Nichtärzte* (Berlin: Stille, 1924), 174ff.

Exchange value must ultimately be measured by, subordinated to, use value and the knowledge thereof.<sup>17</sup> In the words of Ambler, “the first principle of Socratic economics” is “a principle with the potential to reveal the poverty of usual notions of wealth and the folly of ordinary economic activity.”<sup>18</sup> Lowry remarks that Xenophon has given us, “in his emphasis upon the human variable, the major clue that helps explain the direction of Greek thought on economic matters.” “Greek,” or more accurately, Socratic “political economy was the study of the efficient management of personal and political affairs, with emphasis upon the human factor.” Modern political economy, on the other hand, “concentrates primarily upon the material factors of economic life and only secondarily upon human responses to them.” This is why “the assumption of scarcity has become so important, even essential, in modern definitions of economics.” It “could not be otherwise in a discipline focusing on a material-oriented, goods-rationing market process which allocates the wherewithal of economic life to competitive contenders for the gratification of insatiable wants.”<sup>19</sup> Meikle observes with regret that “the distinction between use value and exchange value comes to be progressively elided in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”—citing J. S. Mill, W. S. Jevons, Alfred Marshall, and W. Leontief; “if an independent concept of use value is removed from economics,” then “the consequence [is] that the question of ends cannot be formulated within economics”; yet this “is perhaps the most important question that can be asked in respect of economic matters,” and “whatever answer may be favoured,” it “does not reflect well on a theory if that theory is incapable even of formulating the question.”<sup>20</sup>

At this point in the dialogue we see very clearly the two levels, theoretical and practical, on which Xenophon is having his Socrates proceed in this performance before a cadre of students, including above all young Xenophon: Socrates is elaborating the universal principles of the science of household management as he conceives that science, while making the elaboration beneficially provocative and admonitory for the particular case of the problematic young householder Critobulus.

<sup>17</sup> Ruskin (*Economist of Xenophon*, xxxix) calls this “a faultless definition of Wealth, and explanation of its dependence for efficiency on the merits and faculties of its possessor;—definition which cannot be bettered; and which must be the foundation of all true Political Economy among nations, as Euclid is to all time the basis of Geometry.”

<sup>18</sup> Ambler, “On the *Oeconomicus*,” 106.

<sup>19</sup> Lowry, *Archaeology of Economic Ideas*, 247.

<sup>20</sup> Meikle, *Aristotle’s Economic Thought*, 191, 193.

To what extent did Critobulus pay heed? Xenophon's Socrates relieved the wealthy youth of the embarrassment of responding to the fraught scientific admonition regarding cash accumulation, or even retention. Xenophon has Socrates instead switch immediately to asking about a very different, warmer kind of possession—with regard to which the philosopher elicited another unconventional implication of economic science: “but as for friends/loved ones [*philoî*], if one knows how to use them so as to benefit from them, what shall we declare them to be?” Critobulus replied with enthusiasm: “Riches, by Zeus!—and much, indeed, more than cattle [*bous*], at least if they are more beneficial than cattle.”<sup>21</sup> Socrates did not elaborate with his interlocutor the implications of the Socratic science in regard to those *philoî* whom one does not know how to use so as to get much benefit from them. Xenophon has Socrates proceed instead to draw a related, and again radically unconventional, scientific conclusion, which contradicted what Critobulus began by thinking was absurdly obvious (1.15): “and then even the enemies, according to your argument, *are* riches, for one who is capable of being benefited from enemies.” Showing how far he had advanced in economic science, Critobulus replied: “To me at least, it therefore seems so.” Socrates drove home the radicalness of Critobulus's revision of his own outlook: “So then, to a household manager who is good [*agathos*], it belongs also to have knowledge of how to use the enemies so as to be benefited from the enemies?” “In the strongest terms!” (*ischurotata ge*), answered Critobulus, in effect conceding that he had been refuted in his earlier very confident and strongly asserted opinion.

