Meno, a gentle, just, brave, quick-witted, beautiful, wealthy, imperious aristocrat from Thessaly, who sees μεγαλοπρέπεια in his soul, asks Socrates to reveal the aition of ἀρετή. Meno and the man of ἀρετή in the taxonomy of the ἀρεται in Meno's first definition seem to belong to the same political caste: householders with agency, who participate with others in managing the city's affairs. Meno's hoards of gold and silver came by inheritance and/or from his family's relations with the Persian Great King; he has won honors and offices on his own. Meno's ambition is unsatisfied. He apparently harbors the intention to acquire the ἀρετή of the best men, plenipotentiary rulers over humankind, setting straight the cities, in which they speak for and accomplish many and great things (Men. 99d4). The ἀρετή of the citizen, which he possesses and practices, is an inferior doppelgänger of the ἀρετή that Meno aspires to.

Conversation between willing interlocuters relies on a tacit agreement that continuing it fulfills their respective intentions. Those intentions are referenced by Meno in his third definition of the man of ἀρετή. He says “Ἀρετή seems to me to be, as the poet says, ‘taking pleasure in the beautiful things, and being able to’” (χαίρειν τε καλοὶσι καὶ δύνασθαι [Men. 77b2–5]). The conversation's interlocuters are enjoying that loosely defined condition. The erotic Socrates is gratified by Meno's beauty. Socrates' dunamis that procures him that pleasure is his ability to enunciate καλῶς λόγοι that gratify Meno in turn.

References to a logos that seems well said (καλῶς λέγεσθαι) occur twelve times in Plato, five times in the Meno. (The approbative locution καλῶς λέγεις occurs 40 times in Plato). The phrase καλὸς λόγος occurs once in Plato at Tht. 210d10 where Socrates characterizes an argument that has proved to contradict itself as a καλὸς λόγος that has fled and run away. For ease of exposition, καλὸς λόγος in these pages expresses the sense of a logos that seems καλῶς λέγεσθαι. The problématique of a καλὸς λόγος lies in ascertaining its validity. Socrates describes the process of validating it: a καλὸς λόγος must have seemed genuine in the past, seem genuine in the present, and in the future, if any of it is to be sound (Men. 89a8–10). Its perpetuation over time is epistemologically significant. At Grg. 509a4–5, the καλὸς λόγος that Socrates has propounded to Callicles has been re-examined frequently by its

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1 For a biography of Meno, see Appendix A, 6–7.
2 For Meno's first and second definitions of ἀρετή, see Appendix B, 8.
3 Euthd. 9e8, Cri. 46e2, Phd. 69e7, 94a12, Cra. 423c, Tht. 202d4, Men. 81a1, 89a4, 89c7, 89c9, 89d5, Mx. 247e6, R. 335b1, 389e4, Lg. 770c3, 959b2.
author and invariably confirmed: ὡς ἐγὼ νῦν λέγω καλὸς λέγειν: ἐπεὶ ἐμοι ὦ αὐτὸς λόγος ἔστιν ἂεὶ. Socrates observes at Men. 98a3–4 that bridging the gulf between temporarily possessing the true doxa of a genuine καλὸς λόγος and obtaining epistemological certainty requires an αἰτίας λογισμὸς (a logic of causation) to tie down the doxa, lest it run away, so as to make it into genuine knowledge for perpetuity.

Which of Socrates' remarks may be construed as καλοὶ λόγοι? In the course of teaching Meno the distinction between genus and species, Socrates directs him to define the genus of shape as practice for the assigned task of inquiry into ἀρετή in and of itself. Meno demurs and bids the teacher define it himself. Meno is asked if he wants Socrates to gratify him by so doing (Βούλει σοι χαρίσωμαι; [76b2]). Meno replies, "Yes, gratify me!" Socrates announces his intention to gratify Meno (χαριζομαι οὖν σοι [76c2–3]). He goes on to define shape twice and, repring Empedocles' theory of effluences, color, odor and sound. Meno asks to hear more logoi. The interlocuters are reciprocally delighting in Socrates' καλοὶ λόγοι and Meno's beauty; regarding the latter, Socrates observes that Meno has doubtless noticed his weakness for beautiful males (καὶ ἂμα ἐμοὶ ἵσως κατέγνωκας ὅτι εἰμὶ ἤττων τῶν καλῶν [76c1–2]). The dramatic details cited above are an exact analogue to Meno's third definition of the man of ἀρετή who delights in beautiful things and is able to do so.

