9

SOCRATIC IGNORANCE AND ETHICS IN THE STOA

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Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy

This chapter deals with the reception of accounts about Socrates by the first Stoics in the 3rd century BCE. When Zeno of Citium (334–262), the founder of Stoicism, started his own school in the painted "colonnade" or "Stoa" on the Athenian marketplace at the beginning of the 4th century, Socrates (469–399) had been dead for almost a hundred years. Even so, according to the anecdote preserved by Diogenes Laertius, at 7.3, Zeno, upon his arrival from Cyprus around 312, is said to have become interested in pursuing wisdom by hearing about Socrates: "After having heard the bookseller reading about Socrates in a bookshop and Zeno having expressed his interest in Socrates, Crates of Thebes passed by, whereupon the bookseller suggested to Zeno that he should 'follow [*parakolouthēson*] that man!'" The bookseller was surely right about connecting Crates and Socrates: Crates of Thebes (360–280) had been a pupil of Diogenes of Sinope, himself a follower of Socrates. Zeno indeed became a student of Crates, a Cynic, who like Socrates and his own teacher, Diogenes of Sinope, propagated the simple life, disregarding conventions. A string of other teachers followed, all in one way or another inspired by Socrates: after Crates of Thebes, Zeno studied with Stilpo of Megara (DL 7.24, *SVF* 1.278, fr. 4 Giannantoni) and with Diodorus Cronus (DL 7.25, fr. 3 Giannantoni),[1] who—according to Diogenes Laertius 7.25—were both interested in the Socratic method of arguing correctly. Thereafter he studied with Polemo of Athens (314–276) in Plato's Academy (DL 7.2, Polemo fr. 85 Gigante, *SVF* 1.1 and DL 7.25, Polemo fr. 88 Gigante, *SVF* 1.5), where he will yet again have learned about Socrates.[2] According to the formulation by the Epicurean Philodemus of Gadara (first century BCE), *On the Stoics*, col. 13.3 Dorandi, Zeno and his pupils even went as far as that they were apparently "willing to be called Socratics." "Willing" suggests that Zeno may not actively have endorsed this name—for the obvious reason that other thinkers also claimed to have been inspired by Socrates—but it offers further evidence for the inspiration Socrates apparently exercised on the early Stoics.

Among the other major Hellenistic schools that were inspired by Socrates, the Academics, and even the Epicureans, can be mentioned (for other schools see De Luise and Farinetti 1997, Brouwer 2008). According to Epicurus of Samos (341–271) and followers, Socrates was the perfect anti-hero, the embodiment of dishonesty, as someone

who claimed not to know, but in fact simply did not want to share his knowledge with people whom he called his friends.[3] In Plato's Academy, the influence Socrates still exerted in the third century BCE is unmistakable, even more so when a couple of years after Polemo's death in 269, his pupil Arcesilaus of Pitane (318–242) became head of the school.[4] Under his leadership the Academy would make its "skeptical turn," for which the questioning Socrates, not satisfied with the answers that others provided him with, was the model. For the Academics Socrates was to be followed as someone who refuted the opinions of his interlocutors—in the formulation later put forward by Cicero, *On the Orator* 3.67 (test. 5a Mette), Arcesilaus initiated this "really Socratic practice" [*Socraticum maxime*]. For almost two centuries, the Academy would remain skeptical, with Carneades of Cyrene (213–129), next to Arcesilaus himself, as one of its most important representatives (Dillon 2019, 61–78). Only from Antiochus of Ascalon (125–68) onwards, the Academy would discard its skepticism, and the focus would shift towards the exegesis of Plato's writings for their own sake, as the source for Platonism, which then was developed as a dogmatic system of thought.[5]

With Zeno and Arcesilaus both interested in Socrates, the antagonism between the Academy and the Stoa in the third century BCE can thus be reconstructed as a debate about Socrates' legacy. The Academics offered their interpretation of Socrates as a skeptical thinker, whereas the Stoics offered a rather different interpretation of Socrates as a thinker above all interested in human matters or ethics. Perhaps this debate already started within the Academy itself, when Arcesilaus and Zeno both studied together under Polemo.[6] From the viewpoint of the Academic skeptics, their debate with the Stoics about the criterion of truth is such a Socratic conversation. Against Epicurus, who had presumably introduced the topic of the criterion and had boldly declared that "all impressions are true,"[7] Zeno proposed that only "cognitive" impressions are true, that is "an impression arising from what is" (see e.g. DL 7.54, *SVF* 2.105, LS 40A). Arcesilaus refuted Zeno's proposal, arguing that it is also possible to have a true impression of something that does not exist. The Stoics made various attempts to modify Zeno's definition, which the Academics all attempted to refute in the Socratic manner.