But Socrates went further: “For also you see (he said), Critobulus, how many households indeed there are of private persons that have increased from war, and how many from tyrannizing.”<sup>22</sup> The art of war is thus evidently

<sup>21</sup> 1.14; see similarly *Mem.* 3.11.5; Jacob Hartman, *Analecta Xenophontea* (Leiden: Van Doesburgh, 1887), 189, is so shocked—“Haecce in libro Xenophonteo legi et tolerari! Quid enim absurdius est!”—that he “suspects” this to be a later marginal note added by some “lectore, cui eiusmodi observatio acuta lepide videretur.”

<sup>22</sup> 1.15: *apo tyranniôn*; this is the reading of the manuscripts (for the “hateful” connotation of this rare word *tyranniôn*, see Xenophanes frag. 3 [Diels and Kranz, 6th ed.])—which most editors have failed to follow here. Leading twentieth-century editors such as Marchant (*Xenophontis Opera Omnia*, rev. ed., vol. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1921]) and Chantraine (*Xénophon Économique*) claim in their apparatuses ad loc. that the major manuscript Laurentian 55.21 reads “of those tyrannizing” = *tyranniôn*, genitive, i.e., without the *apo*; but my inspection of a clear photo of that ms. shows this not to be the case. (These editors are correct, however, in reporting that the ms. Paris 1647, whose photo I have also inspected, reads “from tyrants” = *apo tyrannôn*, with an insertion above the line, by a second hand, of a correcting iota to make it read like all the other mss., *apo tyranniôn*.) So provocative is this Socratic observation—that many *private* persons have enlarged their households “from tyrannizing,” as well as from war—that editors have insisted that the text we have received must be emended; the most popular such purification has been that of Benjamin Weiske, *Xenophontis Atheniensis Scripta*, 6 vols.

a part of the Socratic science of economics. Is there also a scientific art of tyrannizing that is part of the Socratic science of economics? For the full answer to this troubling question, we would have to study Xenophon's *Hiero, or One Skilled in Tyranny*—the work that is the antistrophe to the *Economist*. We soon hear Socrates declaring that “when enemies in war who are gentlemen enslave some, they compel many to be better by chastening them, and make them lead the rest of their life more easily.”<sup>23</sup> “To say the least, Socrates and Critobulus are silent here on justice or legality”;<sup>24</sup> they are equally silent on the noble. Xenophon has Socrates here make the science of economics appear so single-mindedly fixated on the good (the beneficial) that competing and traditionally limiting moral considerations, of lawfulness, justice, and nobility, are eclipsed. Xenophon provokes us to wonder: What are the Socratic grounds for such a primacy of the idea of the good?

These grave questions are muted or veiled by the reaction Xenophon reports from the morally insouciant young Critobulus, who said that he found what had been said “*nobly* spoken, in my opinion at least, Socrates!” (This is the sole mention of the noble in the Socratic account of the economic science, or indeed in the first three chapters.)

#### VIRTUE AS KNOWLEDGE

The introduction of strenuously risky wars and tyrannizing as eligible modes of scientific increase of the household evidently provoked our leisure-loving young householder to raise another sort of critical question, one that is revelatory of additional deep implications of the outlook of Socratic economic science (1.16).

How, Critobulus asked, are we to understand people who possess the requisite knowledge, and also have the resources available “from which they have the power, by working, to increase the households,” yet are “*unwilling* to do so” (*mē thelontas poiein*)—rendering (Critobulus thinks) “their knowledge of

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(Leipzig: Fritsch, 1798–1804), ad loc.: he removes the *apo* and, since that leaves a mss. reading that he recognizes as “ineptum,” changes “tyrannizing” to “tyrants”—all on the grounds that “opponuntur inter se *idiōtai* et *tyrannoi*”; thus he reconstructs the passage so that it reads as if Socrates says only that many private persons *as well as* tyrants have profited from war. —Xenophonic provocation to thought erased!

<sup>23</sup> 1.23; Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse*, 96: “Fully stated, the thought suggested by Socrates and imputed by him to Kritoboulos is to the effect that all good things belong to the wise men, and only to them (Cicero, *Republic* 1.27; *De finibus* III.75).”