Meno refutes Socrates' first attempt to define shape, politely terming the definition itself silly, not Socrates himself for saying it. Socrates accepts the refutation with bad grace. He then propounds a second definition of shape to which Meno made no objection. However, Socrates, apparently unwittingly, later provides counterfactuals that disconfirm both of his definitions of shape. During the geometry demonstration with the slave-boy, Socrates draws figures in the dirt with a stick. In the case of those shapes, the color inside their borders is the same as outside. That dramatic fact disconfirms the first definition of shape at Men. 75b9–11, that it "accompanies color." According to the second definition, shape is the two dimension termination or edge of a solid. As Socrates has been teaching Meno the distinction between the genus "shape" and the different species of shape, and citing circles and rectangles as examples of the latter, the shapes in the pair of definitions would most likely be geometrical shapes. Accordingly, a square maps onto a cube, a triangle onto a pyramid, a circle onto a sphere. That mapping is absent in the case of geometrical shapes drawn in the dirt. Earth considered as a three-dimension solid has no correspondance with two-dimension figures drawn on her. That negative fact disconfirms the second definition of shape. If those readings are sound, Plato represents

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4 So far as I know, the implications of drawing shapes in the dirt for validating or disconfirming Socrates' definitions of shape are not entertained by commentators. Karasmanis (2006) 139 writes that the first definition "does not cover all figures drawn on a blackboard, on the earth, or on a piece of paper." However, that observation plays no part in Karasmanis' reading of the first definition.
Socrates delivering a pair of false καλοὶ λόγοι unwittingly. The corollary of doing so would be delivering false καλοὶ λόγοι intentionally.

So far, the καλοὶ λόγοι have all been provided or borrowed by Socrates, with the exception of Meno's first definition, the taxonomy of the ἀρεταί that Aristotle reprises at Pol. 1260a21–24. At Men. 80d5–8, Meno poses his famous paradox:

And how, Socrates, will you seek an existing thing of which you know nothing? Of (sc. the set of) things of which you know nothing, what sort of thing are you proposing that you will seek? And even at best if you should chance upon it, how would you know that that thing is the thing you did not know?

Meno seems to realize belatedly that the avowal at Men. 71b4–7, that Socrates knows none of the qualia of unknowns that he seeks to know, renders inquiry into them impossible.

Socrates restates Meno's paradox, first dismissing it out of hand by characterizing it as a bad faith eristic quibble, the same rhetoric with which he grudgingly accepted Meno's refutation of his first faulty definition of shape. In what is called by commentators a paraphrase of Meno's paradox, Socrates offers an amusing corollary to the futility of ignorant inquiry, that per impossibile those who are all-knowing would be reduced to idleness. That corollary to the thesis of Meno's paradox is not meant to refute it.

Meno asks if what he originally said, and has just heard restated and improved, seems to Socrates to be a (sc. sound) καλὸς λόγος (Ὅὑκον καλὸς σοι δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι ὁ λόγος οὗτος, ὦ Σώκρατες). His self-approbation as its author indicates that Meno hears in Socrates' so-called paraphrase simply a more complete expression of his καλὸς λόγος. Socrates replies disingenuously "Not to me." Asked to explain why, Socrates parries the question by advancing the myth that human beings are reborn after death. As everyone has seen "all the things" in past lives as well as in the afterlife in between

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5 Cf. Soph. Phil. 343–53. Neoptolemos did not know whether the intentionally false λόγος καλὸς of many-wiled Odysseus and Phoenix, that it would not be according to themis that anyone but he capture the citadel of Troy, was true or vain.

6 Plato makes Meno the originating author of the paradox for the sake of the plot. The paradox seems to be a reworking of the thought expressed in Xenophanes' fragment 34; the approximate reprises of Xenophanes' paradox by Plato, Sextus Empiricus and other writers represent the perpetuation of a καλὸς λόγος over time.

