

## REVIEW-DISCUSSION

J. Dillery: *Xenophon and the History of his Times*. Pp. xii + 337. Routledge, 1995. £40.

Professor Dillery aims to investigate Xenophon's understanding of the history of his times as displayed in *Hellenica* and *Anabasis* and to compare it with the historical outlook of his contemporaries (especially other historians). The two agendas do not, however, command equal space—not unreasonably. An author like Ephorus—despite numerous fragments and the (admittedly booby-trapped) guidance provided by Diodorus—is elusive enough in all conscience, but experience suggests that Xenophon, whose oeuvre (historical and non-historical) is by contrast intact, is, for many people, still more so. The latter problem must be thoroughly addressed before substantial time is spent on comparisons. (When it is, incidentally, it would appear that Herodotus might deserve as much thought as Ephorus or Theopompus.) A fundamental impediment for many is, of course, the conviction that X. is a bad historian. But (cf. 196) such a judgment does not relieve us of the duty of trying to figure out what he said and why he said it. This is the duty Dillery seeks to discharge.

Xenophon's principal historical work (*Hellenica*) consists, Dillery argues, of two parts—2.3.10-7.5.27 composed in the 350s and 1.1.1-2.3.10 composed 'I do not know exactly when' (14) but as a completion of Thucydides' truncated *History*. The bulk of it thus belongs late in his life and reflects the final judgment of a man whose view of the world was particularly influenced by notable individuals (Socrates, Cyrus, Agesilaus) and benchmark events: Athens' defeat, the Thirty, the death of Socrates, the Asian expedition, the seizure of the Cadmeia—'arguably the most important event for X. that happened in his lifetime'—and Mantinea. D.'s analysis begins at the end.

*Hellenica* finishes on a dejected note: general expectations aroused by the Mantinea campaign were unfulfilled (and X. had lost his son into the bargain: not that *Hellenica* reports that) and what remained was aggravated ἀκρισία and παραχή. X. realized now that no *hegemon* had emerged or would emerge. D. argues that παραχή is, for X. (a man who yearned for 'order') a disorderly state inimical to the achievement of good things. In this case the good things are presumably lack of *stasis* and creation of *homonoia* in pursuit of some desirable end, though D. oddly does not spell this out, merely saying that X. deduced from the increased disorder that interstate-strife was incurable. He is similarly opaque about ἀκρισία, but I take it he sees this as referring to the non-appearance of a decisively hegemonic power.

The desiderated agenda emerges in the next three chapters which argue that the Peloponnesian War and its outcome fostered utopianism, especially fantasies privileging ‘unity’, that Panhellenism (of which Isocrates presents an Atheno-centric version) is an example of this, and that X.’s *Anabasis* is both a panhellenic text (since it hints at the thesis of Greek military superiority to Persia) and a utopian one (engaged in critical reflection about the *polis* and about conventional panhellenism). This conclusion is to be kept in mind by the reader of *Hellenica* 3-4, where occasional references to the Cyreians reinforce the presentation of Sparta’s Panhellenist war as a bit of a disappointment. (The contrast between *Hellenica* and some portions of *Agesilaus* is rightly stressed.)

Sparta’s failings are, however, of wider scope, and the remainder of D.’s book is largely devoted to displaying this.

First he focuses on four episodes to which X. devotes apparently disproportionate space and suggests that each is, at least *inter alia*, intended to pass implicit comment on Spartan shortcomings by providing variously positive or negative paradigms of *ἐγκράτεια* and *καρτερία* (Phlius: 7.2), *πλεονεξία* (the Thirty: 2.3-4), disorderly leadership (Mnasippus: 6.2) and tyranny (Jason: 6.1.4). Next he argues that X.’s references to divine causation have to be taken seriously by anyone who actually wants to understand *Hellenica* (self-evidently true, but continually in need of reiteration in face of the intellectually snobbish lack of imagination so often displayed by modern readers). And finally he takes us through the crucial part of *Hellenica* from the King’s Peace to the Liberation of Thebes, a stretch replete with dubious Spartan behaviour and culminating in the work’s most prominent statement of divine intervention impact upon human affairs (5.4.1). Here, if anywhere, the unacceptability of Sparta’s treatment of the outside world is blatant.

Spartan imperialism—indeed imperialism of any sort—was folly, such was X.’s conclusion. But in D.’s view he did retain a degree of optimism, and the proof is another piece of Xenophontic disproportion. For the lengthy treatment of diplomatic events before and after Leuctra (6.3, 6.5: D. appears to neglect 7.1 in this context) was intended to insinuate the idea of Atheno-Spartan co-operation into the minds of post-Mantineia readers.

