

XENOPHON ON SOCRATES' POLITICAL ATTITUDES*

As he emerges from Xenophon's writings, Socrates *prima facie* seems to be little more than a projection of certain autobiographic traits and views of the author on the generalized abstract image of a virtuous person. The effect of this, rather superficial, impression is that scholars who write histories of Greek philosophy or books offering a comprehensive view of Socrates' thought tend to find an explanation for this peculiar nature of Xenophon's Socrates in Xenophon's own character and views¹ and to describe him as a simplified version, just a shadow of Plato's Socrates with Spartan colours added, what actually amounts to Xenophon's idealized self-portrait. Considerations of relative chronology² and the general assumption of an 'unphilosophic turn' of mind in Xenophon³ prompt the scholars trying to extricate the 'real Socrates' from the mass of confused historical and literary evidence either to regard Xenophon's testimony with skepticism or to distrust it altogether.

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¹ Russell's scandalous dictum that Xenophon is "a stupid man" (B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, New York 1945, 83) reappears fifty years later in Figal's less radical claim that for us, Socrates as a philosopher is exclusively Plato's Socrates, if for no other reason than the fact that Plato is undoubtedly a much more successful writer than Xenophon (G. Figal, *Sokrates*, München 1995, 15). Stone seems to share the same opinion when he says that "it was Plato who created the Socrates of our imagination", whereas Xenophon's Socrates "is rather platitudinous and banal, sometimes a downright philistine" (I.F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates*, Boston/Toronto 1988, 3; subsequently referred to as Stone, *The Trial of Socrates*). Among the more moderate critics one can number Marchant who describes Xenophon as "a plain man" (E.C. Marchant, *Memorabilia and Oeconomicus* [introduction, text and translation], Loeb Classical Library, London 1923, xxi).

² So Ferguson distrusts Xenophon on the ground that "he himself was young at the time and his judgment immature" (Socrates. A source book, compiled and in part translated by J. Ferguson, London et al., Macmillan for the Open University Press 1970, 137). Vlastos among his other reasons mentions that "Xenophon's acquaintance with Socrates is of unknown duration and probably no better than casual" (G. Vlastos, *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, Cambridge 1991, 298; subsequently referred to as Vlastos, *Socrates*).

³ So Zeller (E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Leipzig 1844–1852), Grote (G. Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, vols. i–iii, London 1865 [repr. 1992]), Guthrie (W.K.C. Guthrie, *Socrates*, Cambridge 1971; subsequently referred to as Guthrie, *Socrates*), Vlastos (Vlastos, *Socrates*), to mention but a few, agree in opinion that Xenophon was a gifted man of letters, but a practical person with no particular interest in philosophy.

On the other hand, before one is in a position to discuss Socrates 'as such' and either to continue, in the words of Robin Waterfield, "the struggle towards the re-establishment of Xenophon as a valid source for Socratic ideas and attitudes"⁴ or, on the contrary, to take sides with his fierce critics, it is necessary to understand, with the greatest possible accuracy, what exactly is the Socrates of Xenophon. In order to avoid the resulting picture being blurred by unintentionally confusing the two kinds of data, fictional representation and historical depiction, I propose to follow O. Gigon's advice⁵ and to treat, for once, all the traits of Xenophon's Socrates as purely literary facts, i.e., to regard them in abstraction from any possible connection with what one assumes to be Plato's Socrates or the historical Socrates, thus avoiding the vicious circle where the historical interpretation depends on fiction which in turn ends up being interpreted from a quasi-historical point of view. This will allow us to see in an unbiased way the *fictional* image of Socrates as it emerges from Xenophon's works. If one proceeds, for the time being, as if the only surviving evidence for Socrates were that of Xenophon, this will help to keep one's judgment in this respect impartial.

It is my intention here to concentrate on the political views of Xenophon's Socrates, leaving for the future another major constituent of this character, viz., his ethical views, despite the tradition of allotting to Socrates' ethics the very central place in any description of his cast of mind. My starting point is the basic assumption of the holistic nature of Xenophon's Socrates, so that one can legitimately speak of a fundamental unity of his thought in which it is almost impossible to separate certain ideas from the rest, just as it is impossible to separate his views from his way of life. If, on the other hand, one is called upon to point out the single dominant motive of Xenophon's reflections in nearly all his works, that will certainly be the theme of power⁶, the fascination with which is fully shared by his Socrates.

⁴ R. Waterfield, *Xenophon's Socratic Mission: Xenophon and his World*. Papers from a conference held in Liverpool in July 1999, Stuttgart 2004, 79; subsequently referred to as Waterfield, *Socratic Mission*.

⁵ O. Gigon, *Sokrates. Sein Bild in Dichtung und Geschichte*, Tübingen/Basel 1947. Waterfield comes to the similar conclusion, i.e., that we are dealing with a literary tradition: "What we can do, however, is look at the interaction of Plato and Xenophon" (Waterfield, *Socratic Mission* 89).

⁶ Cf., e.g., B. Zimmermann, *Macht und Charakter. Theorie und Praxis von Herrschaft bei Xenophon*, in: *Prometheus* 18, 1992, 233 (subsequently referred to as Zimmermann, *Macht und Charakter*); or Ch. Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the 'Cyropaedia'*, Berkeley et al., University of California Press 2001, 6 (subsequently referred to as Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince*). B. Due seems to be overlooking this important feature when she insists that "although Xenophon chooses a king as his ideal, his main concern is with the individual person and his education, not with the constitution ... His main concern is the individual, not the system" (B. Due, *The Cyropaedia. Xenophon's Aims and Methods*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press 1989, 25; subsequently referred to as Due, *Cyropaedia*).

Xenophon's Socrates regards the art of ruling (τέχνη τοῦ ἄρχειν, or βασιλικὴ τέχνη) as the greatest of all the arts (μεγίστη τέχνη) and the goodness of a perfect chief (ἀρετὴ ἀγαθοῦ ἡγεμόνος) as the noblest of all excellences (καλλίστη ἀρετή)⁷. It is the aim of every leader to benefit his subordinates and to make them happy⁸. Βασιλικὴ τέχνη has two sides about it: an ethical, and a practical one. The former is the self-control of the leader (ἐγκράτεια – ἀρετῆς κρηπίδα)⁹. It is of paramount importance, because it is on the presence or absence of this virtue that every deed depends first and foremost, whereas its opposite, ἀκρασία, makes a man forget everything that concerns the practical part of the art of ruling, that specific knowledge which is indispensable to anyone whose task is to control something, be it a chorus, an estate, an army, or a city¹⁰.

As in all undertakings, in controlling a city only he who possesses knowledge will achieve success. Moreover, because the aim of every chief is to lead, the greater success will fall upon to those whom their subordinates will obey sooner. In every enterprise people show the greatest readiness to obey the one whom they trust to possess the relevant knowledge: thus in sickness they obey most willingly someone whom they think to be an experienced doctor, when on a ship they obey someone whom they think to be the best helmsman, in farming someone whom they believe to be a skilled farmer¹¹. Only those who have knowledge can win true fame, while an ignorant impostor, even if his deception at first may pass unnoticed, will soon be unmasked or even worse, will do harm and even cause death not only to his subordinates, but to himself as well¹². To attain to such knowledge, it is necessary to learn. And since to control a city is μεγίστη τέχνη, it requires a more enduring and intense study than learning to play the harp or the flute or to ride¹³.

⁷ Mem. 4,2,11.

⁸ Mem. 3,2,4; 2,6,25; 3,2,2 (πόλιν εὐεργετεῖν).

⁹ Mem. 1,5,4; ἐγκράτεια is the central concept of Xenophon's ethical views, and I will discuss it accordingly elsewhere.

¹⁰ In Xenophon, Socrates says repeatedly that the difference between political and domestic administration is only quantitative: Mem. 3,4,6–12; 3,6,14; 4,2,11. Cf. Oec. 21,11. The point is that all leaders, whether it be a ruler, a general, a farmer or a herdsman, have one and the same task, to make their subordinates happy. This is what makes the art of ruling universal. On Xenophon's concept of political οἰκονομία cf., e.g., R. Brock, *Xenophon's Political Imagery: Xenophon and his World*. Papers from a conference held in Liverpool in July 1999, Stuttgart 2004, 247 f. (subsequently referred to as Brock, *Xenophon's Political Imagery*).

¹¹ Mem. 3,3,9; 3,9,11.