Zeno and his followers criticized the Academics for this one-sided interpretation of Socrates as someone only refuting the opinions of others. Zeno's fellow-traveller Aristo of Chios (320–250) even accused Arcesilaus of being a kind of anti-Socrates, as "a corrupter of the youth" (*phtorea tōn neōn*, DL 4.40, *SVF* 1.435), a clear allusion to the accusation brought up against Socrates in his trial that he would have "corrupted the youth" (*diaphtheirōn tōn neōn*, Plato, *Apology* 24b). Even if explicitly directed at Arcesilaus' apparently somewhat unrestrained sexual appetite ("a shameless teacher of sexual license," as Diogenes Laertius has it in the continuation of the passage), it can also be read as directed at someone who corrupted his students by making them focus on refutation only.[8] For the early Stoics, for Zeno and Aristo alike, Socrates should rather be followed as a thinker with convictions, who in the end was prepared to die for them.[9]

In this chapter I will develop the line of thought that the early Stoics exploited the Socratic tradition in order to present Socrates as more than just a sceptical thinker, such that in following him they were able to develop their doctrinal ethics. I will thus focus on Socrates' ethical convictions, which were unusual, and are therefore often referred to as opinions that go against common opinion or—in the literal sense in Greek—"paradoxes," such as "virtue is knowledge" or "all virtues are interconnected." Before discussing these Socratic paradoxes and how these paradoxes can contribute to a better understanding of Stoicism, in the next section I will first discuss two preliminary problems: the extant sources on Stoicism and the problem of the historical Socrates.

Socrates and the Stoics: Two Preliminary Problems

A reconstruction of Stoic thought from the point of view of Socratic ethics is problematic for two reasons. First, with regard to the Stoics the sorry state of the sources has to be noted. Of the treatises written by the early Stoics, none has survived: the *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthes of Assos, Zeno's successor as head of the school, is the only somewhat longer extant text that is explicitly attributed to an early Stoic: 39 lines in all.[10] Full accounts as to how they interpreted Socrates and how this interpretation relates to their own system of thought have not survived (that is, assuming there were any, of course). For a reconstruction of Stoic doctrine, or how the Stoics relied on accounts about Socrates, we thus have to rely on secondary, often hostile sources.

Second, the problem of the sources about or even by Socrates makes such a reconstruction even more difficult. With the exception perhaps of a lost hymn to the gods Apollo and Artemis and a fable in the manner of Aesop—"as some maintain," according to the Byzantine *Suda* S 829 (LM D1)—Socrates did not write anything himself. For those who had no personal recollections of his life and thought, like the early Stoics, accounts by others were needed on the basis of which Socrates' life and thought could be interpreted. At the beginning of the third century BCE, there were clearly far more possibilities to find out about Socrates than is the case in the twenty-first century. Those who wanted to know more about Socrates could first of all rely on an oral tradition, next to many texts that had been written about Socrates by his admirers. Unfortunately, most of these texts are now lost, as Giannantoni's collection of the extant evidence on Socrates and the Socratics attests (Giannantoni 1990).

For the oral tradition about Socrates, Zeno could surely rely on his teachers Crates, Stilpo, Diodorus, and Polemo. For the written tradition he could fall back on Xenophon and Plato, two admirers of Socrates, whose work has fortunately survived the ages. Xenophon wrote extensively about Socrates, esp. his *Recollections* of *Socrates*, Plato's dialogues are in fact recollections of Socrates, too. In his *Tusculan Disputations*, at 5.11, Cicero refers to these texts in this sense as "Plato's written recollections [*Platonis memoria et litteris consecrata*]." From Diogenes Laertius 1.16, it can be inferred that *Recollections* became in fact a new "Socratic" genre.[11] Among those who wrote *Recollections* are presumably Stilpo,[12] and also the early Stoics themselves. Zeno wrote his *Recollections of Crates* (DL 7.2, *SVF* 1.41, 273), Aristo of Chios wrote a *Recollections*, in three volumes (DL 7.163, *SVF* 1.333), just like Zeno's pupil Persaeus of Citium, presumably writing about Zeno and Stilpo (see DL 7.36, *SVF* 1.435), [13] and also Cleanthes appeared to have contributed to the genre (see below, Socrates and Stoic Ethics: The Interrelatedness of the Virtues).