All journal editors want arrestingly memorable copy, and editors of new journals must want it more than most—articles which triumphantly solve long-standing problems or inaugurate whole new areas of research, reviews which either use gallant rhetorical panache to defend their readers from the false blandishments of some new and pretentiously authoritative publication or set out to demonstrate that the author under review has had *quite* a good idea but could have made it so much better if only he had possessed the scholarly resources of the reviewer. In the present case, I fear that I must disappoint any expectations of this sort. As readers of my *Failings of Empire: A*

*Reading of Xenophon Hellenica 2.3.10–7.5.27* (Wiesbaden 1993) will recognize, there is nothing in D.'s argument as just outlined with which I would wish to disagree. I would modify it by stressing that X. uses the tricks of presentation to which D. draws attention against many targets, not just the Spartans; and I would suggest that, if analysis of *Hellenica* is to take in as much detailed comment on *Anabasis* as D. (quite justifiably) provides, it should also pay much more attention to *Cyropaedia* (cf. my 'Xenophon, Sparta and the *Cyropaedia*' in A. Powell & S. Hodkinson (edd.), *The Shadow of Sparta* (1993), 127–181 and 'Education and Fiction in the *Cyropaedia*' in A. H. Sommerstein (ed.), *Education in Fiction* (forthcoming)). But the essential thing is that D. reads his Xenophon the way I do and I can only welcome a kindred spirit.

I shall therefore content myself with comments on a few matters of detail.

(1) At one stage D. borrows Dover's phrase 'considered design' (*HCT* 5.384) to describe the target of his investigation. In Dover—who is writing about Thucydides—this phrase goes with the idea of the historian of contemporary events who keeps a running record and then imposes a considered design upon it, and Dillery duly writes (15) 'for much of 390s and the early 380s Xenophon looked at his age very much from [a] Spartan perspective and *kept his record* [my italics] accordingly'. Now it is one thing to believe that the *Anabasis* narrative presupposes some sort of diary or set of notes (though maybe only very rudimentary ones). It is quite another to carry the substance of ἀρξάμενος εὐθὺς καθισταμένου (Thuc. 1.1) over into one's image of X.'s historiographical *modus operandi*. It certainly requires specific discussion and justification, which are absent in D.

(2) D. suggests that X. found a justification for the blunt opening of *Hellenica* (seen as a completion of Thucydides) in a parallel with the relationship between *Aethiopsis* (which lacked an introduction) and *Iliad*. This is quite a helpful analogy from which D., if anything, takes too much away by acknowledging that the *Iliad* is not incomplete whereas Thucydides is—for the truth is that the *Iliad* does actually stop quite abruptly and, *as a history of the Trojan War*, is extremely incomplete. If the analogy is valid (and there were after all not too many other literary precedents for continuation/completion available to X.), one should note explicitly the implicit assimilation not only of Thucydides and Homer (which becomes a very early statement of the exceptional status of Thucydides) but also of Xenophon and the author of *Aethiopsis*—which makes quite clear the limitations of X.'s pretensions, for no one surely thought the author of *Aethiopsis* any great genius or remotely a match for the text he was continuing. The comparison may also help a little to dissipate the unease caused by the notorious gap between Thucydides 8.109.2 and *Hell.* 1.1.1. Continuation need not connote seamlessness.

Having back-pedalled on *Aethiopsis* D. makes a different suggestion, that *Hellenica* was not provided with an introduction because X. did not feel it had one over-arching topic and that the same reason precluded its having a conclusion either. We now appear to be contemplating the eventual, composite *Hellenica* text (the situation is rather unclear because D is conducting this discussion before he has got round to mentioning the *Kompositionsfrage*)—and the question of why the composite text continued to present itself naked and unadorned as a Thucydides-continuation is a legitimate one. Indeed for those who do not (as I did in 1993) explicitly limit themselves to consideration of *Hellenica* 2.3.10-7.5.27 it is a mandatory question. But D.'s answer is odd, (a) because he himself spends over 300 pages demonstrating that the bulk of *Hellenica* does have a theme definite enough to admit of introductory comment if X. had wished to provide one (and, one may add, a theme with which the contents of *Hellenica* 1.1.1-2.3.10 are not at any rate in conflict—which is why the two separate compositional units could be conjoined in the first place); and (b) because *Hellenica* 7.5.26-27 surely does provide a formal close to the work (in much greater degree, at least *prima facie*, than e.g. *Anabasis* 7.8.24)—and one from which D. succeeds in deriving insight into interpretation of the work.