<sup>24</sup> Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse*, 96, as well as 127, 202–3; Ambler, “On the *Oeconomicus*,” 109–10.

no benefit to them?” Doesn’t it necessarily follow, on the basis of the Socratic thesis, at least as Critobulus understands it, that “neither their knowledge nor their possessions are riches”? These questions express with some cleverness a commonsense doubt about the emerging Socratic contention or presumption that knowledge of the good has sovereign psychological power to govern one’s choices—that such knowledge is virtue, or that virtue is such knowledge.

In addition, the wealthy but nonetheless financially pressed Critobulus would seem to have been raising a thinly veiled, critical, personal question about his impecunious teacher—and pointing again to the possibility, and now to the seeming Socratic logic, of the two of them entering into an economic partnership. In doing so, Critobulus ignored (and thereby prompts us to note) the possibility—which was incarnate in the Socrates standing before him—that the true knowledge or science of household management dictates that the knower minimize, as much as possible, his involvement in the work of monetarily or materially increasing anyone’s household, starting with his own, and that he instead devote his energies to increasing the riches of knowledge for its own sake, and acquiring friends who contribute to such increase.<sup>25</sup>

Socrates did not respond to Critobulus’s implicit personal challenge. He did not give a defense of his own financially unenterprising economizing. But he afforded a veiled glimpse of the understanding of spiritual freedom that is at the core of his life, that is, of the truly good life, and of that life’s unqualifiedly scientific economics.

Socrates began his response by asking a question that seems at first to exhibit misunderstanding of the import of Critobulus’s questions: “Is it about slaves (said Socrates) that you are trying, Critobulus, to involve me in dialogue?” (1.17). “By Zeus, no!”—Critobulus remonstrated—“I am not!” Then, evidently seeking to overcome what he thought was Socrates’s obtuseness, Critobulus adduced “some who are reputed to be of the best fathers,” whom he saw have knowledge of either the warlike or the peaceful arts of acquisition, but are “not willing” (*ouk ethelontas*) to do the *work* of implementing this knowledge—precisely because they are *not* slaves, or do not have masters (who might compel in them a willingness to work)! Critobulus’s observations (not least, perhaps, of his own character) had made him sure that knowledge of the good is insufficient without the addition of will, or willingness, to labor at achieving the known good.

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<sup>25</sup> Ambler, “On the *Oeconomicus*,” 108–9.

But Socrates rejected the very possibility of such a human condition (1.18): “And how (said Socrates) could they *not* have Masters [*despotas*], since, praying to be happy and wishing to do that from which they would have good things, they are prevented from doing these things by rulers?!”

The bemused Critobulus naturally asked, “And who indeed are these, who, being unevident, rule over them?!”

Swearing by Zeus for the first time, Socrates exclaimed that “they are not unevident, but entirely evident!” They are the Beings whose “wickedness” Critobulus himself “believes in” (asserted Socrates): “Idleness, and Softness of Soul, and Carelessness,” along with “other deceptive Mistresses [*despoinai*] purporting to be pleasures—Dice Playing” and other “human associations that are without benefit” (1.19). A few moments later Socrates added, as additional “harsh Masters,” Gluttonies, and Sexual Lusts, and Drinking Bouts, and Ambitions that are foolish as well as expensive (1.22). These Masters “rule so harshly over humans whom they dominate, that, so long as they see the humans in their prime and able to work, the masters compel them” to “bring the fruits of their labors as tributes” to the desires for these Masters; while the “Mistresses never cease tormenting the bodies of humans and their souls and their homes, so long as they rule over them” (1.22). It is necessary—“Oh Critobulus!—to keep fighting for freedom against these, no less than against those who try to enslave with weapons!” (1.23; see similarly *Mem.* 4.5.5). The philosopher playfully personified, as evilly despotic demons or divinities, the psychological forces that make humans who “pray to be happy,” humans who also *wish* to do what they think they know will make them happy, do in fact the opposite. He thus gently invited Critobulus to contemplate and to react against his own self-enslavement. More profoundly, Xenophon helps us to descry the true, serious meaning of the famous Socratic thesis, “virtue is knowledge”:<sup>26</sup> opinion about the good is only “knowledge” (in the Socratic sense) when that opinion is held by a consciousness in which practical reason has achieved domination over the passions, and especially the desires for pleasure; otherwise, the passions enslave the practically rational mind by beclouding or bedazzling it—thus producing the *practical-psychological ignorance of the good* that is commonly (and mistakenly) conceived as willful evildoing or as clear-sighted lack of self-restraint. And Xenophon has