Even though both Xenophon and Plato wrote recollections of Socrates, their accounts of his life and thought are somewhat different. According to Diogenes Laertius 3.34, Xenophon and Plato both wrote similar narratives, "as if out of rivalry [*diaphiloneikountes*]: a *Symposium, Apology of Socrates*, and their *Recollections* that deal with ethical matters." The differences concern the manner of presentation by both authors: in his accounts Xenophon brings himself in, whereas Plato is more self-effacing.[14] The differences also relate to how they present Socrates himself: Xenophon makes Socrates into someone who investigates together with others (see e.g. *Recollections* 4.6.1), whereas Plato presents Socrates as someone who above all refutes opinions that others bring up (Vander Waerdt 1994: 12). What is more, Plato also makes Socrates the mouth-piece of his own doctrines, as e.g. with the independent existence of forms, of which Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1078b30 informs us that this doctrine was not held by Socrates (Denyer 2019: 23).

In modern scholarship it has been suggested that the Stoics would have relied on Xenophon's accounts about Socrates (Long 1988: 162–3, repr. 1996, 20–21, cf. Brouwer 2014: 172–4). As we have already seen, according to the anecdote, Zeno started his search for wisdom by becoming acquainted with Xenophon's *Recollections*, book 2. However, just as with his "Socratic" teachers, where in his striving for wisdom he had several of them,[15] also with regard to the written texts about Socrates, it seems more likely that the voracious Zeno relied not just on Xenophon's texts, but on others, too, including Plato's.[16] As for Plato, the Stoics were especially interested in Plato's accounts of Socrates' last days before he drank the hemlock: from the preparation for his trial in the *Euthyphro*, the trial itself in the *Apology*, and to his final days spent in prison, in the *Crito* and the *Phaedo*. [17] There is evidence, too, that they used the characterizations of the "real" Socrates Plato offered in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. At the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, 229e-230a, Plato offers a portrait of Socrates, which with its theme of searching for self-knowledge has often been acknowledged as "genuinely Socratic" (Rowe 1988: 140; cf. Brouwer 2014: 149–163).

Even if the Stoics used Plato's texts as recollections of Socrates, they were at the same time critical of at least parts of these accounts. According to Plutarch (2nd half of the first century CE), *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1034e (*SVF* 1.260), Zeno severely criticized notably Plato's *Republic*, "against which he continued to write." He argued against the division of the citizens into three groups in Plato's ideal city, instead proposing in his own *Republic* a city consisting of perfect human beings only.[18] Furthermore, while stipulating the parallel between city and soul (Zeno presumably followed the metaphor of the large and small print in Plato's *Republic* 369a, see Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 31, *SVF* 1.263), Zeno also criticized Plato's tripartition of the soul, proposing a monistic account of the soul instead, consisting of reason only (see DL 7.175, *SVF* 1.135; cf. Brouwer 2014: 73–75). He also rejected Plato's doctrine of the forms as having an independent existence; according to Zeno, these are but "figments" [*ennoemata*] of the soul (Stobaeus 1.136.21–7.6, *SVF* 1.65, LS 30A).

In following Socrates, then, the Stoics appeared to have used the rich traditions available to them, but did so in a cautious manner. Needless to say, given the state of the sources, in terms of what has been lost and of what is still extant, the following discussion of the early Stoics' ethical doctrines against the background of Socratic ethics will inevitably have to remain speculative to an extent.[19] Nevertheless, this double reconstruction, the first one of the Stoics reconstructing Socrates, the second of the reconstruction thereof, may shed yet another, hopefully clarifying light on Stoic thought.

Socrates and Stoic Ethics: Physics?