¹² A phoney flute-player will cover himself with shame; a man who at first seems to be a pilot but actually is ignorant of the art of navigation will destroy the ship, the passengers and himself: Mem. 1,7,2–3; 2,6,36; 2,6,38; 3,6,18; Symp. 8,43.

¹³ Mem. 4,1,2; 4,2,2; 4,2,7.

Xenophon's Socrates says that kings and rulers are those who know how to rule (βασιλεῖς δὲ καὶ ἄρχοντας ἔφη τοὺς ἐπισταμένους ἄρχειν)¹⁴: there is a specific knowledge necessary for a man to become a ruler, just as the helmsman, the farmer or the doctor each has his own proper knowledge¹⁵. And just like as the doctor is someone who possesses the appropriate knowledge and by no means someone elected by the multitude or chosen by lot, so only he should be a ruler who is experienced in these matters and not the one on whom the lot has fallen. Just like as it will occur to no one to choose a doctor among all the citizens by lot, since not everyone possesses the knowledge of the medical art, so one should not make one's choice of a leader in such a way, since not all the citizens have the knowledge of the art of ruling¹⁶. Those practicing the so-called βαναυσικὰ τέχνηαι cannot at the same time have the knowledge of βασιλικὴ τέχνη and other qualities proper of the ruler of a city¹⁷. In the first place, the craftsman's way of life weakens his strength, and this, in turn, makes his soul sick. Craftsmen, therefore, are lacking in self-control. Also, the life of a manual worker leaves him no spare time, depriving him of the chance to learn the βασιλικὴ τέχνη.

Now it will be useful to take a closer look at one statement Xenophon's Socrates makes to this effect, which on the first glance seems quite appalling. Wishing to persuade Charmides not to shun speaking before the Assembly, Socrates says this:

οὔτε τοὺς φρονιμωτάτους αἰδούμενος οὔτε τοὺς ἰσχυροτάτους φοβούμενος ἐν τοῖς ἀφρονεστάτοις τε καὶ ἀσθενεστάτοις αἰσχύνηι λέγειν. πότερον γὰρ τοὺς γναφέας αὐτῶν ἢ τοὺς σκυτέας ἢ τοὺς τέκτονας ἢ τοὺς χαλκέας ἢ τοὺς γεωργοὺς ἢ τοὺς ἐμπόρους ἢ τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ μεταβαλλομένους καὶ φροντίζοντας ὅ τι ἐλάττονος πριάμενοι πλείονος ἀποδῶνται αἰσχύνηι; ἐκ γὰρ τούτων ἀπάντων ἡ ἐκκλησία συνίσταται¹⁸.

I find unpersuasive the understanding of this passage proposed by Gregory Vlastos who thinks that the lower classes of Athens are condemned here by Xenophon's Socrates as

¹⁴ Mem. 3,9,10.

¹⁵ Mem. 3,1,4; 4,2,2; 4,2,5. Dodds arrives at similar conclusions when commenting on Plato's Socrates in *Gorg.* 514a–e (E.R. Dodds, *Plato's Gorgias*, a revised text with introduction and commentary, Oxford 1959, 351–355; subsequently referred to as Dodds, *Plato's Gorgias*).

¹⁶ Mem. 1,2,9; 3,9,10; 3,5,21. It is probably these passages that Vlastos has in mind when saying that to find, with H. Maier (*Sokrates: sein Werk und seine geschichtliche Stellung*, Tübingen 1913), “cruel scorn for the whole of Athenian democracy” in Pl. 319c–d, is to confer on Plato's Socrates Xenophon's animus (G. Vlastos, *Socratic Studies*, ed. by Myles Burnyeat, Cambridge 1994, 96; subsequently referred to as Vlastos, *Socratic Studies*).

¹⁷ Oec. 4,2.

¹⁸ Mem. 3,7,5–6.

"the feeblest and most stupid members of the civic body"¹⁹. It is important to consider the context in which Socrates says these words. Charmides is ashamed of speaking in the presence of a multitude, and Socrates tries to convince him that there is nothing for him to be afraid of because, in Socrates' opinion, Charmides is far more capable than the politicians of the day (3,7,1). This is to say that Charmides seems to Socrates to have more knowledge of political affairs than most of his fellow citizens taking part in public life. This conclusion has been drawn from witnessing the conversations between Charmides and public men: his advice proved to be good and his criticism right (3,7,3). Socrates opposes Charmides as an expert in politics to the majority of the Assembly who are merely political laymen: You behave like a man who can beat trained athletes and is afraid of amateurs (3,7,7)! Those who are no professional athletes but mere diletantes in sport can be outstanding experts in other things. The artisans and other manual workers are amateurs in politics (that is why an expert must not fear them), whereas they can be good experts in their own pursuit²⁰. It is with this distinction in mind that one should read the whole passage: aristocratic Charmides is opposed to "fullers and cobblers" on the ground of his superior knowledge, not their social inferiority. Someone who, like Charmides, rivals professionals of politics need not feel diffident in the face of the amateurish multitude. Only in their claim for political expertise do the craftspeople appear as "dunces and weaklings" and are called accordingly²¹.

It is true, of course, that Xenophon's Socrates does use the adjective βάναισος which, as Vlastos notes, is "a highly emotive term which no one would apply to them [who work at βαναυσικὰ τέχνηαι] to their face, unless one wanted to insult them"²². Vlastos is not, however, quite right in saying that Xenophon's Socrates calls "that largest single segment of the working population *banauoi*": he speaks in fact only of αἱ βαναυσικαὶ καλούμεναι, i.e., τέχνηαι, and he does not say οἱ βαναυσικοί, i.e., ἄνδρες. In the very passage containing this word Socrates once again affirms that the art of ruling²³ (here represented in the form of estate management) is the μεγίστη

¹⁹ Vlastos, *Socratic Studies* 99. It is to be noted that Guthrie's sentence on Socrates' "antidemocratic bias" rests almost entirely on this passage. Guthrie is convinced of Socrates' contempt for craftsmen (Guthrie, *Socrates* 91).

²⁰ Mem. 2,7,7: anyone who is usefully employed in a work which he understands lives a happier life. 1,2,57; 2,7,8; 2,1,20: every employment is useful and good, because labour makes men more prudent and just. 3,9,15: those men are dearest to the gods who do their work well, be it medicine, farming, or public affairs, whereas an idle man is neither useful nor dear to the gods.

²¹ (Here and elsewhere Xenophon is quoted in Marchant's translation: Xenophon in Seven Volumes, Loeb Classical Library, v. 4, London 1923). I cannot agree with Stone that "this is the kind of social prejudice – and of mere ranting – one would not expect from a philosopher" (Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* 118).

²² Vlastos, *Socratic Studies* 99.

²³ Cf. n. 10; here it can only be mentioned briefly that throughout the *Oeconomicus* it is the art of ruling in general that is being discussed, rather than just the art of keeping a house-

τέχνη topping the hierarchy of all τέχνηαι. He confronts and evaluates the arts, not the men who practise them²⁴.

Despite these reservations, it would still be fair to describe Socrates' political views as, in a sense, 'oligarchic', precisely because of his insistence on the role of knowledge in handling political affairs, which implies that not every citizen can be a political man. This claim plainly contradicts the values adopted by the democratic state, and Xenophon, when approaching, among the charges brought against Socrates, the one of having reviled the practice of choosing officials by lot, does not refute it directly. He prefers instead to prove that Socrates' remarks would not make a rebel of any of his interlocutors and that in fact Socrates invariably obeyed the laws of Athens and the orders of his commanders, thus offering an outstanding and well-known example of the civic

hold. The conclusion of Sabine Föllinger is even more wide-ranging: „Denn es geht im ‚Oikonomikos‘ ... nicht allein um die Lehre der richtigen Hausverwaltung, sondern um das Lehren einer Techne als solches“ (S. Föllinger, Sokrates als Ökonom? Eine Analyse der didaktischen Gestaltung von Xenophons ‚Oikonomikos‘, in: WJ 30, 2006, 10).

