I

ATHENIAN LEADERS IN XENOPHON'S *MEMORABILIA**

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Abstract: This paper studies three categories of Athenian leaders in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*: Socrates' notorious pupils, Critias and Alcibiades; Pericles and Themistocles, illustrious democrats; and potential future leaders. Against the common view that Xenophon was hostile towards Critias and Alcibiades, we show how Xenophon's account mitigates their initially negative characterisations. Xenophon's treatment of Pericles and Themistocles reveals subtle criticism of their policies and assimilates their positive qualities to Spartan or Persian models. Finally, prospective leaders seem insufficient compared with their renowned ancestors or Socrates, but possess important dialectical skills that allow them to highlight both the benefits and limitations of Socratic political teaching.

Keywords: Athenian leaders, *Memorabilia*, Critias, Alcibiades, Pericles, Themistocles, Xenophon's political thought.

Xenophon's relationship to Athens is rather a neglected topic. His admiration for Spartan institutions, his friendship with Agesilaus, and his participation in the expedition of Cyrus the Younger have directed scholarly attention to his affinities with Sparta and

Persia; his exile further complicates the task of tracing more precisely his bonds with his native city. In his study about the image of Athens in the *Hellenica*, Ernst Badian observed:

> Xenophon never portrays the Athenians (except for the Thirty) in an unfavourable light. Their commanders, on the whole, are skilful, patriotic and honest, and even demagogues are not charged with accepting bribes.[1]

This investigation deserves to be expanded and qualified. The *Memorabilia* constitutes an apt place for further exploration: it stands out among Xenophon's works not only because it promotes a specific image of Socrates, but also because of its Athenian setting. Other Xenophontic works, such as the *Revenues* and the rest of the Socratic corpus (namely the *Symposium*, the *Apology*, and the *Oeconomicus*) are also associated with Athens, but the *Memorabilia* gives a more eloquent picture of Athenian life and sets forth with great acuity thorny political and social issues of Xenophon's time.[2]

The *Memorabilia* is admittedly a complex work, which, like all of Xenophon's works, has undergone a period of underestimation and rehabilitation.[3] Xenophon's apparent aim in this work is to defend his beloved master, Socrates, against the accusations of impiety and corruption of the youth that led to his trial and condemnation. At the same time, however, the *Memorabilia* is pervaded by themes that

[1] Badian (2004) 51.

[2] The *Memorabilia* has been mostly approached from a philosophical perspective. For recent studies that focus on social and political issues, see Tamiolaki (2013), Bevilacqua (forthcoming).

[3] For a summary of the fate of Xenophon's works, see Flower (2012) 10–12 (with previous bibliography). Concerning the *Memorabilia*, its main critics maintained that it does not meet the (Platonic) standards of philosophical sophistication and therefore presents a predictable and conventional Socrates. On the contrary, the rehabilitation of this work, mainly undertaken by Louis-André Dorion and followed recently by several other scholars, relies on an appreciation of Xenophon's originality both on a philosophical and on a political level. See Dorion (2000) XX–CXVIII; cf. Johnson (2005).

preoccupied Xenophon himself: virtue and knowledge, self-mastery, willing obedience, order, friendship, piety, gratitude, and ambition belong to the agenda of topics that Socrates discussed and are also recurrent in all Xenophontic works. Instead of trying to resolve the insoluble dilemma of 'the first influence' (e.g. is Socrates the main source of inspiration for Xenophon's political thought or does Xenophon project his own political ideas onto Socrates?),[4] it would be more fruitful, in my opinion, to admit that Xenophon pursues two agendas in the *Memorabilia*: an apologetic/defensive one and a political one. He is interested *both* in defending his master *and* in promoting his own political ideas (regardless of whether they are Socratic or not). Sometimes these two agendas seem inseparable and blurred, but in certain instances the political aspect prevails and the reader tends to forget the apologetic purpose of the work.[5]

Leadership occupies a central position in the *Memorabilia*. Not least, Socrates himself is portrayed as a sort of ideal leader: he does not actively engage in politics, but he constantly gives advice to his fellow-citizens, politicians or not, about several political issues.[6] This study will focus on the Athenian leaders (except Socrates) who appear in the *Memorabilia*. It will analyse their role, place and function in this work. It will attempt to answer the following questions: How are Athenian leaders inscribed into Xenophon's double agenda? Is Xenophon consistent in his presentation of them? Why does Xenophon choose specific Athenian leaders as Socrates' interlocutors? My analysis will fall into

[4] For example, Gray (2011) 7–24 believes that Xenophon is inspired by the Socratic theory of leadership. Dorion (2000) LXX–XCIX discusses in more detail the issue of Xenophontic 'projections' and explains why this dilemma is rather insoluble.