The truth is that X. had available to him perfectly good ways of prefixing both his original completion of Thucydides and the eventual composite completion/continuation with a few lines explaining what he proposed to do and why. He chose not to use them. Whatever the reason, it is likely to be the same as the one which left *Anabasis* with its abrupt opening ('Darius and Parysatis had two sons') and its 'but that's another story' ending ('In the meantime Thibron came on the scene. He took over the army and, after combining it with the rest of the Greek forces, went on with his war against Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus'). Lucian's view (*de hist. consc.* 23) was that *Anabasis* 1.1.1 was a 'virtual preface' (*δυνάμει προοίμιον*)—a perfectly adequate, indeed effective, lead-in to the story.

The only real alternative to this essentially literary explanation (but it may really be a complement to it) is to revert to something like D.'s line and say that X. felt there were too many different (if overlapping) strands in *Anabasis*—beyond the simple (simple?! ) telling of the story—and too much uncertainty about priorities to wish to say anything at all. One *could* say something similar of *Hellenica*, but only if one is a little less uni-linear about one's reading of it than Dillery's exposition (at least) makes him appear.

Perhaps in the end there's an element of accident about it all. X. embarked on contemporary historical narrative as the completer of Thucydides' narrative. When he came to write the story of 404-362 he *did* actually see this as a continuation of the story of 431-404 (a genuine historical judgment—something which, of course, some people think to be beyond X.'s in-

tellectual capacity—and a consummately reasonable one) and therefore had no reason to do more than attach his new text to his only one. If he had written no contemporary history until the 350s the result might have been different—though *Anabasis* makes one wonder, even so.

(3) D. draws a distinction between the panhellenist trend of *Anabasis* and two other versions of panhellenism—(a) something he calls conventional ‘plunder-and-return’ panhellenism and (b) Isocratean panhellenism, characterised variously by a continuing obsession with the individual *polis* (esp. Athens) and with *polis* hegemony and a wish to solve the ‘societal and political’ difficulties of Greece by settling mercenaries in Asiatic colonies. One problem is that it is not entirely clear if D. means (a) to be the same as, or at least an aspect of, (b)—and, in either case, what the evidence for (a) is. Is it simply a descendant of the ‘hellenism’ of Thuc. 1.96 (πρόσχημα γὰρ ἦν ἀμύνεσθαι ὧν ἔπαθον δῆουντας τὴν βασιλέως χώραν) and/or the imagined real content of *Agesilaus* 1.7-8? Or is the reader entitled to suspect that it is just a *per contrarium* construction out of the (undoubtedly) hostile presentation in *Anabasis* (esp. V-VI) of the consequences of over-concentration on plundering for profit?

Certainly some other things D. says about this whole topic do not seem quite right. For example, he suggests that X.’s colonial vision is essentially military and for that reason apparently distinctive in character. But the comment in 5.6.15 that it would take ‘not a little money’ to raise and deploy in Pontus an army comparable with the one which already found itself there by accident is in itself unremarkable. In any relevant version of panhellenism the acquisition of Asiatic colonial *Lebensraum* was the consequence of substantial military activity.

I cannot see that X.’s pipe-dream here is part of a radically different agenda or that he is primarily fantasising about preserving a potentially ‘ideal’ military community (which is not to say that I doubt that community behaviour is one of the themes of *Anabasis* or that D. is right enough to use this theme to identify the major sections into which the work falls). And as for his wish to ‘acquire additional land and power *for Greece*’ (ibid.), this is surely ordinary panhellenist rhetoric, for all that some users of such rhetoric (Isocrates) had a vision in which some Greeks would be more equal than others (so perhaps did X. by the time he was writing *Hellenica* 6.3.iff and 6.5.33ff: D. certainly thinks so).

I quite agree, of course, that within the context of *Anabasis* the significance of 5.6.15 lies in the way the dream completely fails to be fulfilled—from which the reader would have to conclude that, if colonial panhellenism is to be feasible, it will require a political and military basis precisely *not* like that illustrated by the Cyreans. *Mutatis mutandis* one may compare Isocrates’ (4.146) inference from the history of the 10,000 about what a ‘proper’ army

could accomplish. (The deployment of negative paradigms is a major weapon in *Hellenica* and a significant element in *Cyropaedia*. We must expect it in *Anabasis*—as, of course, D. does.) Again, it does not seem quite fair to take 3.2.24 as a protest against colonial panhellenism: if X. there presents himself as warning his confreres *against* settling in Mesopotamia like a bunch of Lotus-Eaters, this is because the only course he can sensibly recommend at the time *is* to attempt escape. The whole point is that the last thing any of them *wanted* to do—or would admit to wanting to do—was stay where they were. Anyway ‘ordinary’, pre-Alexandrine panhellenism surely did not envisage *Lebensraum* in Mesopotamia.