²⁴ It may be useful to recapitulate Vlastos' argument here. Vlastos opposes Plato's Socrates who, in his opinion, is supportive of Athenian democracy to the Socrates of Xenophon who allegedly is in favour of an oligarchic regime. To prove the latter thesis, Vlastos quotes the two passages from Xenophon discussed above and comes to the conclusion that Xenophon's Socrates regards the majority of the Athenian citizenry as worthless blockheads and would gladly see them deprived of their civic rights to prevent them from being appointed to magistracies by lot. I already gave some considerations observed that, in Xenophon, Socrates in fact does not at all treat craftsmen as "the feeblest and most stupid members of the civic body". He only calls them worthless in the art of ruling the city – he could quite as well call an expert statesman worthless in medicine. Once this is taken into account, one clearly discerns a rhetorical purpose behind Socrates' 'scandalous' statement: he has to persuade his interlocutor that to feel intimidated by the ignorant multitude is absurd. Even so, these words contain no trace of contempt toward the working population as such. Contrary to what Vlastos believes, Xenophon's Socrates never says or means that people belonging to the lower classes are second-rate. When speaking of (Xenophon's) Socrates' alleged desire to deprive the majority of Athenians of their civic rights, Vlastos uses Aristotle to reconstruct what Xenophon thought. He concentrates on the subjects of the procedure of appointing the magistrates by lot, while what arouses protest in Xenophon's Socrates is the system of random appointment itself. One can recall another interpretation which is opposite to Vlastos' one but seems to be equally mistaken. A. Morkel (*Der politische Sokrates*, Würzburg 2006, 71), following K. von Fritz and K. Popper, contends that Socrates does not mean to supplant democracy with the *Regierung von Fachleuten*, but simply urges anyone to acquire the necessary knowledge before attending the Assembly. The facts indicated above make one rather think that Xenophon's Socrates condemns the existing political order under which most people play roles they are not suited for. But it is the order, not any particular social group that he castigates. Cf. Mem. 3,14,6: here Socrates blames those who, while having no knowledge of the art, try to alter what has been made by a skilled cook. Cf. the conclusions concerning the background of Plato's principle 'one man – one skill' (τὸ αὐτοῦ πράττειν – for example, Rep. 433d7–434c7; 370a) made by T.C. Brickhouse and N.D. Smith (Plato's Socrates, Oxford 1994, 166; subsequently referred to as Brickhouse/Smith, Plato's Socrates).

virtues. Explanation of the reasons for such strictly law-abiding conduct Xenophon entrusts to Socrates himself when the latter, in a conversation with Hippias, asserts that what is lawful is just. Lawful, according to what Hippias says, and Socrates approves, are, in the first place, agreements among the citizens on what is to be done and what to be avoided, and, in the second place, unwritten laws established by the gods. The man who obeys the laws is just, the one who neglects them unjust²⁵. In this way, Xenophon's Socrates urges his interlocutors to obey the laws of democratic Athens. Besides that, his bold claim that he has never committed an injustice implies that he himself has always obeyed the existent laws.

The reader is confronted with a striking contradiction: on the one hand, Xenophon's Socrates savages the contemporary constitution, on the other hand, not only does he obey all its laws, thereby reconciling himself with it²⁶, but he openly declares it to be just. However, if one takes a closer look at the examples which, in Xenophon's design, bear witness to the latter, it soon becomes clear that the testimony they give is fairly awkward.

So on the first such occasion Xenophon relates that Socrates, being a member of the *πρωτάνεις* and having sworn to act in accordance with the laws of Athens, blocked the illegitimate motion to pass by a single vote the sentence on the six generals who had taken part at the battle of Arginusae in 406. Thus he kept his oath in defiance of public opinion and despite the personal risk he was running²⁷. In the second instance, Socrates neglected the order of the Thirty to arrest Leon of Salamis and publicly disobeyed them when they banished him from conversing with the young²⁸. The third example displays Socrates preferring to remain faithful to the laws even at the cost of his life after he refused to implore the tribunal for mercy or to flatter them, something one would expect from a man in a similar situation²⁹.

If these examples are to prove that Socrates always obeyed the Athenian laws and was a just and a worthy citizen, they hardly serve their purpose. Not only was it unlawful to sentence the six generals to death, but it would be outright unjust (and later was

²⁵ Mem. 4,4; 1,1,18. This dialogue (Mem. 4,4) and, in particular, the definition of justice it operates with (*τὸ νόμιμον δίκαιον εἶναι*) certainly deserve a detailed analysis. For the time being, I only indicate the two interpretations offered by Donald Morrison (D. Morrison, Xenophon's Socrates on the Just and the Lawful, in: *Ancient Philosophy* 15, 1995, 329–347) and David M. Johnson (D.M. Johnson, Xenophon's Socrates on Law and Justice, in: *Ancient Philosophy* 23, 2003, 255–281; subsequently referred to as Johnson, Xenophon's Socrates on Law and Justice) who, respectively, describe the Socrates of this episode either as a 'legal positivist' or a 'legal idealist'.

²⁶ Vlastos arrives at a similar conclusion in his discussion of Plato's Socrates: since Socrates obeys the Athenian laws, he thereby welcomes the democratic political structure (Vlastos, *Socratic Studies* 87–108).

²⁷ Mem. 1,1,18.

²⁸ Mem. 1,2,31; 4,4,3.

²⁹ Mem. 4,4,4.

in fact universally recognized to be so)³⁰. To flatter the jury and to attempt to propitiate them is an act of humiliation of the sort that implies tacit acknowledgement of one's guilt and of the right of certain people to exercise power over the others.

All this so plainly contradicts the views of Socrates as he is familiar to the reader of Xenophon's own writings that his choice in each case is better explained in terms of the standards of admissible and inadmissible conduct, rather than obedience and disobedience to the laws. Further on, the orders of the Thirty, issued without the general accord of the citizens, fail to conform to the definition of law as understood by Xenophon's Socrates. The very regime established by the Thirty, moreover, is *a priori* illegitimate. None of their orders, therefore, is a law, and one is free to neglect them. In other words, in all three instances Socrates would act exactly as he did even if there were no laws at all: not a single example shows us Socrates facing an alternative between the real laws adopted in conformity with the rules of the democratic system of the city of Athens, and his personal convictions. Nowhere do the instructions of the law come in conflict with Socrates' standards and his judgment on how one ought to act³¹.

Thus Xenophon's examples of Socrates acting in situations of a difficult moral choice do not at all prove that his conduct is one of strict conformity with whatever the law happens to be; if anything, they add a new touch to the familiar portrait of a moral intellectualist. Without these illustrations, Xenophon's Socrates might seem a cowardly hypocrite who scourges his political opponents behind their back but slavishly obeys their orders and, if forced to speak out loud, is ready to give his assent to whatever they demand. It is not by chance that he pronounces his notorious dictum that whatever is

³⁰ If one can still feel uncertain whether *παρὰ τοὺς νόμους* and *παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον* have different meanings in Mem. 1,1,18, the passage describing the same event in another work by Xenophon (Hell. 1,7,16–35) leaves no place for doubt that, in the Athenian society at the time described by Xenophon, this whole incident was recognized as being not only unlawful, but unjust as well (one cannot discuss here why the sentence of death was nonetheless passed on the generals). This understanding is further corroborated by a passage in Plato's *Apology* (32a4–32e1), where *μετὰ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ δίκαιου* could be seen as *hendiadys* if the notions of 'unlawful' and 'unjust' were not manifestly distinguished in the formula *μηδὲν ἄδικον μηδ' ἀνόσιον*.

³¹ Socrates' attitude to the death sentence pronounced upon him deserves a separate examination, but in short, the position of Xenophon's Socrates can be described as follows. He declares his condemnation to be unjust (Ap. 24. 26. 28), thus disapproving of the resolution of the Assembly. Still, he chooses to die, but only because it is his firm conviction that, for someone of his age, to die is better than to live on. So in this case, yet again, rather than obeying the law he acts in consent with his own judgment on how he ought to act (Ap. 6–9. 27. 33). As always, here Xenophon's Socrates remains faithful to the rational standards of moral choice between the right and the wrong. He uses the verdict of the jury to accomplish his own goal, and it is not his sense of civic duty that moves him to submit to it. (Cf. Pl. Ap. 39b: *καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἄπειμι ὑφ' ὑμῶν θανάτου δίκην ὀφλόν, οὔτοι δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ὀφληκότες μοχθηρίαν καὶ ἀδικίαν. καὶ ἐγὼ τε τῷ τιμήματι ἐμμένω καὶ οὔτοι. ταῦτα μὲν που ἴσως οὕτως καὶ ἔδει σχεῖν, καὶ οἶμαι αὐτὰ μετρίως ἔχειν.*)

lawful is just, in a conversation with Hippias, when it is not Socrates who is putting questions, as it is usually the case, but, on the contrary, he himself is interrogated by Hippias. This short dialogue is, of course, especially contrived by Xenophon so as to prove Socrates' political reliability. When the latter is constrained to answer a provocative question, his words sound more self-assured and peremptory than it is typical for him³².