[5] In this latter case, we can speak with greater certainty about 'projection'. I have analysed some examples in Tamiolaki (2014) and (forthcoming, a).

[6] For Socrates as a political teacher, see Pangle (1994); Morrison (1994); Chernyakhovskaya (2008); Tamiolaki (2010) 371–94, (2012) 580–6.

three parts devoted respectively to the different categories of Athenian leaders detected in the *Memorabilia*: the first part will treat Socrates' notorious disciples, Critias and Alcibiades; the second part will deal with the illustrious leaders of the Athenian past, Themistocles and Pericles; the third part will focus on future and prospective Athenian leaders (anonymous and named) with whom Socrates converses in the third book of the *Memorabilia* (3.1–7).[7]

1. Critias and Alcibiades: Negative or not so Positive Models of Leaders?

Critias and Alcibiades figure prominently in the first book of the *Memorabilia* (1.2.12–46). Xenophon takes pains to refute the charge formulated by Socrates' accuser, according to which Socrates, as a teacher of Critias and Alcibiades, should be (indirectly) held responsible for the suffering those two individuals caused to the city of Athens.[8] The section devoted to Critias and Alcibiades can be divided into two parts: in the first (1.2.12–28) Xenophon attempts to defend Socrates on a theoretical level. His line of defence relies on two elements: (a) Critias and Alcibiades approached Socrates in order to profit from his political teaching, but were not at all attracted by his moral premises or his way of life (1.2.15–16); (b) as long as the two pupils stayed with their teacher, they remained prudent; their vicious actions took place after they abandoned Socrates' company.

[7] In this paper I focus on the Athenian leaders of the third book, because their conversations with Socrates provide a more coherent picture of the political concerns of Xenophon's time and Socrates' impact on them. I leave out Critobulus and Euthydemus. Both these individuals have political ambitions, but the former's discussion with Socrates concentrates on friendship (2.6.37–8), while Socrates' political advice to the latter (4.2.11: definition of $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\iota\kappa\dot{\eta}$ $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\nu\eta$; 4.2.37–9: definition of the *demos*) is part of a *broader concern* on behalf of Socrates to prove Euthydemus' ignorance on many topics (politics included).

[8] The accuser to whom Xenophon responds in the first book of the *Memorabilia* (1.2.9–61) is Polycrates, who published a pamphlet around 392. For attempts to reconstruct the content of this pamphlet through the text of Xenophon, see Dorion (2000) 79–81, Waterfield (2012) 284–7.

Consequently, Socrates should be credited with restraining them while they were under his influence (1.2.24; cf. 1.2.39). The second part (1.2.29–46) is intended to offer a confirmation of the theoretical defence through specific examples from the lives of Critias and Alcibiades. In this part Xenophon stages two conversations: the first revolves around the decision of the Thirty to forbid Socrates from teaching the youth; the second focuses on Alcibiades, who is presented discussing the nature of law with the well-known Athenian leader Pericles.

In what follows I will examine the portraits of Critias and Alcibiades as they are depicted in the first book of the *Memorabilia*. According to scholarly consensus, Xenophon wished to convey an absolutely negative image of these leaders.[9] However, upon closer inspection a more nuanced picture emerges. I will argue that Xenophon operates at two levels in this section of the *Memorabilia*: The first part is more clearly apologetic and focuses on moral matters; Xenophon gives a rather unified portrait of the two individuals, by concealing the negative traits of their personalities. The second part, on the contrary, deals with political issues, some of which go beyond the defence of Socrates.

1.1 *Memorabilia* 1.2.12–28

I begin my analysis with the first part of the section, the theoretical defence of Socrates. This part is marked by a strong apologetic zeal. Xenophon builds his argument by taking into account an imaginary opposition, represented either by the accuser or by other people who may not be convinced by his thesis. His authorial 'I' appears more emphatically here than in any other section of the *Memorabilia*:[10]

[9] See Gray (1998) 46 and Dorion (2000) 85.

[10] In the second part, Xenophon's authorial 'I' intervenes only twice: 1.2.31 and 39.