In all accounts about Socrates, his interest in ethics stands out. See, for example, the account by Xenophon, *Recollections* 1.1.16: "He always discoursed about human matters" or—surely not an eye-witness account, but one which captures Socrates' interest nicely—Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.10:

> Socrates was the first to call the search for wisdom down from the heavens and set her in the cities of men and bring her also into their homes and compel her to ask questions about life and conduct and things good and evil.

Socrates' interest in ethics implied that he was not interested in physics as such. In Plato's *Phaedo* 96a (LM D7), Socrates declares to have discarded the study of nature under the guidance of Anaxagoras. However, this need not mean that he was not interested in nature

at all. Already in the *Phaedo*-passage this is stated as much. Xenophon, *Recollections* 4.3 makes clear that in discussing the rationality of the universe Socrates was interested in physics, at least in so far as it is relevant for ethics.[20] In his account on Socrates, Diogenes Laertius 2.45 (LM D8) presents Socrates' interest in physics thus: "It seems to me that Socrates discoursed on physics as well as ethics, at least where he converses about divine providence; Xenophon mentions this too, though he declares that Socrates talked only about ethics" (tr. Mensch).

The Stoics obviously shared Socrates' interest in ethics—and physics. They divided their study of wisdom into three parts, that is ethics, physics and logic (see DL 7.39, *SVF* 1.45, 2.37, LS 26B).[21] The parts are organically interconnected: they compared the study with a living being, likening logic to bones and sinews, ethics to the fleshier parts, and physics to the soul (DL 7.40, *SVF* 2.38). For ethics physics is thus needed, for which Zeno even relied on Socrates. According to Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 9.110 (*SVF* 1.113), Zeno used Xenophon's account in arguing for the rationality of the universe. This must be a reference to Xenophon, *Recollections* 4.3.[22]

Both Socrates' and the Stoics' ethical doctrines are unconventional and are therefore often referred to as *paradoxes*, in the literal sense in Greek as "doctrines that go against common opinion," in the ancient sources and in the modern scholarly literature.[23] For the ancient sources see Cicero, *On the Paradoxes of the Stoics* 4 (not in *SVF*), who derives the Stoic interest in paradoxes back to Socrates:

> These doctrines are surprising and they run counter to common opinion (*opinionem omnium*)—the Stoics themselves actually term them paradoxes [in his Latin text Cicero brings up the Greek word παράδοξα]; and I wrote with the greater pleasure because these Stoic paradoxes appear to me to be in the highest degree Socratic, and far and away the truest.[24] (tr. King, modified)

Among the unconventional convictions brought up by Socrates are the overall importance of virtue, virtue is knowledge, the interrelatedness of the virtues, and Socrates' self-declared ignorance (or his disavowal of knowledge).[25] It is these convictions that will be discussed here; I will leave out more political topics, which include natural law and cosmopolitanism, for which respectively DeFilippo 1994 and Brown 2000 can be consulted.

Socrates and Stoic Ethics: Virtue

Within ethics, Socrates considered virtue to be the most important topic, as Xenophon, *Recollections* 1.1.16 (LM D9) has it, rather than wealth or reputation, as Plato, *Apology* 29d-e adds:

> Athenians, I am grateful and I am your friend, but I will obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy, to exhort you and in my usual way to point out to any one of you whom I happen to meet: "Good Sir, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city with the greatest reputation for both wisdom and power; are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation and honours as possible, while you do not care for nor give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul?" (tr. Grube)

The Stoics interpreted Socrates' interest in virtue as that virtue is the only thing needed for the good life. In the modern literature this is taken to mean either that virtue is identical to the good life or that virtue is sufficient for it.[26] Whether identical or sufficient, the Stoics would eventually enter into a debate with the Aristotelians, who maintained that virtue is only a necessary condition for happiness, but that besides virtue other things are needed. (Given the fact that Aristotle's writings only became available in the first century BCE, the debate is presumably of a later date, though, and was not one the early Stoics already engaged in.)

For Socrates virtue was a form of wisdom or knowledge. Virtue as wisdom is in Xenophon, *Recollections* 3.9.5 (LM D35): "Socrates said that justice and every other virtue is wisdom." Virtue as knowledge is in Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1216b2 (LM D37): "He thought that all the virtues are forms of knowledge [*epistēmas gar ōiet' einai pasas tas arētas*]."