7 For Socrates' foundation statement at Men. 71b4–7, see Appendix C, 8–13.

8 That amendment to Meno's paradox is reprised in the Lysis: "Consequently we may say that those who are already wise would no longer philosophize, whether (sc. they be) gods or men" (Lys. 218a2–3).
reincarnations, knowledge of everything is buried within the soul and may be uncovered through the process of recollection. Socrates subsumes Meno’s negative criticism of *Men*. 71b4–7, and cures the flaw in the foundation statement that the paradox alluded to. He inserts into the exposition of the recollection theory the tenet that all of nature is interrelated (ἄτε γὰρ τής φύσεως ἀπάσης συγγενούς οὕσης [Men. 81c8–d1]). Imposing that tenet on the epistemological impasse of the foundation statement restores the feasibility of inquiry into unknown things.

In order to validate the theory of Recollection, Socrates poses a problem in geometry to an uneducated slave-boy. Through Socrates' skillful questioning of him, the slave-boy seems to solve the problem on his own. Aside its putative confirmation of the theory of the recollection of “all the things,” the slave-boy’s apparent success in solving a problem in geometry under skillful questioning reproduces a notable phenomenon: the easiness that many, apparently Plato among them, have experienced in learning mathematics. The καλὸς λόγος that humans possess innate mathematical intuition, was reprised by Kant and other philosophers, and is supported by recent findings in cognitive science.9

Having established that inquiry is worthwhile, albeit hard work, Socrates again proposes a joint search for ἀρετή in and of itself. Meno sidesteps that injunction, and deftly sets Socrates to his task, to say what the aition of ἀρετή is. The great καλὸς λόγος in the *Meno* seems to be Socrates' re-investigation of and reconfirmed findings about the qualia of ἀρετή, their relationships inter se, and their several aitiae (Men. 87b2–90a1). At Men. 89a4–5, Meno remarks that the things Socrates is saying seem καλὸς λέγεσθαι and, at Men. 89c7, that what has just been said seems καλὸς λέγεσθαι.

In the *Symposium* at 217a2–5 Alcibiades reveals his motivation in attempting to seduce Socrates: “believing that he was serious regarding my beauty . . . circumstances allowed me (sc. to attempt) to gratify Socrates, and thereby hear all the things he knew” (πάντ’ ἀκοῦσαι ὀδηγεῖ τὸν θησαυρόν ἐμοῦ). Meno’s motivation to associate with Socrates is the same as Alcibiades’. The findings about ἀρετή are some of the things that Socrates knows. Hearing that καλὸς λόγος arms Meno with the true doxa that φρόνησις should govern his bravery, quick-wittedness and σωφροσύνη, lest they turn to harm.10

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10 Bravery, σωφροσύνη [prudential thought for one's safety] and quick-wittedness turned to harm are typically exercised by bold and cunning criminals and, on a larger stage, by bold and cunning tyrants. The exercise of justice and the practice of ὀσιότης [reverencing the gods] never turn to harm in any conceivable situation, thus do not require φρόνησις to govern them. As Protagoras observes at *Prt*. 329e5–6, many are just but unwise. Accordingly, justice and ὀσιότης, which do not need its guidance, are omitted from Socrates' demonstration of the role of φρόνησις at *Men*. 87b2–90a1.
Socrates observes that the φρόνησις- Governed ἀρετή of the very small number of the best men possesses a share of divinity (θεία μοίρα) bestowed intentionally on such men by some god, unlike other parts of ἀρετή such as bravery or a quick wit, whose steady state distribution among human beings suggests that their aitiae represent a mindless regularity of Nature.11 Were Meno to acquire the φρόνησις- Governed ἀρετή of the best men, and exercise plenipotentiary rule over others, he would best consider himself a vehicle of divine intention.