But, his accuser argued (ἀλλ' ἔφη γε ὁ κατήγορος), having become associates of Socrates, Critias and Alcibiades did a great deal of harm to the city … Now if these two individuals did harm to the city, I have no intention of apologising for them (ἐγὼ δὲ … οὐκ ἀπολογήσομαι); but I will explain how they came to be with Socrates. (1.2.12–13)

Seeing this and being such men as I have indicated, is it to be supposed that these two wanted to adopt the simple life of Socrates, and with this object in view sought his company? Did they not rather think that by associating with him they would attain the utmost proficiency in deeds and words? For my part I believe (ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι) that, had heaven granted them the choice between the life they saw Socrates leading and death, they would rather prefer to die. (1.2.15–16)

But somebody could object (ἴσως οὖν εἴποι τις ἂν πρὸς ταῦτα): Socrates should have taught his companions self-control before politics. I do not deny this (ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἀντιλέγω); but I find that all teachers show their disciples how they themselves practise what they teach, and persuade them by argument. And I know that it was so with Socrates … (1.2.17)

But many among those who pretend to exercise philosophy could reply (ἴσως οὖν εἴποιεν ἂν πολλοὶ τῶν φασκόντων φιλοσοφεῖν) that a just man can never become unjust; a prudent man can never become wanton; in fact no one having learned any kind of knowledge can become ignorant of it. But I do not hold this view concerning these issues (ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ τούτων οὐχ οὕτω γιγνώσκω). (1.2.19)

My testimony agrees with theirs [i.e. the testimonies of the poets] (κἀγὼ δὲ μαρτυρῶ τούτοις); for I see that (ὁρῶ γάρ), just as poetry is forgotten unless it is often

　　　repeated, so instruction, when no longer heeded, fades
　　　from the mind. (1.2.21)

Xenophon's apologetic ardour signals the difficulty of the
task he has undertaken; it may also indicate that he is not
very confident in the defence he proposes. It is this
apologetic ardour that accounts for the image of Critias and
Alcibiades in this part of the *Memorabilia*. In fact, although
Xenophon states that he does not intend to apologise for
their actions, he offers a rather sympathetic portrait of the
two individuals, which could potentially serve as an apology
for their actions as well.

　　At first sight a striking contrast can be observed between
the characterisations of Critias and Alcibiades, on the one
hand, and Xenophon's subsequent presentation, on the
other hand. Critias is initially labelled as 'the greediest and
most violent among those in oligarchy', while Alcibiades is
'the most licentious and hubristic among those in
democracy'.[11] However, Xenophon's ensuing account
mitigates these negative judgements and thus runs counter
to the popular opinion about these two individuals. First of
all, Xenophon employs negative superlatives only once,

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[11] The passage in the *Memorabilia* (1.2.12–13) goes as follows: ἀλλ' ἔφη
γε ὁ κατήγορος, Σωκράτει ὁμιλητὰ γενομένω Κριτίας τε καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδης
πλεῖστα κακὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐποιησάτην. Κριτίας μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἐν τῇ
ὀλιγαρχίᾳ πάντων πλεονεκτίστατός τε καὶ βιαιότατος ἐγένετο,
Ἀλκιβιάδης δὲ αὖ τῶν ἐν τῇ δημοκρατίᾳ πάντων ἀκρατέστατός τε καὶ
ὑβριστότατος. ἐγὼ δ', εἰ μέν τι κακὸν ἐκείνω τὴν πόλιν ἐποιησάτην, οὐκ
ἀπολογήσομαι. The crucial point is how we interpret the phrase
introduced by the particle γάρ. Either we take γάρ to expand the point
of the accuser (or Xenophon to transmit and share the point of view of
the accuser, by means of embedded focalisation) or we consider the
second phrase to be Xenophon's own addition and explanation.
Although both possibilities seem plausible, I think that the former
option is preferable, because Xenophon's view appears emphatically
immediately afterwards (ἐγὼ δέ …). If this interpretation is accepted, the
whole section appears more coherent, since it is divided into two parts:
in the first part Xenophon reports the accusation (ἀλλ' ἔφη …
ὑβριστότατος) and in the second part (ἐγὼ δέ) he expresses his own
opinion. Danzig (2014b) 14–15 makes a similar point and also concludes
that the superlatives are more likely to belong to the accuser.

when he refers to the period of youth of Critias and Alcibiades (1.2.26): 'And does he [i.e. Socrates] deserve no word of praise for having controlled them in the days of their youth, when they would be, as expected, most reckless and licentious (ἀγνωμονεστάτω καὶ ἀκρατεστάτω)?' It is implied that, since Critias and Alcibiades did not commit serious injustices during their youth, Socrates should be credited with restraining them. Regardless of whether this line of apology is effective,[12] it is important that Xenophon presents the negative qualities of the two individuals as incidental and deriving from their young age.