Finally, some smaller points.

**(a)** It is good to have attention drawn to Silenus’ *μυθολογία* in Theopompus F 75 but does its immediate relevance to X. really justify the space devoted to it? (Midas and Silenus, of course, appear passingly in *Anabasis* 1.2.13, and D. thinks Theopompus’ story may have been inherited from earlier sources; but, devoted as I am to the belief that X. expects his readers to spot sub-texts, I cannot quite convince myself there’s is anything to be divined here.) Space might more appropriately be used to place Pericles’ subordination of individual to community in the Thucydidean funeral speech and what D. regards as his odd notion of ‘falling in love with city’ (Thuc. 2.41) in their context of democratic ideology. The threads of fantasy social design which we see in the hands of ‘conservative’ figures in the fourth century come from various directions originally, and embryonic versions of the practice are already reflected in e.g. Aristophanes *Birds*—not an irrelevant gloss to Xenophon and fourth century colonial panhellenism, since the play also has the colonial element which Thucydides VI-VII suggests was a feature of public discourse during and about the Sicilian Expedition. (It is a funny coincidence—is it a coincidence?—that the other great concentration of Greek mercenaries at the end of the fifth century was precisely in Sicily.)

**(b)** D. argues that X. provides a notably undistorted treatment of the Thirty. Possibly so. But I cannot believe that, in context, the failure of Plato’s *Seventh Letter* (324B f.) to comment in detail on the means by which the Thirty seized power, the resistance they encountered from within and/or the role of Sparta counts as ‘major distortion’.

**(c)** D. compares X.’s discovery of virtue in the small city of Phlius with Thuc. 7.29-30 (the Mycalessian tragedy), Theop. *FGrHist* 115 F 344 (piety found in insignificant cities) and Plat. *Rep.* 423AB (greatness divorced from size). Hdt. 8.124—Themistocles would have earned fame even if he had come from Belbina—suggests that this is not just an aspect of the fourth century *Zeitgeist*.

**(d)** D. thinks X.’s belief in divine omniscience unusual and takes at face value his assertion that most men believe the gods know some things and do

not know other ones. But is this entirely serious? Is it not an ironic way of describing how men appear to behave, though they ought to know better? Incidentally D. appears not to cite *Hipparchicus* 9.8f. (the gods know all things and warn whom they wish in sacrifices, omens, voices, dreams; they will be more ready to counsel those who not only ask what they should do when they need advice but in times of prosperity serve the gods as best they can) or *Hipparchicus* 6.6 (soldiers are readier to obey commander if they know (i) that he knows about tactics etc., and (ii) that he won't go against the will of the gods in defiance of sacrifices) or *Hellenica* 7.1.27 (X.'s explicit comment about the failure of Spartans and others to consult the Delphic Oracle about their diplomatic negotiations, despite the fact they were meeting *in Delphi*). He also makes no reference to the recent trend towards seeing the religious charges against Socrates as something which should be taken seriously (cf. W. R. Connor, in M. Flower and M. Toher (eds.) *Georgica* [London 1991], 49f.; R. Garland, *Introducing New Gods* [London 1992], 136ff).

(e) D. debates whether the seizure of the Cadmeia is the cause of Sparta's fall or an emblem of flawed foreign policy. Perhaps both, he concludes, but 227 and n. 73 definitely privilege the second explanation—Sparta could only have behaved so badly because she had already embarked on sin and was paying no attention to gods. Still X. does very specifically link the episode (and breach of autonomy-undertaking) with Sparta's punishment by 'just those whom they wronged'. He is actually making a great effort to link divine punishment solely to what happened in Thebes—which is of a piece with his avoidance of incriminating other post-386 events with charge of breach of Peace terms. I have no doubt that the narrative is meant to make reader wonder about the consistency of events at Mantinea and Phlius with Sparta's professions in 386 and her apparent support of autonomy against Olynthian aggression in 382-379, but strictly X. limits divine action to the Theban case. Any other thoughts *are* just speculation. (Oddly D. doesn't seem to draw attention to the fact that the Cadmeia was seized during a religious festival.)