Just like Socrates, the Stoics also understood virtue to be knowledge. In Socratic fashion they defined virtue and the virtues as knowledge. A list of virtues thus defined is best preserved by the 5th century anthologist Stobaeus 2.59.4–15 (*SVF* 3.262, LS 61H):

> Practical wisdom is the science of what should and should not be done and of neutral actions, or the science of things that are good and bad and neutral as applied to a creature whose nature is social. … Moderation is the science of what should be chosen and avoided and of neutral situations. Justice is the science concerned with distributing individual deserts. Courage is the science of things that are fearful and not fearful and neither of these. (tr. LS)

The Stoics understood knowledge in two senses: first, as a product, as a system of cognitions about a specific topic, and, second, as a disposition "that in the reception of impressions cannot be shaken by reason, which they say consists in tension and in power" (Stobaeus 2.73.19–74.3, *SVF* 3.112, LS 41H). The definition of knowledge as the unshakeable disposition, which deals correctly with any sensory impression, is particularly apt for the virtues, and is thus how we find virtue and the virtues also defined, e.g. in Diogenes Laertius' unfortunately mutilated list, at 7.93 (*SVF* 3.76):

> Magnanimity is knowledge or a disposition which makes one superior to those things which happen alike to vicious and virtuous men; self-control is an unsurpassable disposition [concerned with] what accords with right reason or a disposition which cannot be defeated by pleasures; endurance is knowledge of or a disposition [concerned with] what one is to stand firmly by and what one is not to stand firmly by and what is neither; quick-wittedness is a disposition which instantly finds out what the appropriate action is. (tr. Inwood and Gerson)

They also defined virtue in general as a disposition. In his discussion of Stoic ethics, after having discussed the Stoic definitions of the good life, this is how Diogenes Laertius, at 7.89 (*SVF* 3.38, LS 61A), starts the section on virtue: "Virtue is a consistent disposition." It is this disposition, then, that makes the virtuous person always act virtuously.

Socrates and Stoic Ethics: The Interrelatedness of the Virtues

As we have just seen, according to our extant evidence, both Socrates and the Stoics understood the virtues as knowledge. However, this does not imply that they considered the

virtues to be one.[27] As for Socrates, he discusses the virtues as separate and interrelated. Two examples should suffice here. In Xenophon's *Recollections* 4.6.7 Socrates and Euthydemus connect wisdom with justice and piety. They agree that wisdom is not omniscience, but rather knowledge of "what is lawful concerning the gods," which they had defined earlier as piety (2–4), as well as of "what is lawful concerning men," which they had defined as justice (5–7). In Plato's *Gorgias* 507a-b (LM D43) Socrates brings up the connection between the virtues of moderation, justice and piety: "The moderate man will do what is fitting [*prosēkon*] with regard to men and gods; fitting towards men is justice, fitting towards the gods is piety."

As for the Stoics, they also hold on to the doctrine that the virtues are separate: there is no one single virtue, but the virtues are interrelated. An important but hostile account can be found in Plutarch's *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, at 1034c-e (presented in bits and pieces in von Arnim's *SVF*, at 1.200 [Zeno], 1.373 [Cleanthes], 1.563 [Aristo], and 3.258 [Chrysippus], but in full in LS 61C):

> [i] Zeno admits several different virtues, as Plato does, namely practical wisdom, courage, moderation and justice, on the grounds that although inseparable they are distinct and different from each other. Yet in defining each of them he says that courage is practical wisdom in matters requiring endurance, moderation is practical wisdom in matters requiring choice, practical wisdom in the special sense is wisdom in matters requiring action, and justice is practical wisdom in matters requiring distribution—on the grounds that it is one single virtue, which seems to differ in actions according to its dispositions relative to things.
> [ii] And not only does Zeno seem to contradict himself over this, but so does Chrysippus, who criticizes Aristo because he said that the other virtues were dispositions of a single virtue, yet supports Zeno for defining each of the virtues in this way.
> [iii] And Cleanthes in his *Physical Recollections*, having said that tension is a stroke of fire, and that if it becomes enough for fulfilling what comes in one's path, it is called strength and might, adds the following words: "This strength and might, when it arises in what seem to be matters requiring persistence, is self-control; when in matters requiring endurance, courage; concerning deserts, justice; concerning choices and avoidances, moderation." (tr. LS, modified)