<sup>26</sup> See also *Mem.* 1.2.19–24 and Lorraine Pangle, “Virtue and Self-Control in Xenophon’s Socratic Thought,” in *Natural Right and Political Philosophy*, ed. Ann Ward and Lee Ward (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013) and *Virtue Is Knowledge: The Moral Foundations of Socratic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Socrates draw attention to one momentous form that the beclouding and dazzling take: the imagination's creation of the apparent experience of being infatuated or bewitched by superhuman Masters and Mistresses (see also *Education of Cyrus* 6.1.41).

Critobulus apparently did not want to ponder this insinuation that he might be subject to a profound sort of inner slavery. Perhaps spurred by the amazing proliferation of Socratically invented, superhuman Masters and Mistresses, Critobulus moved to another objection (no longer as a question, but assertively), an objection on a very different footing from the previous. He pointed out that there is another class of people who are not at all impeded by the sorts of "Masters and Mistresses" Socrates had conjured up—that is, not at all troubled by lack of self-control over their passions: people who work hard, and who devise methods of income, and who nevertheless wear out their households and wind up without resources (1.21). In other words, reminding of his answer to Socrates's question about the earth, Critobulus pointed again, and more emphatically, to the enormous limitation imposed on any practical rationalism by human reason's helplessness in the face of the truly external, superhuman powers of fortune or destiny.

Socrates's response (1.22–23) perversely ignored this powerful objection—despite his immediately preceding reference to "*praying to be happy*" (*euchomenoi eudaimonein*: 1.18). With apparent obtuseness, Socrates elaborated further his jocular creation of evil divine or demonic Masters and Mistresses against whom Critobulus must keep fighting. Xenophon provokes us to wonder: What is the scientific ground for Socrates's ignoring of Fortuna, and/or the divinities to whom humans pray, and for his unabashed introduction of new, hostile divinities (*daimonia*)?

#### THE PHILOSOPHIC ECONOMIST AS EXEMPLIFYING WEALTH AND THE YOUNG MAGNATE AS EXEMPLIFYING POVERTY

Critobulus persisted in shrugging off Socrates's inventively jocular call to the struggle for inner liberation: "In my opinion I've heard quite sufficiently from you about such, and" (the young man fatuously adds) "examining myself, I think I have found myself reasonably self-controlled in such matters." What Critobulus said he needed from Socrates was advice on how to *increase* his household—"or," he asked, with a hint of the tone of one of the upper class condescending to a plebeian, "do you pass judgment [*kategnōkas*] on us, Socrates, as being sufficiently wealthy, and do we seem to you not to need more riches?" (2.1).

Socrates responded tongue in cheek, as if Critobulus had invited an assessment of the comparative sufficiency of his own and Critobulus's wealth. He earnestly declared himself to be "sufficiently wealthy." But "you, Oh Critobulus, seem to me to be very impoverished, and—by Zeus!—there are times when I very much pity you!" (2.2).

Critobulus reacted by laughing in Socrates's face, and asking: "And how much—before the gods!—do you think, Socrates (he said), your possessions would fetch if put up for sale, and how much would mine?!"

With a straight face, Socrates replied (2.3) that if he "chanced on a good buyer," his entire household and contents would "easily" get five minas (= 500 drachmas)<sup>27</sup>—which, he said, he knows is less than one percent of the price that Critobulus would get for his.

Critobulus drove home the comic preposterousness of Socrates's assessment: "And *you don't* need more riches, but pity *me* as impoverished!?" (2.4).