This is exactly what Xenophon needs here. Yet the examples he gives to demonstrate Socrates' alleged loyalty let transpire the features of quite a different man and help us resolve the apparent contradiction between Socrates' claim that the laws must be laid down only by experts and his admission of the fact that laws are resolutions adopted with consent of all the citizens. It becomes evident that Socrates would never perform an unlawful deed, as he would never commit a crime³³, simply because it would contradict his own moral convictions; he does not, however, consider 'lawful' every existing law, but only such a one as would be in harmony with the basic premises of his moral beliefs³⁴. Xenophon's Socrates, therefore, is not blindly law-abiding, and his position in this respect is not at all contradictory. The very nature of his exceptional integrity is his uncompromising adherence to his judgments and rational beliefs. He acts in accordance with the rational principles of choice between the right and the wrong, and obeys the command of the laws whenever the latter do not contradict the former. The dialogue with Hippias, which seems to fall outside this pattern, betrays the author's expressly apologetic intention, and this explains his inconsistency³⁵.

But does Xenophon's Socrates regard himself as a good citizen, and who is, generally speaking, a good citizen in his opinion? He says that the duty of a good citizen is to benefit the city through the art he practises and of which, accordingly, he possesses a

³² As Johnson rightly remarks, "Xenophon, like Plato, was at pains to distance Socrates from such sophists – and what better way to distance oneself than to refute a sophist with what appears to be an entirely conventional position?" (Johnson, *Xenophon's Socrates on Law and Justice* 272).

³³ Mem. 1,2,62–63; 4,4,1.

³⁴ I believe, therefore, that the paradox of a "puzzling combination of conformity and nonconformity", as conceived by Thomas L. Pangle, is an imaginary one, and no less so is the proposed solution: "The Socratic respect for law is a direct result of the Socratic conception of justice ... It may seem paradoxical that an intense concern for justice, and respect for law, could contribute to a philosopher's getting into trouble with the law. The paradox diminishes when we remind ourselves that men of principled justice are sometimes found to be severely at odds with conventionally respectable opinion and even with the positive law." (T.L. Pangle, *Socrates in the Context of Xenophon's Political Writings*, in: *The Socratic Movement*, ed. by Paul A. Vander Waerdt, Ithaca/London 1994, 132, 135; subsequently referred to as Pangle, *Socrates*).

³⁵ Cf. the analysis of a similar contradiction in Plato's dialogues (Cr. 50a–53a and Ap. 29d) in Brickhouse/Smith (*Plato's Socrates* 141–155) and in G. Young (*Socrates and Obedience*, in: *Phronesis* 19, 1974, 1–29).

knowledge. If, for example, someone is engaged in financial affairs, he ought to make the city wealthier; in military operations, a good citizen's duty is to conquer the enemy; in an embassy, to turn the city's enemies into her friends; in speaking before the Assembly, to put an end to civic discord³⁶. Xenophon's Socrates, of course, does not practise any such business himself. But elsewhere we find his requirements for a worthy citizenship formulated in a slightly different way: the one who teaches his interlocutors whatever good he knows is a καλὸς κάγαθὸς πολίτης, whereas κακὸς προστάτης (and πολίτης) is someone who makes his fellow citizens worse. Xenophon's Socrates maintains that he makes his friends and interlocutors better, promoting in that way the welfare of the city and therefore putting himself as a καλὸς κάγαθὸς πολίτης³⁷.

The question discussed above is closely related to another one, whether one should necessarily be involved in politics at all. Speaking with Charmides, Socrates says that he who is able to benefit the city and the citizens ought to take part in political life³⁸. But in what sense, if at all, does Socrates himself practise τὰ πολιτικά? Asked by Antiphon why he avoids politics despite possessing the required knowledge as someone who undertakes to teach the others, Socrates says: Ποτέρως δ' ἄν, ὃ Ἄντιφῶν, μᾶλλον τὰ πολιτικά πράττοιμι, εἰ μόνος αὐτὰ πράττοιμι ἢ εἰ ἐπιμελοίμην τοῦ ὡς πλείστους ἰκανοὺς εἶναι πράττειν αὐτὰ;³⁹ This remark serves, however, as a banal justification against a reproach. Socrates' meaning is barely perceptible in these words, which are trivial enough to coincide with the typical offer made by the teachers of oratory. It is not by chance that with these words the conversation comes to an end: Antiphon has heard what is familiar to him.

But the thought of Xenophon's Socrates, as it can be reconstituted from several contexts beside this one, is not that shallow. In Athens in the fifth century B.C. πράττειν τὰ πολιτικά meant πράττειν τὰ δημόσια, i.e. to take an active part in public assemblies, to take up a state post, or to indict someone for proposing a new law which contradicts an old one according to the so-called γραφὴ παρανόμων⁴⁰, etc. In this sense, Xenophon's Socrates is absolutely non-political: all the dialogues in his Socratic works, with no exception, are private conversations. Socrates nonetheless maintains that he is engaged in political affairs because he takes care that there be as many men able to engage in political activity as possible, in other words, those who alone, in

³⁶ Mem. 4,6,14.

³⁷ Mem. 1,2,61; 1,6,13; 4,8,10–11. In 1,2,32 a statesman is compared to a herdsman: v. n. 45.

³⁸ Mem. 3,7,2 (ἀνάγκη); 3,7,9.

³⁹ Mem. 1,6,15. Cf. 1,2,17.

⁴⁰ He did not act so even at the trial of the generals of Arginusae, as Darrel D. Colson rightly points out (D.D. Colson, On Appealing to Athenian Law to Justify Socrates' Disobedience, in: *Apeiron* 19, 1985, 133–151).

Socrates' opinion, can be true rulers⁴¹. And, as we know, these are, first, men who possess self-control and are virtuous in general, secondly, those who have a certain specific knowledge. It is hard to suppose that Socrates is making others capable politicians in the practical sense of the word, i.e., that he teaches them knowledge of financial, military, diplomatic and other affairs. The fact that he investigates with his interlocutors τί πόλις, τί πολιτικός, τί ἀρχὴ ἀνθρώπων, τί ἀρχικὸς ἀνθρώπων⁴² means that more likely he only makes their ignorance clear to them and convinces them of the necessity to acquire such knowledge, never taking the liberty of teaching it himself. This is confirmed by the very subjects of the dialogues in the *Memorabilia*, and even more so by direct indications that Socrates, in order to make them acquire the knowledge necessary to become able to rule, entrusted his pupils to those who seemed to him experts in this or that pursuit⁴³. Hence Socrates turns out to be a teacher of the art of ruling in its ethical aspect. The entire text of the *Memorabilia* serves the purpose of demonstrating that Socrates made his associates ἐγκρατεῖς, καλοὶ κάγαθοί, βελτίους. So Xenophon's Socrates is still engaged in political affairs, if not by taking part in assemblies himself, then by training others to be true politicians.

By helping his friends and pupils to become better than they are, Socrates serves the duty of a good citizen: he benefits the city⁴⁴. But is it really *this* that he sees as his purpose? In this connection, the episode with the Thirty deserves notice once again. After Socrates' sharp censorious remark about the Thirty⁴⁵ was reported to them, he was

⁴¹ Cf. Pl. Gorg. 521d and Dodds' commentary *ad locum*: "Socrates takes no part in politics, but in speaking always πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον he is performing the statesman's task so far as a private citizen can." (Dodds, Plato's Gorgias 369).

⁴² Mem. 1,1,16.

⁴³ Mem. 1,6,14; 3,1; 3,6,18. There are, however, two instances on which Xenophon's Socrates appears as a political expert and even offers his own project of defending the city. These are his conversations with Pericles and Glaucon (Mem. 3,5–6). These passages rank with others whose aim is to represent Socrates as helpful to his friends: cf., for example, his deliberations on where and how a house should be built (3,8,8–10), or the advice he gives on how to bear a long journey (3,13,5). Even in the *Memorabilia*, however, conversations of this kind are of minor importance, whereas the overwhelming majority of the episodes concern the ethical questions.

⁴⁴ Socrates calls his art pandering (ἡ μαστροπεία – Symp. 3,10). Ἀγαθὸς μαστροπὸς teaches his pupils to become agreeable not just to the majority, but to the city as a whole (4,60). In order to achieve this, it is necessary to strive for virtue because, as stated above, false fame is disclosed in experience (Symp. 8,43); that is why τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μαστροποῦ is to lead others towards virtue. But everybody must be one's own panderer (μαστροπὸς ἑαυτοῦ), i.e. everyone must first seek virtue on one's own, which will eventually make him agreeable to the others as well. Such is Xenophon's Socrates (Mem. 2,6,28. Cf. 2,6,13).