At Men. 76e8–9, Socrates expresses regret that Meno is soon to end his visit to Athens, which he was informed of the day before. Meno states that he is prepared to extend his stay to hear more of Socrates' logoi. Socrates fears that his store of such logoi will run out. A Socratic conversation with the same interlocuter spanning two or more days is unique. One may ask why Socrates terminates the conversation and departs without explanation. Plato seems to provide multiple reasons for Socrates to do so. Socrates expressed the fear he might run out of καλοὶ λόγοι, which may be the case after he delivers the great καλὸς λόγος at Men. 87b2–90a1. The Anytus interlude soured the mood. Socrates' intention that his student collaborate in searching for ἀρετή in and of itself has been repeatedly stymied. Like Konnos as described in the Euthydemus, 12 Socrates is quick to anger faced with a recalcitrant student, as frequently in the Meno and, again like Konnos, may have ceased to be concerned with Meno's welfare.

Appendix A: a biography of Meno

Commentators usually deprecate Meno's character, their negative impression reinforced by Socrates' in-your-face insults of the man. Aside Socrates' insults, Plato's characterisations of Meno are these. At Rep. 6.494a4–e6, Socrates describes a politically ambitious young man of exceptional natural gifts. The external goods of the promising young man in the Republic and Meno in the Meno are identical. The former is wealthy, of aristocrat status and, as well, comely and tall (πλούσιος . . . γενναῖος . . . εὐειδῆς . . . μέγας). Meno is beautiful, wealthy and of aristocratic status (καλὸς . . . πλούσιος . . . γενναῖος [Men. 71b6–7]).13 Like their external goods, the psychic goods of the young man in the

11 Protagoras' assertion at Prt. 351b2–3, that ἄνδρεία is from φύσις, is reprimed by Socrates in the Republic at 4.429e8–430a4.
12 Cf. Euth. 295d3-5 "I was reminded of Konnos how he always gets angry with me when I don't yield to him, and then is less concerned for me as being a stupid person." Plato was familiar with those common pedagogical affects.
13 The concatenation of adjectives characterizing Meno and and the young ambitious unnamed aristocrat in the Republic also occurs at Prt. 119c1–4 where someone attempts to address the ekklesia regarding a technical
Republic and those of Meno are identical. The young man in the Republic possesses a quick wit (εὐμάθεια), a strong memory (μνήμη), bravery (ἀνδρεία), and magnificence (μεγαλοπρέπεια). When Socrates proposes that they "look into the things in the soul" (τὰ κατά τὴν ψυχὴν σκεψόμεθα) at Men. 88a8–b1, Meno looks into the things of his own soul, the only one available for him to look into. He affirms that in addition to seeing σωφρόσυνη and justice in his soul, he sees bravery, a quick wit, a strong memory and μεγαλοπρέπεια. The meaning of μεγαλοπρέπεια in the soul is a puzzle. In surviving texts the term is associated with expensive liturgies and extravagant feasts. I suggest that Meno seeing μεγαλοπρέπεια in his soul is tantamount to recognizing his intention to do great things greatly. At Men. 94b1, Socrates characterizes Pericles as possessing political wisdom together with μεγαλοπρέπεια (Περικλέα, οὗτος μεγαλοπρεπῶς σοφὸν ἀνδρα). Pericles freely spent the tribute money of the allies to enhance Athens with magnificent temples during the years of his dominance in the ekklesia (445–29 BCE).

The adolescent Theaetetus is brave (ἀνδρείοιον), quick-witted (εὐμαθῆ) and gentle (πρᾷον). Meno and Theaetetus share those psychic attributes. Theaetetus fought bravely at Corinth. Meno presumably fought bravely in the military adventures recounted in Xenophon’s Anabasis. Theaetetus displays quick-wittedness throughout Theaetetus. Meno claims title to a quick wit, and occasionally displays it. In a rapid fire series of questions about geometry requiring yes or no answers, Meno effortlessly spots the fallacious proposition that round is no more round than it is rectangular (Men. 74e7). And his instant refutation of Socrates’ first definition of shape, that it relies on an undefined term, is the exercise of a quick wit. Several indices point to Meno possessing a gentle disposition. On the one hand, he indulges in the behavior of an aristocrat and a beauty at Men. 71b9–c2, 75b1, and 76b1–2, enjoying a license not available to the very ugly Theaetetus. On the other hand, his responses to Socrates’ rank insults are invariably mild: he simply asks Socrates to explain why he

matter in which he is unversed, but is laughed off the speaking platform for his presumption, even though very beautiful, wealthy and aristocratic (καλὸς . . . πλούσιος . . . τῶν γενναίων).