Socrates stubbornly contended that he had resources adequate to procure what is sufficient for him; but soon added (2.8) the following crucial and not conventionally gentleman-like supplement to his initial evaluation of his resources: "If I should need something in addition, I know that you too are aware that there are those who would assist, so that, by providing very little, they would *deluge* my life with abundance."<sup>28</sup>

But as regards the "pitifully poor" Critobulus, Socrates declared that, in striking contrast to himself, the young magnate is so engaged in practicing, and becoming reputed for, magnificence (*megaloprepeia*)—the moral virtue of grand generosity that Aristotle (*NE* 1122a18–b33) ranks close to the peak of the adequately "equipped," morally serious life—that even if the young man's wealth were four times as great as it is, it still would not seem adequate. It thus transpires that the heart and root of Critobulus's financial difficulties is not his illusory estimation of himself as wealthy, nor his careless failure to devise ways to make more money, nor even his thinking that he can devote all his attention to affairs with boyfriends; all these deplorable deficiencies do not by themselves render Crito's son "pitiable" at risk of "suffering incurable evil and winding up in great want" (2.7). What threatens him with ruin is

<sup>27</sup> Augustus Boeckh, *The Public Economy of the Athenians*, trans. Anthony Lamb (Boston: Little, Brown, 1857), 156–57, comments: "according to the price of barley in the time of Socrates, . . . with this he could not have procured even the amount of barley which was requisite for himself and his wife, to say nothing of the other necessities of life, and of the support of his children."

<sup>28</sup> We recall that "friends are riches, by Zeus!" (1.14); see Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse*, 102–5.

his virtue of magnificence in action, both in deeds of great private generosity (such as sacrificing to the gods and hosting strangers as well as fellow citizens), and, above all, in public deeds obeying the city's demands upon him for much more massive civic generousities, in peacetime and in war.

Obviously, the philosopher Socrates does not even attempt to join in these private and civic activities of the moral virtue of magnificence: as Aristotle declares (*NE* 1122b28), “a poor man would not be magnificent”—and “one who tries is foolish.” But Aristotle also allows that the activities of the moral virtue of magnificence can be undertaken if one has sufficient resources not of one's own but through one's “connections” (1122b32); could not Socrates gain access to the requisite resources for the practice of this moral virtue by way of his connections with Crito and his family—even by becoming the authoritative adviser to Critobulus in the latter's household management as a whole, including his philanthropy? Yet Socrates speaks of Critobulus's practices of magnificence as involving burdensome “compulsion” (*anangkē*), under the “imposition” of “commands,” accompanied by threats of being made “bereft of allies,” and of no longer being “tolerated,” and of becoming “severely punished” by the city of Athens. Socrates does not speak of the activities of grand generosity as being either “nobly” sacrificial or as “nobly” and “pleasantly” fulfilling—in contrast to what he will report he heard from, and replied to, the perfect gentleman Ischomachus (11.9–10). Even more striking is the contrast with Aristotle, who characterizes such expenditures as being “similar to votive offerings,” as “for the sake of the noble,” as “not for oneself but for the common,” and yet “also pleasant while lavish,” looking to “what is honorable” and “what is most beautiful/noble” and, as such, objects of “admiring contemplation—and the magnificent is admirable” (*NE* 1122b7–a5). Someone might suggest that the major reason for the dim view Socrates takes of the active engagement in magnificence by Critobulus is that the latter has to practice the virtue in Athens (as Socrates underlines here), which is governed by a democratic regime that is constitutionally incapable of properly appreciating the public virtue of magnificence, and that inevitably distorts the practice of the virtue by using it to try deliberately to impoverish the wealthy practitioners.<sup>29</sup> But in that case one might expect Socrates to give some indication—along the lines of Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*—of aspiration to, or admiration of, magnificent expenditure when practiced in

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<sup>29</sup> See Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus*, 229 and Xenophon's *Regime of the Athenians*; Ambler, “On the *Oeconomicus*,” 107: Socrates “speaks of the Athenians as one might speak of a despotic master.”

a virtuous regime. Socrates does not do so.<sup>30</sup> Nor does he give to Critobulus any recommendation to follow the prudent and somewhat defensive public generosity that the Athenian gentleman Ischomachus taught Socrates that he engaged in with (mixed) pleasure (11.21–22). Xenophon compels us to wonder: What did Socrates learn from listening to Ischomachus, or from observing the reactions of young men to whom he has told the story of his education by Ischomachus, that led him not to recommend imitation of this peak activity of the morally serious gentleman? (With a view to Plato, we may submit that insofar as there is a Socratic philosopher’s magnificence, it is a virtue of an altogether different order, on an altogether different footing: see Plato’s *Republic* 486a, 487a, 490c, 494b, 495d, 503c, 536a; also *Laws* 709e and 710c.)