Furthermore, again contrary to the initial characterisations, the quality on which Xenophon chooses to insist is ambition. He underlines the ambitious nature of Critias and Alcibiades in the following way (1.2.14): 'Both of them had a most ambitious nature (φύσει φιλοτιμοτάτω): no Athenian was ever like them. They were eager to get control of everything and to outstrip every rival in celebrity.' *Philotimia*, however, is not conceived of as a negative quality in the works of Xenophon. It is the quality *par excellence*, which leaders should possess, a significant prerequisite for success and distinction. Cyrus the Great and Agesilaus are characterised as 'most ambitious' (φιλοτιμότατος: *Cyr.* 1.2.1, *Ages.* 10.4).[13] The same goes for the Athenians collectively, as a people (*Mem.* 3.3.13, 5.3). The works of Xenophon also attest to a theoretical defence of *philotimia*: it is viewed as a noble quality that distinguishes men from animals (*Hier.* 7.3, *Oec.* 13.9).[14] The emphasis on

[12] In my opinion, Xenophon's apology is flawed in many respects in this section, but analysing this is beyond the scope of this paper.

[13] The concept of *philotimia* is recurrent in all Xenophontic works (see Keim in this volume), but the *Cyropaedia* has attracted more scholarly attention. See Reisert (2009); Sandridge (2012) 21–44, who analyses it in conjunction with Cyrus' *philanthropia*; Vandiver (2014), who stresses its positive character.

[14] On the contrary, *philotimia* is employed by Thucydides with negative connotations. See, for instance, his comment on the causes of the *stasis* in Corcyra (3.82.8): πάντων δ' αὐτῶν αἴτιον ἀρχὴ ἡ διὰ πλεονεξίαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν.

the ambitious nature of Critias and Alcibiades thus corresponds to an acknowledgement on Xenophon's part that these two individuals were intrinsically inclined to become successful leaders. This implication has an apologetic dimension (since it could prove that Socrates chose individuals of noble nature as his students), but it also serves Xenophon's political agenda: the two leaders are placed side by side with the ambitious leaders whom Xenophon admires.

Finally, it is noteworthy that Xenophon does not give details about the reproachable political actions of Critias and Alcibiades. Gabriel Danzig aptly observes that the hypothetical εἰ at 1.2.13 (ἐγὼ δ', εἰ μέν τι κακὸν ἐκείνω τὴν πόλιν ἐποιησάτην, οὐκ ἀπολογήσομαι; see n. 11) potentially casts doubts on the criminal actions of Critias and Alcibiades.[15] Moreover, we hear nothing about Critias' initiative and leading role in the assassinations during the reign of the Thirty at Athens. Xenophon states generally that *the Thirty Tyrants* assassinated good people (1.2.32: οἱ τριάκοντα … οὐ τοὺς χειρίστους ἀπέκτεινον).[16] Nor are we informed about Alcibiades' treasonous attitude towards his native city. Instead, Xenophon relates laconically Critias' activities in Thessaly, comments with indulgence on Alcibiades' personality and offers a generalising conclusion about both (1.2.24–5):

> But when they parted from him [sc. Socrates], Critias fled to Thessaly and began to associate with men who put lawlessness before justice; while Alcibiades, on account of his beauty, was hunted by many great ladies, and because of his influence at Athens and among her allies he was spoiled by many powerful

[15] See Danzig (2014a) 514.

[16] On the contrary, Xenophon highlights Critias' leading role in the *Hellenica* (2.3.15): ἐπεὶ δὲ αὐτὸς μὲν προπετὴς ἦν ἐπὶ τὸ πολλοὺς ἀποκτείνειν. In an excellent discussion of the divergent portraits of Critias in Plato and Xenophon, Danzig (2014a) argues that Xenophon's negative depiction of Critias in the *Hellenica* could be a response to Plato's overall mild portrait of the tyrant.

men: and as athletes who gain an easy victory in the games are apt to neglect their training, so Alcibiades neglected himself (ὥσπερ οἱ τῶν γυμνικῶν ἀγώνων ἀθληταὶ ῥᾳδίως πρωτεύοντες ἀμελοῦσι τῆς ἀσκήσεως, οὕτω κἀκεῖνος ἠμέλησεν αὑτοῦ). Such was their fortune: and when to pride of birth, confidence in wealth, vainglory and much yielding to temptation were added degeneration because of all this and long separation from Socrates, what wonder if they grew overbearing?