15 At Grg. 516a1–2, in the heat of an adversarial exchange with Callicles, Socrates denies that Pericles wisely ruled the Athenians in that he was indicted for theft near the end of his life, and came close to being condemned to death.

16 In externalities, they are diametrical opposites. Meno the beautiful wealthy foreigner is taught by an Athenian. The extremely ugly Athenian Theaetetus, impoverished by his guardians, is taught by a foreigner.
is saying them. He tempers his refutation of Socrates' first definition of shape by calling the definition silly (τοῦτο γε εὖνηθὲς), not Socrates himself for saying it. Consider also Meno's and Anytus' different manner in speaking of the mortal danger Socrates' lifestyle is putting him in. The harsh-tempered Anytus imbues his warning of that danger with an air of menace (Men. 94e2–95a1). No menace attends Meno’s version of the same observation (Men. 80b4–7). He reports that Socrates has numbed his mind, rendering him unable to justify his deepest convictions, observing insightfully that “if you went on like this as a stranger in any other city, you would very likely be taken up for a wizard.” The foreigner Meno does not realize that Socrates is in danger also in Athens. Reminiscent of Socrates’ odd prediction at the end of the Theaetetus (210c2–4), that the gentle (πρόφοι) Theaetetus' future philosophical inquiries will make him less harsh (Ἠντὸν . . . βαρός) towards his comrades and more gentle (ἡμερότερος), Socrates urges Meno to behave more gently (πρόφοτερον) when refuting another's definition. And at the end of the dialogue, at Men. 100b8–c1, Socrates bids Meno strive to make the harsh Anytus more gentle (ἴνα πρόφοτερος ἦ), a senseless injunction unless Meno possesses a gentle disposition.

Appendix B: Meno's first and second definitions of ἁρετή

Socrates puts Meno to the task of defining ἁρετή without reference to any of its qualia such as justice, piety, or courage. Meno eagerly delivers a practiced καλὸς λόγος expressed in Gorgianic prosody, laying down a taxonomy of the various human conditions whose exemplary behavior is informed by various ἁρεταί [excellences],17 namely that of the slave, the free man, children male and female, the old, and the wife of the householder. The paradigm case of ἁρετή is the householder who is competent (ἰκανόν) to manage the city’s business (τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράττειν [Men. 71e1]) (sc. with the otherburghers in the ekklesia). That man benefits his circle of friends and family, and contrives to harm unfriendly neighbors without suffering retribution, as cities do. Socrates is not impressed. He dismisses the taxonomy out of hand for producing a swarm of ἁρεταί, not the single ἁρετή that Meno has been tasked to define.

Socrates orders Meno back to his task. Meno less eagerly than before defines ἁρετή this way: “What other than to be able to rule over human beings (Men. 73c8–d1)—in that you are seeking some one thing in regard to all (sc. of the ἁρεταί).” The man of ἁρετή in Meno’s initial definition, who is competent to participate in managing the city’s business, shares collectively with others the individual

17 At Pol. 1.1620a21–24, Aristotle reprises Meno’s taxonomy of the ἁρεταί, and notes Socrates' rejection of it.
plenipotentiary agency exercised by the man of ἀρετή of the second definition. As stated above, Meno's ambition is unsatisfied; he apparently harbors the intention to become a ruler exercising plenipotentiary power over others, like the man of ἀρετή of his second definition.