#### THE PHILOSOPHIC ECONOMIST EVADES RESPONSIBILITY

The philosopher’s effort to awaken the young man to his dire financial situation seemed to have succeeded all too well. “The time has come, Socrates,” Critobulus declared, “for you to take charge of me, so that I will not in reality become pitiable!” (2.9; our young bon vivant of course did not agree that he was already pitiable—that suggestion, he assumed, was merely a Socratic joke).

After a moment’s resourceful reflection (*akousas oun*), the master responded by launching into a fabulously fibbing account of the previous conversation (2.9). Socrates asserted that Critobulus had not only laughed at the philosopher’s claim to be wealthy, as showing that Socrates is ignorant of the very meaning of “wealth,” but had forced the philosopher “through refutation” to admit that he possesses not even a hundredth of the possessions of Critobulus: forced the philosopher to admit, in other words, that he is financially impoverished, rather than wealthy as he claims—and, by implication, forced Socrates to realize that he is thus the last person in the world that should be asked to take charge of anyone’s estate.

Critobulus is phlegmatic enough (or familiar enough with Socrates’s penchant for playful prevarication) not to be drawn into haggling over what actually was or was not said and done in the previous few minutes’ dialogue. He insisted on facts that he regarded as visibly evident: Socrates knows one crucial work of becoming wealthy—making a surplus; and if he can achieve that from a little, it is not unreasonable to “hope” that he can achieve it from a lot (2.10).

<sup>30</sup> Ambler, “On the *Oeconomicus*,” 107; Bragues, “Socrates on Management,” 12.

In response, Socrates continued his fibbing. He asked whether Critobulus did not recall how, in the preceding dialogue, the young man insisted—without allowing poor old Socrates even to grunt<sup>31</sup> in demurrals!—that for one who lacks knowledge of how to employ horses, or land, or herd animals, or cash, or any other resource, these all cease to be riches: “and how do you suppose that *I* would know how to use any of these, when absolutely none of these have ever belonged to *me*?” (2.11). Suddenly, in his drive to escape responsibility for Critobulus’s affairs, Socrates introduced the importance of knowledge based in practical experience—from which he had previously abstracted.

Critobulus stubbornly reminded Socrates that “it seemed to us that even if one did not happen to have riches, all the same, there is a certain *science* of household management; so, what prevents you too from knowing it?” (2.12).

“By Zeus!”—Socrates expostulated—“the very same thing that would prevent” anyone from knowing how to play a musical instrument if he himself never possessed an instrument, and no one else ever allowed him to learn on theirs!—“And that holds for me as regards household management!” (2.12–13). Socrates spoke as if he were homeless, and thus totally ignorant of what it means to manage or to grow a household or to balance its expenses against its resources.<sup>32</sup>

Critobulus “was not buying it”: he rejoined by reproaching Socrates for “trying so intensely to escape giving help to me, in any way, so as to more easily bear the burden of my necessitated affairs!” (2.14).

“By Zeus, no!”—Socrates exclaimed—“I am not! I shall eagerly guide you in any ways that I can”; and Socrates proceeded to secure the young man’s agreement that he could not blame Socrates (for, Critobulus declared, that would “not be at all just”<sup>33</sup>) if the philosopher, being himself ignorant of the needed knowledge, should show to the beleaguered young householder others who are much cleverer in these matters, others who will even (Socrates seemed to promise) be grateful if Critobulus were to become their student.

<sup>31</sup> *Anagruzein*—the word is Aristophanean (*Wealth* 17 and the scholiast); Hubert Holden, *The Oeconomicus of Xenophon* (London: Macmillan, 1884), ad loc. In the *Clouds* (945), the word appears when the Unjust Discourse says it will allow the Just Discourse to “grunt” when it has been defeated: does Xenophon have his Socrates associate Critobulus with the Unjust Discourse, Socrates himself with the Just?

<sup>32</sup> At the same time, by drawing an analogy between a household and a musical instrument, Socrates may be hinting that in his view a knower of the art would not need to “increase” his household in order to maintain and use it beautifully and well.