Before discussing what Plutarch tells us about the Stoics, two preliminary remarks need to be made here. First, it should be noted that Plutarch ascribes the doctrine of the differences between the virtues to Plato rather than to Socrates, as had become customary in the first century CE among Platonists (as the Academics are then more fittingly called), who like Plutarch studied Plato's texts for their own sake. Second, the overall aim of Plutarch's treatise is to criticize (or even ridicule) the Stoics for their self-contradictions. With regard to the Stoics, who aimed for the consistency of their doctrines, this appears to be a particularly suitable strategy. However, Plutarch often shows no more than that the Stoics discussed their doctrines from different points of view or that the subsequent heads of the schools developed the doctrines of their predecessors further.

As for what Plutarch tells us about the early Stoics, it is clear that most of them held on to the doctrine that the virtues are not one, but that they are connected. One Stoic, Aristo of Chios, disagreed, maintaining that virtue is indeed one, but then Aristo also deviated in other aspects from the doctrines as they had been developed by Zeno: he considered the study of nature irrelevant, offering a formulation of the good life without reference to nature

(cf. Ioppolo 1980). These deviations may well be understood as the results of a debate with Zeno about how to understand Socrates or more plainly as a struggle for mastery over the Stoic sect. At any rate, Chrysippus, the third head of the school, followed Zeno in considering the virtues interconnected rather than one, criticizing Aristo for deviating from Zeno's position, as stated in section [ii] of the Plutarch passage.[28]

The exact nature of the interconnectedness was an issue, about which the different heads of the schools formulated their own proposals. For Zeno the different virtues are connected in the sense that the virtues are all forms of practical wisdom, applied in different realms—see section [i] of the Plutarch passage. For Cleanthes, as Plutarch tells us in section [iii], the virtues are connected in the sense that they are all strength and might, yet again applied in different realms. Cleanthes' use of "self-control" [*enkrateia*] has surprised commentators, but should presumably be traced back to Socrates himself. In Xenophon, *Recollections* 1.5.4, Socrates declared "self-control" [*enkrateia*] to be the "foundation" [*krēpis*] for virtue; in *Recollections* 4.5.1 he praised self-control above all else (see further Boys-Stones and Rowe 2013: 71–4). Against this background the terms "strength" and "might" or the title of Cleanthes' treatise *Physical Recollections* are perhaps less surprising: against Aristo, Cleanthes might have wanted to bring in physics in the same way Socrates did. Plutarch's strategy thus backfires: rather than that their positions are inconsistent, Zeno and Cleanthes chose a different point of view: whereas Zeno had presented the interconnectedness of the virtues from the point of view of ethics, Cleanthes presented it from the point of view of physics.

Disavowal of Knowledge: Ignorance

Among the best-known Socratic unconventional opinions is the paradox that Socrates claims not to have knowledge. Socrates' disavowal of knowledge is perhaps most famously captured in Plato's *Apology*, at 21d (LM D11a, cf. 29d, LM 11b): "It seemed to me that I was a tiny bit wiser than him [someone claiming to be wise], by this very difference, that what I do not know, I do not think either that I know it." A simpler, more down-to-earth version can be found in Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* 183b7–8 (LM D15): "Socrates asked questions, but did not answer them; for he admitted that he did not know." Socrates thus makes clear that he is not wise, does not have knowledge, and—given that he considers virtue to be knowledge—that he is not virtuous.

The Stoics' disavowal of knowledge appears to be modeled after the example of Socrates, at least the Socrates as they interpreted him. Like Socrates, they denied wisdom, knowledge or virtue for themselves. This denial can only be properly understood if we look at their conception of knowledge. According to the Stoics, as we have seen already in relation the Stoic definitions of virtue, knowledge is the infallible, perfect disposition out of which the person having that disposition always has the perfect grasp of each impression. Zeno's well-reported hand simile (see e.g. Cicero, *Lucullus* 145, *SVF* 1.66, LS 41A) is meant to illustrate this. Zeno compares an impression that is grasped with a hand turned into a fist. An impression that is grasped is not yet knowledge. Such an impression that is grasped only becomes secure knowledge if it is done out of an infallible condition. In the hand simile the other hand goes over the fist and makes it thus secure. Only someone with such a disposition is capable of dealing with impressions securely and has knowledge; all others have not and are declared ignorant. Only sages have knowledge and are good; all other inferior persons are ignorant and bad. Ignorance for the Stoics has thus this unusual broad scope of not having an infallible disposition.