Appendix C: Socrates' foundation statement at Men. 71b4–7

Meno's paradox pointed out that according to Socrates' foundation statement, inquiry is impossible. (The tenet advanced in the theory of Recollection that all of nature is interrelated restored the feasibility of inquiry). In the foundation statement, Socrates states that he knows nothing whatsoever about what sort of thing ἀρετή is. Socrates' καλὸς λόγος at Men. 87b2–90a1 about the qualia of ἀρετή, namely its parts, their relationships inter se and their several aitiai, renders his earlier assertion that he does not know the qualia of ἀρετή false to the facts. Socrates generalizes that assertion as applying to all unknowns. He advances an analogy to validate the assertion about ἀρετή and its generalization. With the exception of Verdenius and Fine, 18 commentators provide various ways of reading the analogy so as to make it true to the facts. 19 I argue that the analogy, like the part of the foundation

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18 See Fine (1992) 225, n. 42 "But Plato speaks here, not of knowing Meno, but of knowing who Meno is; and it is not at all clear that I need to be acquainted with Meno to know who he is—I know who he is from having read Plato’s dialogues.” Fine is reporting her second-order knowledge of Meno’s identity derived from reading about him, whereas in the analogy, the hypothesized person’s state of ignorance of Meno’s identity is an unmediated first-order failure to recognize the man she is looking at. For that distinction, see n. 21 below. The observation of Verdenius (1957) 289 that "[i]t is not necessary to know the essential nature of Meno in order to know his qualities" seems a matter of common sense. I am unable to parse Verdenius’ following remark: "The discussion still moves on a popular level and the question simply is whether we can imagine any thing when hearing the word ἀρετή or the word Μένων."

19 Cf. Thompson (1901) 65 "The difference in the mode of existence of the individual (original emphasis) Meno on the one hand and the class Virtue on the other is not here for Plato’s purpose important”; Bluck (1961) 214 "So far as the analogy with ‘knowing Meno’ is concerned, the point here is simply that some kind of acquaintance with a person or thing is necessary before one can be certain about any attributes”; Klein (1965) 42 "... it (sc. the analogy) plays with the diversity of words which convey the meaning of ‘knowing’ and with the range that this meaning itself encompasses”; White (1976) 37 "For, we can ask, if someone tells us that Meno is handsome, what reason do we have for
statement that falsely avows ignorance of the *qualia* of ἀρετή, is false to the facts. The core truth claim of the analogy is that someone who doesn't know who a person is, would not know any of her qualities. Socrates hypothesizes someone who in no way at all knows who Meno is, in which case she would not know whether Meno is beautiful, or rich, or even an aristocrat, or the reverse. The analogy refutes itself specifically in this regard: someone who does not know at all who Meno is, would in fact know that he is beautiful, wealthy, and of aristocratic status by virtue of seeing him, and inferring those attributes from what is seen.

There is no contemporary testimony regarding the original mode of performance of Plato's writings. As the *Meno* is a performed dialogue, the original audiences may have watched and listened to it being enacted by *dramatis personae* impersonating Socrates, Meno, the slave-boy and Anytus. Whether reading the *Meno* out loud, or listening to and watching its enactment, the audience is imaginatively present at the proceedings, like a modern reader immersed in the *mise en scène* of a good novel. Where is Socrates' hypothesized "someone who does not recognize Meno" hypothetically located? Like the *dramatis personae*, and the audience hearing or reading the text out loud, she might also be imaginatively present at the proceedings, beholding Meno whom she does not recognize. Or believing his report, and how could we claim, simply on the basis of that testimony, to have knowledge of the fact?"; *ibid.* (1994) 155 "At 71b, Plato . . . has maintained that we cannot know what a thing is like until we know what it is—e.g., that we can not know whether Meno is wealthy until we know who he is. But why not? Why could we not know on good authority (e.g., on Plato's) that Meno is wealthy without in any plausible sense knowing 'who he is'? The answer is that Plato believes that to know that Meno is wealthy we have to find and examine him, so as to see that he is; for otherwise we are relying on hearsay, and thus on less fully 'direct' evidence. But to find him, we need a specification enabling us to recognize him, and in that sense telling us who he is"; Thomas (1980) 75 "The example, though simple is deceptive because of an ambiguity in the word 'acquaintance.' How extensive does this acquaintance need to be?"; Canto-Sperber (1993) 215–16 "Socrate [. . .] énumère les qualités dont Ménon s'engorgueillit le plus tout on montrant qu'on ne peut les lui attribuer avant le connaître et que, privé de cette connaissance, on peut tout aussi bien lui attribuer les qualités contraires"; Nehamas (1999) 6 "His (sc. Socrates') point is simple and intuitive: if he (sc. the hypothesized person) has no (original emphasis) idea who Meno is, how can he answer any questions about him? That this is so is shown by the fact that Meno immediately accepts Socrates' general view [. . .]"; Weiss (2001) 23 "If one does not know at all who Meno is, one certainly should not comment on whether he is handsome, well-born, or wealthy. Indeed, on what grounds do people presume to make pronouncements about the features of things they know not at all?"; Karasmanis (2006) 131 "So if we do not have an acquaintance or familiarity with Meno we cannot say if he is handsome or rich etc."; Scott (2006) 19 "Presumably he (sc. Socrates) is thinking of a scenario in which someone who has never heard of Meno is asked whether he is rich etc. Although the person can infer, just by being asked the question, that Meno is a human being, they are otherwise in a complete blank about him."
she might be imagined to be located elsewhere, off-stage and out of sight of the proceedings (White, Fine, Scott), 20 or even disappear entirely, replaced by decontextualized conceptual problems (Verdenius, Klein, Thomas). 19, 20 I argue for the former, because the specific properties (beauty, wealth, aristocratic status), which Socrates selects from the many other attributes of the foreigner from Thessaly, are visible in his person, thus would be known by virtue of being seen by the hypothesized person, were she present at the proceedings. Indeed, if she is to fail to recognize Meno, she must be present, for according to Plato’s epistemology of personal recognition, 20 one must see or hear a person in order to recognize someone one knows, or to realize that one doesn’t know who she is.

