

Fiona Hobden and Christopher Tuplin (editors) *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry*. Mnemosyne Supplements History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity, vol. 348, Leiden & Boston: Brill 2012, xii + 792 pages. ISBN 978 90 0422437 7 (hardback), 978 90 04 23419 2 (e-book).

This title covers twenty-three contributions that were presented at the conference of the same name held at the University of Liverpool from 8 to 10 July 2009. This was a continuation of the previous conference, “The World of Xenophon”, held at the same university almost exactly ten years earlier (7–10 July 1999), and edited by Ch. J. Tuplin as *Xenophon and his World* (Stuttgart 2004).

Was Xenophon (abbreviated as X.) a poor imitation of Plato, a naïve historian, far inferior to Thucydides, a mediocre rhetorician impossible to compare with Isocrates? And what influence did he have on his contemporaries, on the later Graeco-Roman world and western civilisation? This work tries to provide answers to these questions, and looks in depth at X.’s ethical principles and his historical methodology, not only by re-reading his work but also re-reading interpretations of his life and work by other authors, from Plutarch to the present day, providing a more positive image of this Athenian author.

After a short Preface, Fiona Hobden and Christopher Tuplin argue, in an extensive Introduction (1–42), that X. was a man of his time and a prolific writer who made new literary contributions to prose and history, politics, education and ethics. By reviewing all the chapters, their aim is to present us with the essential unity of a book that covers such diverse topics as the context of his readings and the relationship between the world he lived in and his later readers, the portrayals of X. at his retreat in Scillus, his reception by our predecessors, the political episodes as an expression of his historical methodology, the trial of Socrates as a reflection on ethics and wisdom, the relationship between virtue and leadership and the philosophy that underlies his economics.

Philip Stadter in “‘Staying Up Late’: Plutarch’s Reading of Xenophon” (43–62), after highlighting the parallels between the life and work of Xenophon and Plutarch and the didactic and ethical approach adopted by each of them, sets out, by analysing Plutarch’s quotations from X.’s work, to explore the way in which Plutarch appropriates material from Xenophon’s work in order to write his own, and the way in which the Greek authors of the imperial era related to the classical past in the context of an Atticist revival. As well as using X. as a stylistic and historical model, Plutarch transformed X. himself in the context of the culture of his time and, through the central themes of leadership and friendship, hospitality and virtue discussed by X., Plutarch was able to address a wide audience of non-philosophers and made X.’s work an integral part of his own identity as a man of culture and active citizen. By doing this, he also became a prominent representative of the Greek renaissance of the first and second centuries.

Noreen Humble in “The Renaissance Reception of Xenophon’s *Spartan Constitution*: Preliminary Observations” (63–88) looks at the reception of *The Spartan Constitution* by

the Renaissance authors in order to understand the way in which scholars have come to see the same text in different ways, such as an apology of Sparta or even a satire. From her position between these two extremes, seeing *The Spartan Constitution* as a work that both praises and criticises Sparta, the author points out that these differences reflect the individual and cultural contexts of the commentators who read the book rather than X. himself. Thus those who think it was intended as a eulogy, although they come from various backgrounds, are all influenced by the old idea that X. was a minor thinker and naively pro-Spartan. However, this view has been successfully challenged in the last forty years, and *The Spartan Constitution* is proof of X.'s great capacity to play a role in the political debate of his time.

Tim Rood in "A Delightful Retreat: Xenophon and the Picturesque" (89–122) investigates portrayals of X.'s retreat in Scillus and raises the question of whether studying the reception of Xenophon's Scillus adds anything to our understanding of Xenophon himself. Beyond certain similarities or differences, most authors have helped to create an idyllic and nostalgic picture of X. in a paradisiacal retreat. However, this perception of Scillus is a projection of the particular interests and yearnings of the writers describing it, seeing him, for example, in the same way as a British aristocrat moving between his home in the city and his country house, the owner of a colonial plantation or an Israeli settler in disputed Palestinian territory. This interpretation, still found in the historiography, runs the risk of obscuring the real X. in Scillus, the religious connotations of his property and his search for virtue.

