In the controversy now represented by Moore and de Vries in Mnemosyne (IV 19, 147; IV 22, 225-232) I wish to take de Vries’s side—that is to defend μαλακὸς at Symposium 173 D 8—and also to discuss the ‘parallel’ (supposed to be such by Hug, taking the hint from Vahlen) at Politicus 264 C. In my translation of the passage (in Plato’s Statesman) it did not seem possible to convey the sense of the μὲν γὰρ and I was content with ‘But...’. Perhaps in conversation we might more readily say ‘Now...’. (“Now where (fishes in) ornamental fountains are concerned, it could well be that you have noticed them”).

To consider the Symposium passage first, it seems to me that it is very carefully constructed as a dramatic conversation: Apollodorus is shown as impetuous and intense. He meets the request of the companions for an account of the banquet with a direct challenge to them to turn from worldly wealth to the unshod Socratic life. They are proof against his attempt to effect a sudden conversion, for they have met him before and are more amused than angry. They remark, to parry his thrust at them, that they cannot conceive how he got the name of ‘Softy’. Surely they could well have understood how he got the name of ‘Crackers’ or whatever popular translation of μανικός other languages provide. Τοιοῦτος does not refer either to μαλακὸς or to μανικός but to the general manner and behaviour-pattern Apollodorus has just produced. “You were always a fellow of this type”, ἄγριαίνεις may indeed be in conscious opposition to μαλακὸς as de Vries suggests; but I do not think τοιοῦτος is to be restricted in sense. It is a very normal use of the word.

This, however, leaves μὲν unexplained. I think the explanation lies in the drama. Apollodorus does not wait for the δὲ clause (it might have been “and in your actions you allow no one any peace”), but he jumps in with self-defence against accusing words which he puts into their mouths with ironical emphasis. Here Hug sees the point perfectly: “es ist ja wohl sonnenklar—nämlich in den Augen von euch Weltkindern”. The companions leave the δὲ clause unsaid, in order to come to the narrative and avoid the ‘personalities’:

οὐκ ἄξιον περὶ τούτων, Ἀπολλόδωρε, νῦν ἐρίζειν.

The Politicus passage seems to me rather more complex. Again it
is humorous and dramatic—I am sure that Plato wanted to make fun of (though not to ridicule or underestimate) the method of διάφορας as practised in the Academy at the time. Dialectic must be two-sided: the partner to the discussion must agree before the enquiry can go further. Arts of nurturing herds of living creatures have to be ‘divided’ and a division by habitat is to be recommended. (Aristotle might dislike it, but perhaps appeal could be made to the primacy of the wet and the dry as opposites to justify the fundamental divisionis). We want to follow up ‘nurturing herds of creatures on dry land’ but this implies a collateral art of nurturing herds of creatures in water. It is not without significance that the Stranger wants to find instantiations of each side of his division. One cannot go so far as to say that the argument could not proceed further without assent from Young Socrates based on his own observation. If he had been prepared to take the existence of herds of fishes on trust, as he does the more credible herds of geese and cranes on the plain of Thessaly, this would be enough; but the Stranger obviously wants to make assent easier in the more exotic case of herds of fishes, and so he lights on a case which may come within the boy’s personal experience and thus make his assent easier. This is the case of fish in ornamental fountains (or ponds—see R. E. Wycherley in CR 51, 1947, 2) which he may have observed. ἐν μὲν γὰρ χρήμας implies both (a) that in respect of direct observation by young Socrates the answer is “Yes” and (b) that in this respect the answer concerning the Nile and the Great King’s lakes is “No” (there is an implied τὰ δὲ ἄλλα οὐ τεθέασαι); but all three instances together comprise the evidence for herds of water-creatures. The actual answer of Young Socrates, beginning πάνω μὲν οὖν, implies that he understands the Stranger to say τεθέασαι μὲν ταύτα, ἐκείνα δὲ τολλῶν ἄχρημας. There is therefore a kind of double ellipse, but the other elements in contrast to, or completion of, the μὲν γὰρ clause are in this instance expressed in advance of it.

This very complex instance is difficult to compare with other passages, but Meno 82 B 3 is instructive: Ἐλλήν μὲν ἐστι καὶ Ἑλληνικά; (asked concerning Meno’s servant). Here one might, on the strength of 85 E 4, assume something like ἄπαιρος δ’ ἐστι τῆς γεωμετρίας; but one may fairly call this a case of μὲν solitariurn. Bluck’s useful note ad loc. is unhappily spoilt by his unfortunate misquotation of Hadley’s remark mentioned by Denniston (Particles, 367). This was “Unless the answer is ‘yes’, the discussion cannot go on” (Bluck says “goes on”). As we have seen, the exigence in the Politicus passage is not as great as this, but still some requirement for a preliminary agreement is to be found there also, and this gives to μὲν γὰρ a meaning tending in the direction of ἄλλα