This presentation again implicitly qualifies the initial characterisations: Xenophon acknowledges positive qualities in Critias and Alcibiades (noble birth, wealth, power, popularity). These traits are not of course incompatible with historical reality;[17] but they represent values that Xenophon himself and his Socrates also cherish.[18] Xenophon further attributes the moral failure of Critias and Alcibiades to their arrogance, which is supposed to have grown *after* they abandoned Socrates. In this way, the actions of the two individuals are inscribed into the well-known pattern of the fall following hubristic behaviour. This scheme, however, does not only concern vicious people, but can also accommodate sympathetic figures, as Greek tragedy and Herodotus amply show.[19] The recourse to this pattern concerning Critias and Alcibiades can thus potentially arouse pity rather than indignation for their actions. Moreover, Xenophon's generalising comment on

[17] For the aristocratic origins and connections of Critias and Alcibiades, see Davies (1971) and Nails (2002) s.vv.

[18] The conversation between Socrates and Aristippus in the second book of the *Memorabilia* (2.1.1–34) clearly illustrates the importance Xenophon's Socrates attributes to the combination of all these factors as constituents of happiness. See for this conversation Dorion (2011) *ad loc.*, with further bibliography.

[19] For the scheme of pride going before a fall in Xenophon, see Hau (2012), who shows the ambivalent meaning of the terms deriving from *phron*-compounds (such as *mega phronein, kataphronesis*, etc.). Hau does not include in her analysis the term ὑπερήφανος, which is used only twice by Xenophon (for Critias and Alcibiades in the passage quoted above and at *Cyr.* 5.2.27: ὑπερηφανίαν).

the shared *philotimia* of the two individuals and his unifying conclusion about their destructive pride creates a misleading assimilation between them and distracts attention from Critias' atrocious actions.

Concerning Alcibiades, more specifically, it would not be far-fetched to concede that he is shown in a rather positive light: the comparison with an excellent athlete, who, nevertheless, precisely because of his excellence, neglects his training, suggests that Alcibiades ceased to be excellent (and therefore risked losing his superiority over others), not necessarily that he became bad. It is also telling that Socrates himself employs the same comparison with regards to Athens (3.5.13):

> My own view is that as a consequence of their great superiority the Athenians grew careless of themselves and have thus fallen into decline (ἀμελῆσαι ἑαυτῶν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο χείρους γεγονέναι), much as athletes who are in a class by themselves and easily win the championship are apt to grow slack and fall behind their rivals.

This comparison is not derogatory either for Alcibiades or for the Athenians, nor does it in any way hint at the harm Alcibiades inflicted on his native city. It conveys a belief in change: if they train again, they will recover their excellence.[20]

1.2 *Memorabilia* 1.2.29–46

We can now turn to the second part of the section, the conversations in which Critias and Alcibiades participated, which are meant to confirm the theoretical part of the defence: the first one takes place under the reign of the

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[20] Although Alcibiades does not meet Socratic moral standards (see Tamiolaki (2012) 568 for his classification with regards to his virtue), it is interesting that Xenophon seems to be sympathetic towards him in the *Hellenica* as well: he describes in detail the positive sentiments of the Athenians towards him (1.4.13–16), while he devotes only one phrase to those who criticise him (1.4.17).

Thirty and involves Socrates, Critias, and Charicles, while the second one, between Pericles and Alcibiades, is placed during the period of the former's rule in Athens, a little before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.[21] This part of the *Memorabilia* raises some intriguing questions: Do these conversations eventually confirm the characterisations about Critias and Alcibiades? Why is Socrates present only in the first conversation? Why does Xenophon choose Pericles as Alcibiades' interlocutor?

To begin with, these conversations could be viewed as an elaboration on the expressions 'among those in oligarchy' (τῶν ἐν ὀλιγαρχίᾳ) and 'among those in democracy' (τῶν ἐν δημοκρατίᾳ). But, again, they do not provide sufficient evidence for Critias' violence and greediness or Alcibiades' intemperance and *hybris*. Through these conversations Xenophon implicitly comments on constitutions: respectively, the oligarchy of the Thirty and the connection between law and constitutions. The first issue also has an apologetic dimension, while the second is predominantly political.