⁴⁵ Mem. 1,2,32: εἶπέ που ὁ Σωκράτης ὅτι θαυμαστόν οἱ δοκοίη εἶναι, εἴ τις γενόμενος βῶν ἀγέλης νομεὺς καὶ τὰς βουῆς ἐλάττους τε καὶ χεῖρους ποιῶν μὴ ὁμολογοίη κακὸς βουκόλος εἶναι, ἔτι δὲ θαυμαστότερον, εἴ τις προστάτης γε-

summoned before Critias and Charicles. His habitual display of indifference to politics in its traditional understanding, even in the moment of danger menacing the city, provoked the indignation of Isidor F. Stone. Stone writes that “Socrates had a chance to show himself a more outspoken critic of the regime”, he had a chance to point out to them their illegality and he had a chance to “use his influence with his old friend and pupil Critias to bring him back to the paths of virtue”, which he fails to do, to Stone’s disappointment. That was “less than heroic confrontation”, because “amid so many instances of injustice [of the Thirty], all that seems to concern Socrates is his familiar search for absolute definitions of his favorite topics”⁴⁶.

It is worth taking a closer look at the way the brief dialogue between Socrates and the representatives of the Thirty proceeds (1,2,33–37). Critias and Charicles announce to Socrates that he is discouraged against engaging in conversation with the young. In order to understand the prohibition rightly, Socrates asks whether it concerns sound or unsound reasoning. To “put the order into language easier to understand”, Charicles says that it is forbidden to Socrates to hold whatever conversation with the young. But Socrates wants to know exactly how long a young has to be treated as young. The answer is that those who are under thirty should be regarded young. Then Socrates asks if he could inquire about the price if the seller is under thirty. This permission is granted, together with the prohibition to ask questions to which he knows the answer. Socrates seemingly fails to understand again and asks if it means that he is not allowed to give an answer when a young man asks him, for example, where Charicles lives or some other question to which he knows the answer. This move compels Critias to give his thought a more exact formulation: You will have to avoid your favorite topic, – the cobblers, builders and metal workers. Seemingly surprised, Socrates asks whether it means that he is obliged to avoid also the things that usually follow from that, such as Justice, Holiness, etc.

I cannot share the view of David M. Johnson that Xenophon’s Socrates here rebuffs his interlocutors “simply to humiliate them”, because they are reprehensible and “fully deserve this treatment”⁴⁷. In my opinion, we are dealing with an evident example of Socratic irony. Socrates pretends that he does not understand what Critias and Charicles have in mind, he feigns that he does not perceive the difference between the situations under consideration. And by means of elenchus, in this case taking the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, he proves the ineptitude of the ban imposed on him. As always, Socrates remains true to himself. Had not Charicles interrupted the dialogue, Socrates most likely would go on trying to find answers to questions like what Justice,

νόμενος πόλεως καὶ ποιῶν τοὺς πολίτας ἐλάττους τε καὶ χείρους μὴ αἰσχύνεται μηδ’ οἴεται κακὸς εἶναι προστάτης τῆς πόλεως.

⁴⁶ Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* 158–160.

⁴⁷ D.M. Johnson, *Xenophon at His Most Socratic* (Mem. 4,2), in: *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 29, 2005, 44.

Holiness, etc. is, i.e., exactly the ones he has been ordered to avoid. Stone is disappointed with Socrates who was “only lukewarm in his opposition to the Thirty” and did not even try to bring Critias back to the paths of virtue, and in the case of Leon of Salamis “resisted, but minimally, not so much as a political, but as a private act”; from this he concludes that “as a teacher of virtue Socrates was a failure.”

In Stone's opinion, his inference is by no means arbitrary and finds confirmation in Mem. 1,2,12 ff.⁴⁸ I think he is mistaken. When in the *Apology* Xenophon's Socrates says that he does not admit being guilty because all his life he has benefited the city, as it will be universally recognized in the future, he means that this is what he actually did and does not at all claim that he was acting with anything like a patriotic intention. Thus I cannot accept Pangle's thesis that “the Socratic capacity to reform the republican life was very limited”⁴⁹. Socrates does not set himself the task of reforming the state, he cares neither for the well-being of his interlocutor nor for the welfare of the citizens, but only for the truth. Those who have joined him in the pursuit of truth would improve and become better, and for them Socrates is indeed of benefit, but this is only a consequence of his search for the truth and not in the least his purpose. His dialogue with Critias and Charicles, therefore, is elliptical, it implies that they only harm themselves when trying to ban the search for the truth. If Socrates has never been a political man in the traditional sense of the word and remains inactive as far as the political affairs of the city are concerned, this is so because he is concerned with other things (and that is why it is wrong to call a man a failure in the occupation he has never practised); *indirectly*, however, he is indeed engaged in politics all the time through his workings on others⁵⁰. Pangle is right in another of his assertions, that Xenophon's Socrates “lived a life that, however lawful, was highly unorthodox”⁵¹. Thus, to run a few steps forward, we can say that in the most important respect Xenophon's Socrates is the same as Plato's Socrates: it is his intellectualism that determines all his words and deeds, and not an open heart bleeding for the destiny of his nation.

The political views of Xenophon's Socrates can be recapitulated as follows. The art of ruling, in his opinion, heads the list in the hierarchy of all τέχναι. The leader must exceed in virtue and possess specific knowledge; so the βασιλική τέχνη turns out to be opposed to handicraft, because occupation with the latter excludes any knowledge of the former. The purpose of any ruler or citizen is to benefit the city and to make other citizens happy by means of knowledge. The question of what is happiness

⁴⁸ Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* 62. 115. 160.

⁴⁹ Pangle, *Socrates* 147.

⁵⁰ This contradiction is no less evident in Plato's dialogues (*Ap.* 31c4–32a3 and *Gorg.* 521d6–8); Vlastos gives it the name of ‘complex irony’ (Vlastos, *Socrates* 237–242). There is an echo of this irony in *Mem.* 3,11,16: καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης ἐπισκόπων τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπραγμοσύνην, Ἄλλ', ὁ Θεοδότη, ἔφη, οὐ πάνυ μοι βράδιόν ἐστι σχολάσαι· καὶ γὰρ ἴδια πράγματα πολλὰ καὶ δημόσια παρέχει μοι ἀσχολίαν.

⁵¹ Pangle, *Socrates* 135.

for the citizens is not a simple one, and Xenophon's Socrates expounds two different views regarding it. On the one hand, it is the prosperous and peaceful life in the city. To accomplish this, the ruler, as well as every citizen, must have the knowledge of financial and military affairs and to be capable of efficient action in diplomatic and rhetorical arts. On the other hand, εὐδαιμονία consists in self-perfection and striving for virtue, so in this case the good ruler and the good citizen is he who takes care of himself and helps others in search for the truth, making them thereby better⁵². It seems that in fact only Xenophon's Socrates himself is such a citizen.

I consider the most important result of the above analysis to be the conclusion that all the actions of Xenophon's Socrates and all his advice given to others are a direct consequence of certain intellectual and logical procedures dominated by the fundamental ethical premises which, in their traditional formulation and as derived from other sources, are known as the so-called 'Socratic paradoxes'. (It must be stressed here yet again that in fact the political views of Xenophon's Socrates are inseparable from his ethical judgments, and it is only a matter of convenience that I treat them in a sequence). The key to understanding Socrates as a character in Xenophon, therefore, is the analysis of the mode of his thought alone. In a slightly simplified form, this means that a certain trait in Socrates' conduct as portrayed by Xenophon (and, in fact, by any other contemporary of Socrates) can be accepted as genuinely 'Socratic' only in case it is derived by a given author directly from the rational ethical premises which he ascribes to the philosopher (and which are, of course, mostly the same as are known to us from independent sources). At the core of Xenophon's 'Socrates' there lies, all the differences of purpose, outlook and ideology between the two authors notwithstanding, an ethical intellectualism of the kind unexpectedly similar to the one we find in the Socrates of Plato.

But Xenophon's case presents us with an additional complication: when reading Xenophon's non-Socratic writings, one cannot help having the impression that somehow Socrates is present there, too. Some characters of Xenophon's works where Socrates' name is never mentioned share certain substantial features with him⁵³. Before

⁵² Contra Vlastos, in whose opinion the royal art, for Xenophon's Socrates, is only "mastery of the great instrumentalities of civic happiness: wealth, military supremacy, good external relations, harmonious internal relations" (Socratic Studies 102).