David M. Johnson in "Strauss on Xenophon" (123–160), without sharing all the opinions of Leo Strauss – one of the most influential and controversial conservative thinkers of the last century – about X., but taking the opportunity to learn from his interpretation and analytical tools, especially his ability to read between the lines, investigates Strauss's reading of X. Contrary to those who think he is erroneous and ahistorical and did not understand the controversy concerning natural law in X.'s time, Strauss's interpretation deals with the perennial questions that human beings face, not with putting Xenophon in his proper historical context, and he found his own scepticism about natural law in the lack of an integrated rational explanation of the world in Xenophon's text. In fact, his reading of X. can help us discover a rational thinker based on serious principles rather than a minor thinker who left a lot of gaps.

Dustin Gish in "Defending demokratia: Athenian justice and the Trial of the Arginusae Generals in Xenophon's *Hellenica*" (161–212) analyses X.'s account of the trial of the Arginusae generals and concludes, in my opinion correctly, that X. did not intend to condemn or subvert Athenian democracy, but aimed in the *Hellenica* to convince his readers that at least some of the people of Athens were willing to listen in order to abandon their misguided imperial ambitions in the interests of justice. Thus, stripped of the anti-democratic image that has tended to obscure the real complexity and obscure the meaning of his work, X. can be seen not as an irrational antagonist of democracy but as an author who tried to contribute to the development of justice within the democratic regime with all its institutional virtues and limitations.

Guido Schepens in “Timocrates’ Mission to Greece Once Again” (213–242) focuses on the mission of Timocrates of Rhodes, who tried to bribe the anti-Spartan Greek leaders with Persian money, alleged by the Spartans to be one of the causes of the Corinthian War (395–386 BCE). He suggests that the ‘official’ Spartan version of the origins of the Corinthian War was mainly promulgated (and perhaps also shaped) in retrospect. This allows us to put the critique – made by *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, according to the author Cratippus – of the Spartan interpretation in context: it was made before X. wrote the *Hellenica*. Some decades later, when X. published the *Hellenica*, he reasserted the Spartan point of view, ignoring and refuting the Oxyrhynchus historian’s account. However, displaying considerable control of the historical material, he did not simply align himself with the Spartan version of events, but carefully distanced his critique from that view.

Michael Stokes in “Three Defenses of Socrates: Relative Chronology, Politics and Religion” (243–269) looks in depth at the relative chronology and intentions of the accounts of Socrates’ defence that have come down to us. By examining the thematic interrelationships between the texts, he concludes that the chronological order must have been X.’s *Apologia* (XA), Plato’s *Apologia* (PA), Polycrates, and X.’s *Memorabilia* (XM). He also suggests that the prosecution of Socrates was the result of popular prejudice based on the *Clouds*, together with some evidence of his political intentions. But above all, in XA and XM, X. shows himself to be a creative writer capable of adapting, for example, episodes from PA and refuting the accusers, in keeping with his idea that Socrates was careless of the outcome of the trial.

Robin Waterfield in “Xenophon on Socrates’ Trial and Death” (269–306) considers that Socrates accepted his death as a voluntary scapegoat. The philosopher had been irritating people with his activities since about 440 and it was his link with the Thirty that changed his status from eccentric to undesirable. After the Peloponnesian War the Athenians proceeded to review the past, and found evidence not only of moral decadence but also, in a society firmly based on religious sentiment, that the favour of the gods had been lost; impiety, through the concept of pollution, had propagated a *miasma* that had affected everyone. Thus the trial of Socrates was a logical step. Socrates died because the Athenians wanted to purge the city not only of an undesirable individual but of undesirable tendencies, and the philosopher accepted his destiny, so his sacrifice was not an invention after the event by his defenders but one he actively sought.

Shane Brennan in “Mind the Gap: A ‘Snow Lacuna’ in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*?” (307–340) sets out to refute the idea that three months of the winter march from Babylon to the Black Sea described in Book IV of the *Anabasis* are unaccounted for, and that X. omitted them from his work: the so-called ‘snow lacuna’. By analysing the various topographical and geographical information in X.’s account, he concludes that no significant period is missing from the account; X.’s chronological record appears to be substantial and we can be reasonably confident that his account of the march is accurate. This means that the Battle of Cunaxa would have been fought in November rather than September, and the Greeks would have reached the Pontus in May or the second half of

April. In his conclusions, Brennan emphasises X.'s integrity and his skill as a historian, which did not prevent him selecting his historical material.