Concerning Critias, it is interesting that Xenophon insists on his relation to law, commenting on his legislative activity during his leadership of the Thirty as follows: 'when he was one of the Thirty and was drafting laws (νομοθέτης) with Charicles … he inserted a clause which made it illegal to teach the art of words' (1.2.31; cf. 1.2.33: νόμον ἐδεικνύτην). This account gives the impression that Critias' authority was recognised and creates no doubts about the legality of the regime of the Thirty.[22] Not even Socrates challenges Critias' authority to draft laws; he is only interested in ridiculing the law he issued against him. This

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[21] Xenophon states that Alcibiades was less than twenty years old when this conversation took place. Given that Alcibiades was born around 450 and Pericles died in 429, the dramatic date of this conversation should be placed a little between 435 and 431.

[22] For the legislative actions of the Thirty, see Krentz (1982) 57–68; Nails (2002) 111–13; Shear (2011) 166–87 for the plan of the Thirty to reform the laws of Athens. Cf. also Németh (2006) for Critias' theoretical entanglements.

presentation is compatible with Xenophon's account in the *Hellenica*: Xenophon states that the Thirty were elected in order to draft new laws (2.3.11).

The second trait of Critias on which Xenophon chooses to insist is his irascible character. He traces the beginning of the tension between Socrates and his pupil to an emotional incident: Socrates had once urged Critias not to adopt a servile attitude towards his potential *eromenos*, Euthydemus (1.2.29–31). Because of this advice Critias hated Socrates (1.2.31: ἐμίσει) and hence decided to issue the law that would forbid him to teach. Similarly, in the subsequent conversation between Socrates and the two tyrants Critias and Charicles, when Socrates starts posing a series of bewildering questions which show his disrespect and even mockery of them, Xenophon stresses twice that he thus provoked their wrath (1.2.35: καὶ ὁ Χαρικλῆς ὀργισθεὶς αὐτῷ; 1.2.38: ἔνθα καὶ δῆλον ἐγένετο ὅτι … ὠργίζοντο τῷ Σωκράτει). In brief, Critias is depicted as a legitimate leader who, however, suffers from an irritable character.

This presentation also has an apologetic dimension. By emphasising Critias' bad temper, Xenophon minimises an important political issue, Socrates' intellectual affinity with the oligarchy, and thus leaves aside more pressing questions: Why did Socrates stay in Athens under the Thirty? Since he did not follow the orders of the Thirty, why was he not punished or at least forced to obey?[23] It would be tempting to compare this section with Thucydides' digression on the fall of tyranny in Athens (6.54–9): Thucydides had also privileged the emotional over the political motive in his version of the events by emphatically claiming that the love affair between Harmodius and Aristogeiton (δι᾿ ἐρωτικὴν ξυντυχίαν) rather than the Athenians' alleged love of freedom was the decisive

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[23] It is possible that Socrates was initially among those who believed that the Thirty would install the καλλίστη πολιτεία, a reformed aristocratic constitution (*HG* 2.3.34). For the problems posed by Socrates' stay in Athens during the reign of the Thirty, see Waterfield (2012). Cf. also Ober (2005), who ingeniously explains why the legal system in Athens allowed Socrates to disobey the law of the Thirty.

factor which led to the overthrow of tyranny in Athens.[24] Xenophon may have adapted the technique of his predecessor to serve his apologetic agenda.

Concerning Alcibiades, his conversation with Pericles contains some peculiar features. Leo Strauss has rightly observed an asymmetry in Xenophon's treatment of Critias and Alcibiades: 'He gives no example of Socrates rebuking Alkibiades, to say nothing of a conflict between Socrates and Alkibiades.'[25] Moreover, Xenophon does not comment on Alcibiades' notorious sexual license;[26] nor does he inform us about his close association with Socrates. The dialogue between Pericles and Alcibiades has often been taken to indicate that Alcibiades employs in a perverted way the dialectical skills that he has learned from Socrates.[27] Kirk Sanders has recently suggested a different interpretation: according to his view, the phrase πρὶν εἴκοσιν ἐτῶν εἶναι (1.2.40) shows that Alcibiades displayed these dialectical qualities *before becoming the pupil of the famous master* and therefore serves to exonerate Socrates.[28] This interpretation is attractive, but disregards the context of this conversation: Xenophon's emphasis is not on *when exactly Alcibiades began his relationship to Socrates*, but on the fact that Alcibiades, from a very early age, was strongly preoccupied with political matters. Now the question that arises is why Xenophon does not present Alcibiades conversing with Socrates on

[24] Thucydides' digression is a complex and controversial topic. For a recent assessment and bibliography, see Tamiolaki (2015a).

[25] Strauss (1972) 14.