⁵³ This has been observed, if not systematically treated, many times. See, e.g., Due's remark that "throughout the *Memorabilia* we meet the same virtues as in the *Cyropaedia*, partly as virtues pertaining to Socrates, partly as topics discussed and explained by Socrates to various Athenians" (*Cyropaedia* 199); also, cf. Tatum: Xenophon "turns the problems that his Socratic and historical writings had disclosed into the theme of his new work [i.e. *Cyropaedia*]" (J. Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction. On the Education of Cyrus*, Princeton 1989, 57; subsequently referred to as Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction*); Gera: "Socrates, Xenophon's Socrates, is a real presence in the *Cyropaedia*. ... For a start, Cyrus the Great has several character traits in common with Socrates..." (D.L. Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia: Style, Genre,*

making any definitive statement about Xenophon's Socrates, therefore, it is necessary to examine the entire corpus of Xenophon's writings for this peculiar trait. For the time being, however, it will suffice to illustrate the suggestion made above with a few examples drawn from the *Cyropaedia* so as to show that this hypothesis is neither arbitrary nor fantastical but, on the contrary, is based on the things that can hardly be accounted for otherwise⁵⁴.

In the first lines of the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon indicates the three facts which compelled him to meditate on the nature of power. First, that all known political regimes (he mentions democracy, monarchy, oligarchy and tyranny) are in the highest degree unstable, second, that only in rare cases is one successful in keeping one's household slaves in obedience, and, finally, that cattle, on the contrary, are fully submissive towards their herdsman. These observations led Xenophon to concluding that the art of ruling the people is superior to the art of controlling cattle. Judging from experience, the former is hardly attainable at all⁵⁵. As he got familiar with the story of Cy-

and Literary Technique, Oxford 1993, 26; subsequently referred to as Gera, *Cyropaedia*); Mueller-Goldingen: „Die Kyrupädie führt dem Leser mittels einer Projektion sokratischer Tugendvorstellungen auf eine historische Person vor Augen, wie der ideale Herrscher beschaffen sein muß...“ (Ch. Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen zu Xenophons Kyrupädie*, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1995, 273; subsequently referred to as Mueller-Goldingen, *Kyrupädie*).

⁵⁴ For the moment, I set aside the dialogue *Hiero*. The many parallels it has with Xenophon's Socratic works are obvious, moreover, a typically Socratic question constitutes its subject. It is tempting, of course, to treat this dialogue as precisely Socratic, with Simonides seen as a substitute figure for Socrates. There is, however, an intrinsic difficulty underlying such a straightforward interpretation: in the *Hiero*, the ideas of Socrates seem to be presented from the opposite side. Whereas in all other political works the Socratic traits in various characters are the ultimate source of their potential happiness, in this dialogue a system (though not a flawless one) of Socratic ideas is offered to the unhappy tyrant as a remedy against his misfortunes: only in case he accepts it, may Hiero hope to attain happiness as promised to him, the happiness typical of all Xenophon's 'Socratic' characters.

⁵⁵ So in the first two paragraphs we find the two analogies: a ruler is compared to a manager of household and to a herdsman. The opposition between Cyrus' capacity to exercise power over a great number of peoples, some of which dwell at great distances from each other, and the inability of the majority to control just a few slaves in one house implies the idea that ruling the city differs from keeping one's household only in the number of subordinates. The same simile occurring in the *Oeconomicus* and the *Memorabilia* (Τὸ πάσαις κοινὸν ταῖς πράξεις, καὶ γεωργικῇ καὶ πολιτικῇ καὶ οἰκονομικῇ καὶ πολεμικῇ, τὸ ἀρχικὸν εἶναι – *Oec.* 21,2. Cf. 1,23; 5,15; 13,5; 20,5–6. Ἄγαθὸς ἂν εἴη προστάτης, εἴτε χοροῦ εἴτε οἴκου εἴτε πόλεως εἴτε στρατεύματος προστατεύει – *Mem.* 3,4,6. Cf. 2,8,3–4; 3,6,14; 4,2,11) has been mentioned above. The analogy between a house and a city, drawn in the beginning of the *Cyropaedia*, gives Xenophon ground for yet another simile in the end of the text: a good ruler is likened to a good father (*Cyr.* 8,1,1; cf. *Ages.* 1,38; 7,3). Both endeavour to bring someone happiness: the latter to his children, the former to his subjects. This is the familiar *tertium comparationis* from the comparison of a ruler or a general to a herdsman (*Cyr.* 1,1,1–2; 8,2,14; cf. *Mem.* 1,2,32; 3,2,1; *Oec.* 3,11 and n. 37). Brock calls

rus, however, he changed his mind and now, with this work, he intends to find an answer to the question what is the way to attain to mastery in the affairs that concern the administration of a city, and thus how one can possibly acquire the art of ruling, the τέχνη τοῦ ἄρχειν.

In the *Memorabilia*, Socrates calls the art of ruling βασιλική τέχνη, the noblest and the greatest excellence⁵⁶. There is no doubt that it is exactly the βασιλική τέχνη that Xenophon speaks about in the introductory paragraphs of the *Cyropaedia*, too. His purpose is to write about Cyrus' perfection in this art. It is remarkable that in this context the word βασιλική does not occur at all, although it would only be reasonable to expect it in a story about the Persian king. In the *Memorabilia*, on the contrary, it appears twice (the second time in 2,1,17), in a manner that confuses not only the reader, but also Socrates' interlocutors as well: Aristippus and Euthydemus desire to become πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες, but not at all βασιλεῖς, hence the words of Socrates seem to them quite absurd. It can be explained by the fact that Socrates' identification of πολιτική and βασιλική τέχνη is not to be understood in a literal sense, that is why its meaning is not obvious for others. In the introduction to the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon avoids using the word βασιλική, and announces the subject of his work indirectly lest the reader, misguided by the traditional lexicon and phrasing, be put on the wrong track. It is not the grandeur of a Persian king that Xenophon admires above all in Cyrus, but the 'kingly art' of his Socrates. What kind of art this is becomes clear as one proceeds with reading the *Cyropaedia*⁵⁷.

these similes "images of monarchy" (Xenophon's Political Imagery 249 f.). For the origins of these and other similes in the *Cyropaedia*, see, e.g., Mueller-Goldingen, Kyrupädie, and Gera, *Cyropaedia*.

⁵⁶ Mem. 4,2,11: τῆς καλλίστης ἀρετῆς καὶ μεγίστης ἐφίεσαι τέχνης [δι' ἣν ἄνθρωποι πολιτικοὶ γίνονται καὶ οἰκονομικοὶ καὶ ἄρχειν ἱκανοὶ καὶ ὠφέλιμοι τοῖς τε ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἑαυτοῖς]: ἔστι γὰρ τῶν βασιλέων αὕτη καὶ καλεῖται βασιλική.

⁵⁷ Nadon notices parenthetically that Cyrus "perhaps possesses the art or science of rule spoken of by Socrates" (Xenophon's Prince 26), but he never develops his observation. I cannot, however, share this scholar's view that "the *Cyropaedia* resembles nothing so much as a biography, from which one would as little expect to learn a science as to master modern physics from an account of the life and times of Albert Einstein" (*ibidem* 27). It is not my aim here to discuss the problem of genre in the *Cyropaedia*, but I believe that it is exactly the τέχνη τοῦ ἄρχειν that Xenophon bears in mind when describing his ideal ruler, in such a way that the reader of the *Cyropaedia* can make it out what kind of art this is. Cf. H. Wilms: „Xenophon stellt in der *Kyrupädie* die τέχνη τοῦ ἀνθρώπων ἄρχειν dar“ (Techne und Paideia bei Xenophon und Isokrates, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1995, 103; subsequently referred to as Wilms, Techne und Paideia).