Sarah Brown Ferrario in "Historical Agency and Self-Awareness in Xenophon's *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*" (341–376) examines the agonistic relationship sometimes used by the historian to construct the figures he writes about, that is, the relationship between the knowledge of a historical event and its impact on historical memory. Thus the figures depicted in X. describe, in their own terms, their personal achievements and the way in which they expect to be remembered. X. describes these attempts, but on occasion also intentionally includes other material, ranging from reported rumours to direct authorial interpretations. He thus establishes a complex relationship between the text and reality, and his additions, which can amend or contradict the statements made by the figures concerned, prove that it is the historian that has ultimate control of the work.

Ellen Millender in "Spartan 'Friendship' and Xenophon's Crafting of the *Anabasis* (377–426) says that in the *Hellenica*, the *Agesilaus* and the *Anabasis*, X. studies the friendly relations established between the Spartans and foreign rulers and states, and is critical of the effects these friendships can have. The King's Peace, for example, led to the harsh subjugation of the Greeks, so although the Spartans originally appear to have calculated the advantages of this form of friendship correctly, X. suggests that the price of these relations could be much higher than they had imagined. The topic of friendship brings out various fundamental aspects of X.'s work and concerns, such as the relations between Sparta and Persia and the betrayal of *philia* or *xenia*. It reveals, above all, that he is not a simple Laconophile and his opinions are sometimes at odds with the superficial interpretation of his loyalties, especially to Agesilaus.

Rosie Harman in "A Spectacle of Greekness: Panhellenism and the Visual in Xenophon's *Agesilaus*" (427–454) focuses, from a re-reading of the *Agesilaus*, on a Greek reader's possible responses to this work. She argues that the work is actually much subtler and more sophisticated than has been recognised, and that its rhetorical structure and assertions about Greek identity give us an insight into the complexity of Greek self-awareness. The narrator emphasises the status of Agesilaus as a paradigm of the Greek ideal, but also, in a rhetorical appeal, questions his own authority and invites the reader to be critical of his claims. In short, the text reveals the ambiguities and deliberate manipulations of Pan-Hellenism, which Agesilaus exploits, along with its political potential. The response depends on the spectator, for his vision of Agesilaus and Pan-Hellenism both determines and is determined by his own identity.

Louis-André Dorion in "The Nature and Status of *sophia* in the *Memorabilia*" (455–476) examines X.'s concept of *sophia*, which was never given the same importance in his work that Plato attributed to it in many of his dialogues. According to X., self-mastery is the fundamental basis of virtue; while for Plato it was *sophia* that has an absolute value, for X. *enkrateia* is an absolute good, and its possession takes priority over *sophia* in the moral thought of Socrates. Thus X. constructs a different interpretation from the all-encompassing Platonic understanding of *sophia*, which for X. is more of a practical skill

that can lead to the acquisition of virtues such as *enkrateia* (self-mastery), *sophrosyne* (temperance) and *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency).

Louis L'Allier in "Why Did Xenophon Write the Last Chapter of the *Cynegeticus*?" (477–498) asks himself why X. included a diatribe against the sophists in *Cynegeticus* 13. This chapter is, for the author, an attempt by X. to rehabilitate his own text and counter the accusations of those who saw it as the work of a sophist because of its technical treatment and rhetorical style. We should not forget that he was a former student of Socrates, and tried to give a moral and didactic dimension to his writing. At the same time he is critical of the sophists of his day and those who confuse the ancient sophists with those of the fourth century, and tries to separate them from these new sophists.

Gabriel Danzig in "The Best of the Achaemenids: Benevolence, Self-Interest and the 'Ironic' Reading of *Cyropaedia*" (499–540) says that an analysis of the *Cyropaedia* and some examples taken from it, such as the accounts of Cyaxares and Cyrus, give the reader a perspective of what the concepts of justice and benevolence meant for X., who, despite leaning towards a conventional *phthonos-based* morality, tried to show, not without some irony, that self-interest was compatible with advantages for others, and thus opened up an original approach towards a more rational practice of political leadership. In short, Danzig's re-reading gives us a new perspective on the *Cyropaedia* narrative and an alternative view of Cyrus.

John Henderson in "Pheraulas Is the Answer, What Was the Question? (You Cannot Be Cyrus)" (541–562), by analysing Pheraulas, a man of plebeian extraction, favoured by Cyrus in the *Cyropaedia*, examines the relationship between ruler and subject within the reciprocal framework of utility and benevolence. In this context, through stimulation of the audience, command of the historical material and a meticulous working of the narrative, X. reflects not only on what constitutes good government but also on the difficulties involved in continuing it.