[26] See Dorion (2000) 98 n. 116, who comments on the paradox that we hear about Critias' license instead. According to Bevilacqua (2010) 298 n. 60, Xenophon's comment on Critias' sexual license is a hint at his tyrannical profile, since tyrants are usually described in ancient sources as sexually intemperate.

[27] Gigon (1953) 65; Gray (1998) 115–16; Dorion (2000) CLVIII–CLXIX. This use of dialectics has been also seen as a confirmation of the characterisation ὑβριστότατος, but I doubt that Alcibiades displays *hybris* in his discussion with Pericles. See below. Cf. also Danzig (2014a) who concludes, on the contrary, that Xenophon does not intend to convey a negative image of Alcibiades.

[28] Sanders (2011) 351–4.

these matters: a possible explanation could indeed be that he had *not yet* become a pupil of Socrates. But still some questions remain open: Why does Xenophon choose Pericles as Alcibiades' interlocutor? Is Pericles associated with the apology for Socrates? I would like to suggest that this conversation mainly reflects Xenophon's political agenda and interests, and is thus only loosely connected with the apologetic purpose of the *Memorabilia*.

It is remarkable that the connections of Pericles and Alcibiades with democracy are not emphasised. The expression προστάτης τῆς πόλεως (1.2.40), which is used for Pericles, is the only hint at a democratic background.[29] Yet the conversation revolves around an important political issue, the association of law with constitutions. Alcibiades asks Pericles to give a definition of the law. As a democratic leader, Pericles answers based on what a democratic law is (1.2.42): 'Laws are all the rules approved and enacted by the people in assembly, whereby they declare what ought and what ought not be done.' The choice of Pericles as a representative of democratic law is not surprising: in the funeral oration (*Epitaphios*) reported by Thucydides, Pericles praises the obedience of the Athenians to the laws, written and unwritten (2.37.3). Moreover, democracy, more than any other constitution, took pride in its laws.[30] What seems peculiar (if not paradoxical) is the fact that, although Pericles is a democratic leader, through Alcibiades' questions he is led to contest even the nature of democratic law: he admits very readily that oligarchs or tyrants are equally entitled to write laws (1.2.43). While this would not be an astonishing observation concerning oligarchy, as we saw before, the idea of a law-abiding tyrant runs counter to a prevalent tradition in Greek thought, according to which the tyrant incarnates the violation of law.[31] More

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[29] The most usual expression is προστάτης δήμου. For the connotations of this term, see Connor (1971) 111–15, Ober (1989) 316–17.

[30] See Ostwald (1969); de Romilly (1971) 9–24.

[31] See, for instance, Otanes' description of the tyrant in Herodotus (3.80.5): τὰ δὲ δὴ μέγιστα ἔρχομαι ἐρέων· νόμαιά τε κινέει πάτρια καὶ

alarmingly, when, in the course of the conversation, Alcibiades comes to identify lawlessness with violence, Pericles again appears prompt to admit that, if the laws of democracy do not receive the consent of everybody, they are also violent (a precursor perhaps of the Tocquevillian *tyrannie de la majorité*?). This thesis is not only anti-democratic; it also challenges the very concept of the law, which can accommodate constraint as an inherent part of itself.[32] Of course the two interlocutors admit in the end that their conversation has resulted in intellectual acrobatics (1.2.46: ἐσοφιζόμεθα). Yet the interpretation according to which this conversation is only meant to show Alcibiades' inclination to sophistry does not seem sufficient.

In fact, neither the choice of Pericles and Alcibiades as interlocutors nor the topics discussed seem accidental. Besides the family connections of the two individuals, which could add more credibility to their conversation, the two men share some important features: both were influential leaders under the democracy and both were accused of tyrannical aspirations. Thucydides had described Pericles' rule rather elegantly by characterising it as the 'rule of the first man' (ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή, 2.65.9), but the comic poets openly compared Pericles with tyrants.[33] Similarly, it is well known that Alcibiades' presumptuous character and extravagant way of life had triggered an anti-tyrannical hysteria in Athens at the beginning of the Sicilian expedition (Thuc. 6.15).[34] If we take into consideration these common traits, it becomes evident that Xenophon, in this conversation, elaborates on the tyrannical associations of the two individuals: building on Pericles' reputation as a tyrant, he presents the Athenian leader conceding that the laws of the tyrants can potentially be just and, conversely,

βιᾶται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους. For tyranny in Herodotus, see Dewald (2003).

[32] Cf. Dorion (2000) 105–6. For the inherent connection of the law with violence, see also Pindar, fr. 169.

[33] See in detail Christodoulou (2013), who suggests that Thucydides' portrait of Pericles can be seen as a response to these charges.