The purpose of the βασιλικὴ τέχνη is to bring happiness and welfare; hence ἄρχων ἀγαθός is an εὐεργέτης⁵⁸. The idea, once expressed in the proem, that the art of ruling is a great and a difficult one is later repeated by Cyrus himself: ὑπερμέγεθς εἶναι ἔργον τὸ καλῶς ἄρχειν⁵⁹. The story of Cyrus explains why this art is so difficult, and why it was Cyrus and not anyone else who managed to succeed in ruling. The leader must surpass all others in any situation: he ought to bear heat and cold with ease and to toil with ardent zeal⁶⁰; it is not, therefore, an idle life in luxury (ῥαδιουργεῖν) that distinguishes him from his subjects but, quite the contrary, his excellence in bearing hardship which he voluntarily undertakes (φιλοπονεῖν). One main thing, however, that makes one a good leader is knowledge. Thanks to possessing the necessary knowledge, Cyrus managed to set up a great empire and to keep it⁶¹. People obey willingly the man whom they think to be the most able to lead them to welfare. When instructing his son in the affairs of administration and demonstrating him the necessity of learning, Cambyses backs his thought up with the same arguments which Xenophon's Socrates used; he draws the same analogy with a doctor, a helmsman and a flute-player, for whom knowledge is equally important⁶². In the *Cyropaedia*, just as in the *Memorabilia*,

⁵⁸ Cyr. 1,1,1–2; 8,2,14. Cf. Wilms: „So zeichnet sich der τεχνίτης in jeder beliebigen τέχνη dadurch aus, daß er die im Bereich seiner τέχνη anfallenden Aufgaben meisterhaft, d.h. besser als andere Menschen, die nicht Fachleute sind, bewältigt, auf diese Weise mit seinem Handeln Erfolg hat und durch das erfolgreiche, richtige Verhalten und Handeln anderen Menschen, die nicht Fachleute sind, nützt und Vorteile verschafft“ (Techne und Paideia 107).

⁵⁹ Cyr. 1,6,8.

⁶⁰ Cyr. 1,6,25.

⁶¹ Cyr. 1,1,3 (ἐπισταμένως). In general, scholars write about just the same virtues necessary for a good ruler (cf., e.g., Zimmermann, Macht und Charakter; Due, *Cyropaedia*; B. Schiffmann, *Untersuchungen zu Xenophon: Tugend, Eigenschaft, Verhalten, Folgen*. Dissertation, Göttingen 1991; subsequently referred to as Schiffmann, *Untersuchungen zu Xenophon*), the difference usually lies in which of them tops the list. All these belong to the realm of moral values, so I leave their systematic analysis for the future. I would like to remark, however, that I find it quite astonishing that the only one who mentions the governing role of ἐπιστήμη is Mueller-Goldingen (*Kyropädie* 276). The latter is certainly right in placing the emphasis on the fact that the voluntary obedience of the subjects depends on the ruler's knowledge which thus is an essential condition for the stability of the regime (*ibidem* 57). But the task of a good ruler is to bring happiness, and it is the successful fulfilment of this task that leads to stability, because when everybody is satisfied and happy, the regime is in no danger. It is necessary, therefore, to understand what is happiness and what knowledge the good ruler ought to have in order to be able to bring happiness to his subordinates.

⁶² Cyr. 1,6,21–22: people obey voluntarily whom they believe to be capable of leading them to a good end. In sickness all people willingly obey doctors, on board the ship everybody obeys the helmsman, in a journey nobody wants to fall behind those who know the way. That is why someone who has earned the reputation of a good general will succeed in his deeds. But he must also possess the true knowledge attained by learning. He cannot only look like a good general. A phony general, just like a phony farmer, horseman, doctor or flute-player, will

one is struck by the same radical way of reasoning: nobody voluntary causes himself harm, so everyone willingly obeys the man whom he believes able to lead him to a good end. On the other hand, in the *Cyropaedia* the voluntary obedience that was mentioned by Xenophon already in the preamble⁶³ becomes one of the dominating motifs of the whole work as one of the crucial characteristics of a good ruler: his knowledge and his ability to benefit his subjects make violence and constraint unnecessary⁶⁴; people follow the good leader as willingly as bees invariably follow the queen-bee⁶⁵.

In addition to winning unanimous and voluntary obedience from his subjects (which is the μέγιστον ἀγαθόν for success in anything, be it a victory over an enemy, a happy end of a sea journey or exercising control over the city)⁶⁶, the ruler's duty is to provide his subordinates with all the necessities of life, just as a good general's duty is first of all to supply his army with victuals. A good ruler takes care of all who are under his command like as a good οἰκονόμος looks after his οἰκέται. The task of a good ruler, however, is not only to supply all his subjects with everything they need, but also to govern them in such a way that they might become what they should be⁶⁷. In the first place, what is meant here is that a commander has the task of bringing up brave warriors. In order to accomplish this, the commander's duty is not only to train his soldiers and to stage contests, but also to reward those who excel and to punish those who are

eventually be unmasked as a vain boaster. Mueller-Goldingen explains this and other textual similarities between the *Memorabilia* and the *Cyropaedia* by „Xenophons Vorliebe für die Übertragung von Gedankenblöcken in einen neuen Zusammenhang“ (Kyropädie 123). But when Xenophon implants in a new context not only a certain idea, but also the very way of thinking and intellectual procedures which lead to this idea, it would be wrong to regard it as a merely mechanical borrowing of a certain *topos* from one work to another. It has been shown above that the key to understanding Socrates as a character in Xenophon is the analysis of the mode of his thought, and it seems safe to assume that in this and similar cases Xenophon purposefully moves the very Socratic features into a non-Socratic work.

⁶³ Cyr. 1,1,3.

⁶⁴ Voluntary obedience, in Ischomachus' opinion, is a gift of the gods: οὐ γὰρ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ ὅλον τουτί τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀνθρώπινον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ θεῖον, τὸ ἐθελόντων ἄρχειν. Σαφῶς δὲ δίδονται τοῖς ἀληθινῶς σωφροσύνῃ τετελεσμένοις (Oec. 21,12). I do not agree with Due that what matters most in achieving the voluntary obedience is the ruler's generosity. It does indeed “win for him the affection and gratitude of people” (Cyropaedia 217), but they obey willingly first and foremost whom they believe to have the knowledge and the ability to lead them to a good end. In the *Anabasis*, everyone obeyed Clearchos because they saw that he alone knew the cause (An. 2,2,5). And Agesilaus became the king thanks to his ἀρετή (Ages. 1,5).

⁶⁵ Cyr. 5,1,24. Cf. Oec. 7,17; Ages. 1,38; An. 1,9,9.

⁶⁶ Cyr. 8,1,2.

⁶⁷ Cyr. 1,6,7: ὅπως ἔσονται ἅπαντες οἴους δεῖ. Contra Nadon, who thus understands this passage: “among the things he [the good ruler] toils for is to provide those under him with the necessities of life in abundance so that they will all be as they should” (Xenophon's Prince 165).

left behind. When only the valiant are awarded, an emulative spirit reigns in the army⁶⁸: everybody strives to excel in their commander's opinion in order to receive the reward and to win his praise. There is no place for inglorious deeds in Cyrus' army⁶⁹. And as the commander surpasses all others in everything, so more precious is his praise and so greater is the desire to get it. That is why the ruler must become a model of conduct for his subjects⁷⁰. Already in the beginning of his work, Xenophon speaks about the importance of personal example in upbringing of the young, when he describes the Persian school where the boys learn σωφροσύνη by looking at the conduct of their masters⁷¹. The ruler's task, therefore, is to make others better, because he who considers himself good is but half good⁷².

The entire text of the *Cyropaedia* reveals that what is in question here is not just military valour but virtue in general, because a true warrior is not only brave but also virtuous. Thus Socrates' thought about the unity of virtues is embodied in the picture of an ideal military education. Another manifestation of the same idea one finds elsewhere in the works of Xenophon. Xenophon's Agesilaus managed to accomplish all his feats thanks to possessing the necessary virtues: Agesilaus was not only courageous but also pious, self-controlled, just, generous, grateful, and sound of mind⁷³. Xenophon's first aim in the *Cyropaedia* was to portray an ideal ruler, an educator of his subjects in moral perfection, the one who leads them towards virtue. That is why Xenophon puts in Cyrus' mouth the same tale of the alternative paths of Virtue and Vice as we hear from Socrates in the *Memorabilia* when he relates Prodicus' essay on Heracles⁷⁴. Cyrus says that vice has much the larger following because it promises immediate pleasure (αἰ παραωτίκα ἡδοναί) and leads along the sloping path, whereas virtue leads along the steep road and does not promise any momentary pleasure. But it is impossible for someone who follows the example of a pious man to become impious, and for someone

⁶⁸ Ischomachus says that the leader who is capable of arousing in his subordinates of the desire to excel and to win the reward, has τὴν ἡθους βασιλικοῦ about him (Oec. 21,10).

⁶⁹ Cyr. 5,3,48; 7,2,7; 8,4,4. Cf. An. 1,9,18.