Melina Tamiolaki in "Virtue and Leadership in Xenophon: Ideal Leaders or Ideal Losers?" (563–590) suggests that the connection between leadership and virtue largely belonged to the sphere of the ideal. In practice, for X. the two concepts could be dissociated and thus there might be rulers who were not virtuous and virtuous peoples, and the virtue of a leader or of a people was not always a guarantee of success. However, X.'s view is not a criticism or an ironic interpretation but an assertion that perfect virtue is difficult to achieve, and that things are not black and white when political considerations are involved. In practice, according to X., a tension exists between political and moral considerations that are normally resolved at the expense of morality. Thus X. offers us a more realistic and pragmatic view of the complexities of political life that implies a certain ambiguity about the concept of virtue, although obviously he does not go so far as to discard it.

Lisa Irene Hau in "Does Pride Go before a Fall? Xenophon on Arrogant Pride" (591–610) by analysing the words *mega phronein*, *phronema* and *kataphronesis*, shows us that in most of his works X. is interested in manifestations of arrogance and scorn, not only in a

military context but also in civil life. By introducing a topic that was extensively covered by Hellenistic historians, X.'s intention is to give us an ethical and didactic message: arrogant pride resulting from military or social success is immoral and potentially dangerous.

Pierre Pontier in "Xenophon and the Persian Kiss" (611–630) examines a specific and particular theme of one of X.'s works: the scenes of kissing that X. subjects to multiple elaborations in his works and that are also included in the Greek concept of *logoi paidikoi*. X. refers to the Persian kiss of greeting within the family, and as an honour granted by the king, whether Cyrus or Agesilaus, that transcends the logic of the social hierarchy based solely on birth. The gesture of kissing thus acquires a political dimension, the hallmark of the ideal governor, guarantor of justice, capable of controlling his desires (*enkrateia*) in accordance with a Socratic message that X. conveys in his own way.

Emily Baragwanath in "The Wonder of Freedom: Xenophon on Slavery" (631–664) tells us that X. never advocated the abolition of slavery, but, within the context of the general theory concerning ideal human relations that can be traced in his works, he followed the example of certain thinkers of the classical period who reflected and invited others to reflect on slavery. In X.'s work, slaves are not only capable of prompting moral behaviour in their observers but they can even be treated like free men. Thus, in the context of an ethical stance based on utilitarian pragmatism, he tries to persuade his reader to reconsider some of their deeply-rooted opinions.

Thomas J. Figueira in "Economic Thought and Economic Fact in the Works of Xenophon" (665–688) suggests that, despite the fact that X. and his contemporaries had no concept of 'economics' as such, X. displayed an awareness of economic phenomena, and put particular emphasis on what we might call the adoption of an early psychology of intentional decision-making. Unlike previous commentators, X. succeeded in proposing, in the form of practical instruction, a coherent programme in terms that would be recognised by the modern economist, such as craft specialisation, investment, intensive exploitation of resources, the search for commercial advantage and the manipulation of supply and demand.

Stefan Schorn in "The Philosophical Background of Xenophon's *Poroi*" (689–724) shows us that the *Poroi* exemplified the interaction between X.'s political and moral philosophy. By comparing X.'s opinions on leadership, also given in other works, especially the *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus*, Schorn traces the relations and responsibilities that should be assumed by the members of the *polis* in a project in which justice and *enkrateia* are fundamental and would enable Athens to regain a role as Pan-Hellenic leader.

Joseph Jansen in "Strangers Incorporated: Outsiders in Xenophon's *Poroi*" (725–760) highlights an important aspect of X.'s political philosophy. While X. usually adjusts to the social and economic situation and political conventions of the *polis* and comfortably accepts its traditional system of values, he also habitually tends to transcend boundaries

beyond the normal limits of thought and practice. In the *Poroi*, X. proposes notable measures to drastically increase the number of strangers in Athens, such as granting honours and privileges that would allow them to improve their legal status. It is true his proposals were less recipes for social and political change than economic and financial growth; while he is neither a real defender of egalitarianism nor an abolitionist, X. tended to erode the barriers that separated citizens and strangers – and deviate from traditional Greek morality – to the mutual benefit of citizens and their dependents described in other works.

The book closes with an Index of Names (761–771) and a Thematic Index (772–791) and, although it is part of a recent trend seeking to rehabilitate the figure of Xenophon, it does not reach a conclusion, but rather extends an unstated invitation to the reader to re-read X. and, on the basis of the guidelines given, learn to appreciate an important author for the History of Greece and Western Civilization.

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