<sup>33</sup> The first mention of justice in this work.

Socrates further declared that if Critobulus were willing to become their student, Socrates thinks that the young man will become a “terrific money maker”—“if,” that is, “the god should not oppose you” (2.15–18). Was the philosopher’s introduction of the hitherto ignored, crucial importance of divine providence somehow connected with Critobulus’s respectful introduction of normative justice for the first time?

The basis Socrates gave for his promise to Critobulus was a rather bizarre account of the philosopher’s activity in the city (2.16–18)—an account that is odd both in its formulation and in its substance. Socrates “confesses” (*homologō*) that he “has been attentive to whoever among those in the city are the most expertly knowledgeable [*epistēmonestatoi*] about each of the things.” He was motivated to this because “there came a time” (*pote*) when he “learned” that “from the *same* works” (*apo tōn autōn ergōn*) “some are very much without resources, and some very wealthy”—and about this dramatic disparity he “very much wondered.” His “investigating” (*episkopōn*) led to his “discovery” of a cause that he characterizes as “altogether intrinsic” (*panu oikeiōs*) to the matters: “those who practice these affairs without method [*eikē*] suffer penalty, but I came to the judgment [*kategnōn*] that those who apply themselves with an intent judgment [*gnōmē suntetamenē*] proceed in the affairs more quickly and easily and profitably.” Strangely, however, immediately after this account of his discovery of an “altogether intrinsic” cause for humans either progressing or failing in business, Socrates indicated to Critobulus that the young man’s success as a money maker would depend decisively also on a cause or power that is not intrinsic to business practice based on sound judgment: divine providence—“if the god should not oppose you” (2.18).<sup>34</sup> As we later hear (11.8–9), Socrates learned from the perfect gentleman Ischomachus that the latter “believed that he had learned that the gods” grant “happiness” only to “some of those who are prudent and diligent, and to others of these not,” and hence prudence and diligence must be supplemented by pious devotion. Is this not a clue to what made Socrates “very much wonder” about what might be going on to cause some humans to be without resources, and some to be wealthy, from the *same* works? Does this not call into question Socrates’s previous apparent insistence or contention that success or failure in business is due simply to human knowledge and self-control (recall 1.16–22)? Looking again at the passage before us in 2.16–18, we see that Socrates does not in fact say that he learned that business

<sup>34</sup> Socrates makes no reference to the power in human affairs of chance or luck (*tuchē*)—which is never mentioned in *The Economist* (though see the verbs in 1.4, 2.12, 3.3, 4.19, and 8.3 [*tuchein*], 2.3 and 12.20 [*epituchein*]).

guided by intent judgment leads to success *simply*, but only that it leads to proceeding “*more*” quickly and easily and profitably than lack of method, which he “saw” leads to “suffering *penalty*” (*zēmioumenous*—from whom; the gods? Is Socrates implying that he discovered that the true divinity favors intelligent human diligence and frowns on the lack thereof?).

Socrates makes it sound as if, in the time prior to his life-changing learning and then wondering and then investigating and discovery, he had lived in an extraordinary “economic” aloofness (compare Plato’s *Theaetetus* 173c–175b)—and as if his investigations, while leading him back down to earth, and to discovering an “altogether intrinsic” cause for economic progress or failure “from the same works,” did not at all move him to join his fellow humans in their preoccupation with money-making business, or with gentlemanly household management.

#### CONCLUSION

The preceding affords a dialectical gateway to the full elaboration of what may be called Xenophon’s Socratic “political economy”—as found especially not only in the remainder of the dialectical *Economist*, but also in crucial passages in the *Education of Cyrus*, *Memorabilia*, *Hiero*, and *Ways and Means*. The Socratic science of economics prioritizes use value over exchange value, intellectual and spiritual utility over material and corporeal utility, private friendship and teaching over family and public philanthropy, politics over markets, virtue as end over pleasure as end, and philosophy as a way of life. The full justification of these priorities is found in the empirical and normative account of the human condition to whose exposition the Socratic Xenophon’s systematic oeuvre as a whole is dedicated.