According to the Stoics, sages are very rare indeed and almost nowhere to be found (Brouwer 2014: 92–135). The Stoic doctrine of the rarity of the sage may yet again have been inspired by Socrates. If their venerated Socrates declared himself not to be a sage, who else could be? In denying sagehood for themselves, the Stoics thus included themselves among the ignorant, not having the disposition out of which to deal with each impression in an infallible manner. However, being inferior persons, they did not deny themselves the possibility of having cognitive impressions, on the basis of which they were able to develop their doctrinal ethics etc., just like Socrates had been able to bring his convictions into play.

Even though Socrates explicitly denied sagehood for himself, the Stoics' veneration for Socrates appears to have gone as far as that they took him to be a sage after all, at least in the final phase of his life. In the extant sources (esp. Plutarch, *Stoic. Rep.* 1042f-1043a, Plutarch, *Comm. Not.* 1062b, Stobaeus 2.113.12–16; only the last passage is in *SVF*, at 3.540) the Stoics introduced the sage who is not yet aware of the fact that he has achieved sagehood. Even though Socrates is nowhere explicitly identified as such a sage, it seems likely that they developed it having Socrates in mind, esp. as Plato depicted him in the *Crito* and *Phaedo*. In the last days of his life, perhaps without noticing it himself, Socrates may have finally acquired that infallible disposition, calmly accepting his death as part of the divine order of things, in striking contrast to Crito, who—as Plato describes it in the eponymous dialogue—desperately tries to get him out of prison, or to those who could no longer hold back their tears, when he finally drinks the poison, as described by Plato in the *Phaedo*, at 117c-e:

> When we saw him drinking it and after he drank it, we could hold them back no longer; my own tears came in floods against my will. So I covered my face. I was weeping for myself, not for him—for my misfortune in being deprived of such a comrade. Even before me, Crito was unable to restrain his tears and got up. Apollodorus had not ceased from weeping before, and at this moment his noisy tears and anger made everybody present break down, except Socrates. "What is this," he said, "you strange fellows. It is mainly for this reason that I sent the women away, to avoid such unseemliness, for I am told one should die in good omened silence. So keep quiet and keep strong." (tr. Hutchinson, modified)

Conclusion

It is time to round off. The Stoics shared Socrates' interest in ethics—and in physics in so far as it relates to ethics. Like Socrates, they considered virtue to be the most important topic, discussing virtue, like Socrates, in terms of knowledge. Just as for Socrates, for the Stoics the virtues are not one, but interrelated. Like Socrates, they did not consider themselves to be virtuous or have the infallible disposition of knowledge, out of which they could always act perfectly. Their admiration for Socrates may even have gone as far as that the Stoics may have considered Socrates to be virtuous after all, in the last days of his life, calmly accepting his fate, drinking the poison he was ordered to drink, just as Plato had depicted him in the *Crito* and above all the *Phaedo*. They thus developed the thought that Socrates may not have been aware of the fact that he had become virtuous, declaring him a perfect human being, who has not yet become aware of his wisdom. This interpretation of Socrates would have made him even worthier to be followed by the early Stoics and their pupils.