To see a beautiful man unknown to one is to know in a flash that he is beautiful. Also, one may infer, from seeing the many servants who attend him, 21 that the unknown man is wealthy. As for the unknown man’s aristocratic status, that may be seen in the magnificence of his carriage typical of his caste, in the way he holds his face, and by the figure he affects, in sum by his haughty projection of privileged self. At Rep. 4.425b3–4, Socrates calls the ensemble of elements that make up a particular stance "in general the deportment of the body" 22 (καὶ ὅλον τὸν σῶματος σχηματισμὸν). At Rep. 6.494a4–e6, a promising young man who, like Meno, is rich, handsome, and of aristocratic status, is rebuked by a philosopher for "imagining himself prepared to rule over Greeks and barbarians, and elevating himself in the thought of it, puffed up in magnificent stance (σχηματισμὸν . . .

20 In Plato, the cognitive act of recognizing someone’s identity is based on perception, in seeing the person, or hearing his voice if in the dark. At Tht. 144c5, Theodorus points out Theaetetus entering with two companions, and bids Socrates "See if you know him!" (ἀλλὰ σκόπει ἐν γνώσεις αὐτόν). Socrates replies "I know him!" (Γνώσκω). Cf. also Prt. 110b3–5: "Socrates," said Hippocrates, "Are you awake or sleeping?" And recognizing his voice (Καὶ ἐγὼ τὴν φωνὴν γνώσεις αὐτοῦ), I said “That is Hippocrates!” Cf. Eur. El. 766–768. Messenger: “Seeing me (μ’ εἰσορῶσα), the servant of your brother, did you not know (οὐκ οἶσθ’) (sc. who I was)?” Electra: “It was from fear that I failed to recognize your face (ὁισγνωσίας εἶχον προσώπου). Now indeed I recognize you (γνώσκω σε).” Plato names the canonical markers of identity at Soph. 267a6–7, where an impersonator is said to make his voice (φωνή) and appearance (σχῆμα) nearly like the voice and appearance of the one impersonated. At Tht. 193b9–d2, in the context of a discussion of false belief, recognition of someone is said to occur when the appearance of a person is in accord with the imprint in the soul, antecedently acquired, of that person’s identifying characteristics. Plato distinguishes between unmediated first-order knowledge of identity (recognizing a person upon seeing her or hearing her voice) and second-order derived knowledge of identity, as in the case of never having laid eyes on someone whose identity one knows. For the latter, cf. Men. 94c5–6, where Socrates asks Anytus "Are you not mindful (sc. of the identity of Xanthias and Eudorus, the famous wrestling trainers)?" (.Eulerγη, ἀκοῇ).