⁷⁰ Cyr. 8,1,12; 8,1,38. Cf. Mueller-Goldingen, *Kyrupädie* xiii f.

⁷¹ Cyr. 1,2,8.

⁷² Cyr. 3,3,38.

⁷³ Cf. Schiffmann's remark, though she makes no mention of Socrates: „Aufgabe der Reihen von Tugenden ist, die Persönlichkeit, der diese Tugenden beigelegt sind, als ideale Verkörperung von Tugendhaftigkeit vorzustellen, wobei gleichzeitig die Interdependenz der Tugenden insgesamt deutlich wird“ (Untersuchungen zu Xenophon 144).

⁷⁴ Cyr. 2,2,23; Mem. 2,1,21. For a more detailed account of the notion that πόνοι are a necessary condition of happy life, see Mueller-Goldingen, *Kyrupädie* 106 f. 221. But I cannot quite agree with him that the question of what happy life is remains open. From Socrates' retelling of Prodicus' tale one can understand that only the virtuous are happy. The story told by Cyrus seems to share that same idea.

who takes as his model a just man to become unjust. The ruler, therefore, must serve an example to his subordinates and lead them along the path of Virtue⁷⁵.

In the *Cyropaedia*, the *Agesilaus* and some chapters of the *Anabasis* (the encomium of Cyrus the Younger in An. 1,9, where the characteristics of Cyrus the Great and Agesilaus are taken over almost *verbatim*), Xenophon draws the portrait of an ideal ruler, the one whose presence at the head of the state determines its well-being. Some of the qualities required from such a figure can be summarized as follows. The ruler excels all others in ἀρετή. In the list of his virtues the first place is taken by ἐπιστήμη, and this is in conformity with the Socratic principle identity of virtue with knowledge. Next comes his φιλανθρωπία which, owing to a superior knowledge, makes it possible for the ruler to benefit all his subjects and to receive in return the favour of his people who obey him voluntarily and willingly. Of no lesser importance for the good ruler is to possess δικαιοσύνη, εὐσέβεια, and ἐγκράτεια, and Xenophon never tires of stressing the importance of these and other ἀρεταί for him, because the conduct of the people is that of the one who governs them⁷⁶, and a good ruler is a moral teacher of his subjects; moreover, he is a νόμος βλέπων⁷⁷ whose task is to direct his people towards perfection.

In the character of Cyrus the Great Xenophon brings into a harmonious unity the two concepts of the duties of a ruler and a citizen which have been shown to be prevalent in Xenophon's Socratic writings. Cyrus cares not only for the material well-being of his subjects and for their superiority over the enemy, but also for their individual perfection: just like Socrates, he exhorts them to virtue with homilies and with his own example. The words of Gobryas, who says that Persians do not long for wealth but take care to become as good as possible⁷⁸, show the extent to which Cyrus proved to be successful. His unique accomplishment as a ruler was grounded in a particular kind of σοφία that he possessed. This implies, in the first place, a supreme knowledge of all practical affairs, necessary for controlling both an army and a city. That knowledge furnishes the ruler with one of his virtues, πρόνοια. Another part of Cyrus' σοφία is the philosophic wisdom which is evident in his reflections on the nature of virtue and vice, the necessity of knowledge and exercise, on happiness and immortality of the soul, as developed in the speech he gave on his last day⁷⁹. Thus Xenophon's ideal ruler has philosophic traits. It is not by chance that Xenophon from the very start indicates the pres-

⁷⁵ Ages. 10,2.

⁷⁶ Cyr. 8,8,5.

⁷⁷ Cyr. 8,1,22.

⁷⁸ Cyr. 5,2,20: ὁμῆϊς δέ μοι δοκεῖτε ἐπιμέλεσθαι ὅπως αὐτοὶ ὡς βέλτιστοι ἔσεσθε.

⁷⁹ Cyr. 8,7. Pace Mueller-Goldingen (*Kyropädie* xiii) and contra Due in whose opinion "the most conspicuous of Cyrus' qualities and those most emphasized by Xenophon do not include ... wisdom" (*Cyropaedia* 183 f.; cf. 223).

ence of this quality of mind in Cyrus even in childhood, as implied by his other merits, and the one which he names φιλομάθεια.

It would be fair, therefore, to speak of a remarkable similarity between the political views expounded by the characters of Xenophon's Socratic and non-Socratic writings. Βασιλικὴ τέχνη is the greatest of all arts because the task of any leader is to make the people he governs happy⁸⁰. First, a good ruler ought to promote the material well-being of all the citizens, their peaceful life in the city and their superiority over the enemy. In order to accomplish this, the ruler must possess the necessary knowledge that is only acquired through learning the art of ruling, as is also the case with all other arts. This knowledge grants him success in everything he undertakes; in particular, it ensures that he has voluntary and obedient subjects.

The other part of the ruler's task in Xenophon's Socratic works concerns only Socrates: since happiness lies in moral perfection, a good ruler (or a good citizen) can only be the one who is able to lead his subjects (or, respectively, friends) to virtue. In Xenophon's non-Socratic writings, however, qualities of both kinds concur in the figure of the ideal ruler. Beside knowledge of practical affairs, a good ruler possesses virtue, which allows him to bring others to moral perfection by means of moralizing conversations and his own example. He is the educator of his subjects. Hence the βασιλικὴ τέχνη is, on the one hand, a practical art of administration which presupposes as its *conditio sine qua non* a certain kind of ἐπιστήμη, whereas, on the other hand, it is an ability to make one's associates as good as possible; so its second indispensable condition is the ἀρετή of the ruler. The ideas of Xenophon's Socrates are embodied in the character of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, as it is presented by Xenophon. Even if the real Socrates had no political programme, Xenophon conducts an experiment on his behalf: in the figure of Cyrus, he attempts to combine Socrates' purely speculative thought with practical theory⁸¹.

⁸⁰ The task of every τεχνίτης is to benefit all others by means of his specific knowledge. The task of the one who practises τέχνη τοῦ ἄρχεῖν is the most difficult one because he is to make all the others happy, and the source of the true happiness are not the shoes made by a cobbler but the moral perfection (cf. Cyr. 3,3,53).

⁸¹ Zimmermann is not, however, quite right in saying that „das Ideal des Herrschers, das Xenophon in der *Kyrupädie* am ausführlichsten entwirft ..., ist nach dem Vorbild des Sokrates gestaltet, wie Xenophon ihn sieht“ (Macht und Charakter 235). Xenophon would not wish his Socrates to be a ruler, he understood very well that Socrates would be unable to cope with the task, since he did not possess the necessary knowledge of the τέχνη. I strongly disagree, therefore, with Tatum who comes to believe that “if Socrates were given the role of Cyrus the Younger, or Agesilaus, or Teleutias to play, but in disguise ..., he would succeed where Cyrus the Younger and the Spartans had failed” (Xenophon's Imperial Fiction 58). Mueller-Goldingen has found a more exact, if still somewhat one-sided, expression: „Xenophon entwickelt in der *Kyrupädie* das Bild eines sokratischen Herrschers“ (Kyrupädie 275). Xenophon's ideal ruler is indeed a personification of Socrates' ideas about the good ruler (as they

It has not been my aim to show every relevant parallel between the 'Socratic' and 'non-Socratic' writings of Xenophon. Such coincidences can be pointed out exhaustively only in a commentary on this or that work. But even the few examples I have discussed demonstrate clearly enough that Socratic patterns of thought are present in some of Xenophon's 'non-Socratic' writings. Xenophon deliberately adds a Socratic nuance to his picture of the ideal ruler. Since the motives that govern the guiding lines of the ruler's conduct are not explicitly stated by Xenophon in any of his political writings, not even in the most systematic and detailed of them, the *Cyropaedia*, there is no way out but to look for the explanations scattered through his Socratic works⁸². After one has reconstructed Xenophon's Socrates as a literary character and thoroughly analyzed the Socratic traits that can be found in Xenophon's non-Socratic writings, it will become possible to make reasonable assumptions about the genesis of these features⁸³.

Bamberg

Olga Chernyakhovskaya

were understood by Xenophon himself), but beside that he has other qualities, of which Xenophon's Socrates has none.

⁸² Cf. Mueller-Goldingen's conclusion in his *Kyrupädie* 279, though the author puts here a different emphasis in accordance with his particular aim.

⁸³ On the other hand, the *Cyropaedia* gives as many examples of the features that are obviously incompatible with Socratic morality, let alone its rather paradoxical ending. It has not been my task here to undertake a detailed analysis of this work as a whole.