Notes

1 In the older literature (see e.g. Döring 1972) Stilpo and Diodorus are considered as members of the same school; for them as leading different schools see Sedley 1977.
2 For what Zeno might have learned from Polemo, see Sedley 1999.
3 See e.g. Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1117d; cf. Riley 1980; Kleve 1983; Vander Waerdt 1994, 8; Brouwer 2014, 168. For the evidence on the hostility towards Socrates by Epicurus' follower Philodemus of Gadara, see Acosta Méndez and Angeli 1992.
4 See e.g. Cicero, *De Or.* 3.67 (Polemo fr. 74 Gigante, Arcesilaus test 5a Mette).
5 On the development towards reading Plato's texts as offering a system of thought see Bonazzi 2015; on the Stoic background to this development see Engberg-Pedersen 2017.
6 For Arcesilaus as a student of Polemo see (yet again) Cicero, *De Or.* 3.67 (Polemo fr. 74 Gigante, Arcesilaus test. 5a Mette). For Zeno and Arcesilaus studying together with Polemo see Cicero, *Varro* 35 (Polemo fr. 76 Gigante, Arcesilaus test. 5b5 Mette, *SVF* 1.13), Strabo 13.1.67 (Polemo fr. 77 Gigante, Arcesilaus test. 1c2 Mette, *SVF* 1.10), Numenius ap. Eusebius, *PE* 14.5.12 (Polemo fr. 90 Gigante, Arcesilaus test. 2 ll. 63–65 Mette, *SVF* 1.11).
7 See LS 16–17 for the evidence and a discussion thereof.
8 In her excellent monograph on Aristo, Ioppolo discusses the passage in relation to Arcesilaus' license only (1980: 30).
9 Cf. in modern scholarship the contrast between the "skeptical" Socrates on the one hand and the "principled" or "visionary" Socrates on the other hand. For principled see Vlastos 1991 and 1994; for visionary see Polito 2015: 10. See further Dillon 2019: 62.
10 *PHerc*. 1020 may contain part of Chrysippus' *Logical Investigations* and could thus be the other exception; for his authorship see Alessandrelli and Ranocchia 2017, 8–17.
11 To be contrasted with the later genre of (textual) *Commentaries*, developed once the texts by Plato (or Aristotle, for that matter) had been given canonical status.
12 Athenaeus 4.162b (fr. 191 Döring, fr. 24 Giannantoni), but see DL 1.16 (fr. 189 Döring), for a denial that Stilpo would have done so.
13 Persaeus may also have made a compilation from Zeno's and Stilpo's *Recollections*, under the title *Convivial Dialogues*, see Athenaeus 4.162b (*SVF* 1.452), cf. Gourinat 2012.
14 For a comparison of their *Apologies* see Denyer 2019: 23.
15 Zeno's eagerness to learn—and the absence of self-conceit that went with it—is nicely illustrated by the anecdote in DL 7.25: even at a stage in which he had already developed his own doctrines, he was still prepared to learn from Polemo the Academic.
16 Cf. Dorion 2011, 18–19 with regard to the reconstruction of Socrates in modern scholarship, who refreshingly maintains that the different accounts are "an exceptional occasion for enriching our understanding of Socratism."
17 For the Stoic reception of Plato's *Apology* see Brouwer 2014: 145–8, for the *Crito* see Sedley 1993: 317, Brouwer 2014: 165, for the *Phaedo* see Sedley 1993: 317, Alesse 2015. See further below section 3.4.
18 On Zeno's city of sages see Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* 329a-b (*SVF* 1.262, LS 67A), cf. Brouwer 2006.
19 For other recent discussions of Stoic ethics in a Socratic context see Alesse 2000: 289–343, Brown 2006.
20 For the Socratic nature of the doctrine see Denyer 2019: 24.
21 For more on the Stoic division of wisdom, see Brouwer 2014: 18–41 and Stephens' chapter in this volume, "The Stoics and their Philosophical System."
22 For a fuller discussion of this extraordinary passage in the Socratic-Stoic context see Long 1988: 163, cf. Dorion 2017, 40–1.
23 For the Socratic paradoxes see e.g. O'Brien 1967, who reconstructs them from Plato's texts only, Gerson 2013: 41; cf. Dillon 2019: 41, who rather speaks of "principles" (which are, of course, no less controversial). For the Stoic paradoxes and Socrates, see Alesse 2001: 121.
24 For a parallel see Cicero, *Lucullus* 136 (*SVF* 3.599).
25 For modern slightly different lists of the Socratic paradoxes see e.g. O'Brien 1967, 16: virtue is knowledge, vice is ignorance, virtue can be taught, no one does wrong willingly, no one wishes evil; Gerson 2013: 41, virtue is knowledge, no one does wrong unwillingly, it is better to suffer than do evil, Socratic ignorance; Dillon 2019: 66, what matters most is virtue, the best possible condition of the soul; virtues are knowledge, it is better to suffer injustice than to inflict it.
26 See e.g. Schriefl 2019: 136 with further references.

27 For helpful, recent discussions of the Stoic conception of virtue see Vogt 2017, Forschner 2018: 197–206.

28 For Chrysippus see further Schofield 1984, Collette-Dučić 2014, Gourinat 2014.

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