21 Cf. Men. 82a8–b1 ἄλλα μοι προσκαλέσαν τῶν πολλῶν ἀκολούθων τούτων τῶν σαυτοῦ ἕνα.

22 Translation of Shorey (1935) 1, 135.
ἐμπιμπλάμενον), with a vacant mind full of senseless fancies.” Those passages in the Republic support the inference that Meno's σχηματισμός is visible, as is his beauty, and his entourage of servants, and would be seen and recognized as signifying aristocratic status by someone who does not know that she is beholding the son of Alexidemus. And if she fails to grasp the significance of his σχηματισμός, the next remark out of Meno's mouth confirms his aristocratic status. Meno offhandedly agrees that it is impossible for someone who does not know who he is, to know that he is beautiful, wealthy and of aristocratic status. Surprised by Socrates’ avowal of ignorance regarding ἀρετή, he goes on to ask, at Men. 71c1–2, “if we may announce back home (sc. your eccentric opinions about ἀρετή)?” The contemporary audience of the dialogue listening to those words would recognize Meno's aristocratic status by hearing him use the pluralis majestatis, a mode of speech that employs the first person plural to signal privileged status.24

The considerations above demonstrate that Socrates' analogy in support of the foundation statement is intentionally false to the facts. The denial that someone observing Meno, whose identity she does not

23 Cf. Thompson (1901) 68 “The plural is used because Meno is speaking for himself and his party”; Klein (1965) 42 “Does Socrates really not know what human excellence is, he asks. And he adds, with a sweeping gesture—as we imagine—over the heads of the people who form his retenue and are witnessing the conversation on the spot: 'shall we spread that (original emphasis) news about you [which must be known here, in Athens] back home, too?''' That Socrates and Meno are engaged in a private conversation, aside Socrates' brief encounter with Anytus in Meno's presence, is indicated by Socrates’ insults and scoldings of Meno that would transcend propriety if others were listening. Socrates is quite unpleasant to Protagoras throughout the Protagoras, but the insults there are wrapped in irony as is required by the presence of an audience. Plato takes great care in distinguishing private conversations (for example, that of Socrates with Euthryphro on the road to the law court or with Crito in the prison cell) from those with an audience (for example, the attendees at Kallias' house, assembled and seated to hear Socrates converse with Protagoras [Prt. 317d5–e3], or the scrum pushing and shoving to sit on the bench on which Charmides is about to sit down [Chrm. 155c1–4]). Meno's entourage are menials who keep their distance unless summoned, and do not eavesdrop on their master's conversations. In contrast to that conventional social arrangement, Agathon in the Symposium at 175b7–c1, as an innovation, bids his house-slaves consider themselves to be the hosts who have invited him and the other guests to the feast. Alcibiades who arrives late notices that the house-slaves are listening to the guests' conversations, and instructs them to clap heavy doors on their ears that they not hear what he is about to say (Smp. 218b5–7).

24 The use of the pluralis majestatis survives in modern languages. Another instance of the pluralis majestatis occurs at Chrm. 155a7. Socrates proposes a conversation with Charmides, and asks Critias, an Athenian grandee holding court in the gymnasium, to summon the young man. Critias is amenable to that proposal. He replies "We shall summon him.”
know, would realize in seeing and hearing him that he is beautiful, wealthy and of aristocratic status, seems to be an intentionally false καλὸς λόγος. In exculpation of the flagrant deception of Meno by Socrates denying that he knows the qualia of ἀρετή, and advancing an analogy false to the facts, the foundation statement identifies Socrates' enduring philosophical concern: to know what ἀρετή is in and of itself. Indeed he means to inquire into that conundrum and bids Meno do so throughout the dialogue. Plato's theory of the Ideas—passed over in silence in the Meno—will provide the toolkit for that inquiry. Socrates is reluctant to re-examine and reconfirm what he already knows about the qualia of ἀρετή, namely its parts, their relationships inter se and their several aitiai, and only does so at Meno's insistence.

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Works Cited

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