[34] Rhodes (2011) 39–54.

that the laws of democracy can be violent. And, of course, it is no surprise that he discusses these issues with Alcibiades, a man who, despite his democratic background, did not show loyalty to a specific constitution, but was ready to accept any of them if it served his own interests.[35] The choice of the specific individuals in this particular setting further gives Xenophon the opportunity to raise some important political issues. For instance, the idea of a law-abiding tyrant is a topic that preoccupies Xenophon himself: in his work *Hiero* the possibility is envisaged that a tyrant could be transformed into a benevolent and lawful king. Even Critias is presented as drafting (oligarchic) laws. The *Cyropaedia* also often attests to a blurring of boundaries between kingship and tyranny.[36] Finally, if there is a connection with Socrates in this conversation, this does not concern the period during which Alcibiades started conversing with him, but rather Socrates' attitude towards the law: Socrates had made fun of the law of the Thirty, just as Pericles and Alcibiades question the law of all constitutions. Taken together, these conversations highlight the fluid nature of the law or at least the necessity for its better circumspection.[37]

To sum up, our analysis has shown that the initial negative characterisations of Critias and Alcibiades are not fully supported by Xenophon's ensuing account. In our

[35] In fact, the image of Alcibiades in the conversation of the *Memorabilia* is compatible with the image offered by Thucydides: in the speeches of Alcibiades reported by Thucydides, the Athenian leader shows off his sophistic skills. For instance, he presents his treason as an act of love for his polis (6.92.2–5). Moreover, he does not hesitate to express his loose faith in democracy, which he characterises as an acknowledged folly (6.89.6). And, of course, his overall career, the siding with the Spartans and the assistance he offered later to the Persian king, amply prove that he was far from committed to the Athenian democracy.

[36] For the blurring of kingship and tyranny in Xenophon, see Tamiolaki (2015b).

[37] For legal relativism in Xenophon, see Danzig (2009) and Johnson (2012), who focus on the problem of whether the lawful is (or should be) identified with the just.

opinion, this is due to Xenophon's double focus (moral and political) in the *Memorabilia*. It seems that the two parts of the section devoted to Critias and Alcibiades correspond to the different agendas pursued by Xenophon. The first part is more in tune with the apologetic agenda: it concentrates on moral issues and gives a sympathetic portrait of the two individuals by stressing their ambitious nature and their fall as a result of their pride. In the second part, Xenophon's political interests appear more prominent, while the apologetic ardour recedes. On the one hand, Critias is presented as a legitimate tyrant, while his problems with Socrates are ascribed to his irascible character. Xenophon refrains from stating whether there were also ideological disagreements between Socrates and the Thirty. The conversation between Pericles and Alcibiades, on the other hand, reflects more openly Xenophon's political agenda. Pericles and Alcibiades, two individuals who were accused of tyrannical aspirations, are presented as open to discussing tyranny and law. This conversation promotes a more open attitude towards the relationship between law and constitutions. Pericles and Alcibiades convey a relativist message regarding this issue: like the art of ruling (the so-called $\beta \alpha \sigma \iota \lambda \iota \kappa \grave{\eta} \ \tau \acute{\epsilon} \chi \nu \eta$), which is not specifically attributed only to one constitution,[38] the law is not (and should not be) the privilege or the possession of democracy. Alcibiades' sophistry thus results in provoking reflection on a topic that interests Xenophon himself.[39]

2. Leaders of the Athenian Past: Pericles and Themistocles

Pericles and Themistocles were eminent leaders of the Athenian past. They occupied an important position in the

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[38] For the definition of $\beta \alpha \sigma \iota \lambda \iota \kappa \grave{\eta} \ \tau \acute{\epsilon} \chi \nu \eta$, see *Mem.* 4.2.11. See Dorion (2013) and some qualifications in Tamiolaki (2015b).

[39] Danzig (2014a) focuses more on the apologetic dimension of this conversation, but he also characterises the discussion as 'a triumph of Socratic political thought' (22).

collective memory because of their (democratic) ideas about the importance of naval power and also because of their intelligent decisions during the wars in which they participated. It is thus no coincidence that they have inspired Xenophon: the two leaders are mentioned in several instances in the *Memorabilia*. It is also interesting that contrary to Plato, who mentions in his works other Athenian leaders as well, even of aristocratic background, such as Cimon or Miltiades (*Grg.* 515b–17a, 519a; *Men.* 93c–e, 99b), Xenophon chooses to focus on the most illustrious democratic leaders. More specifically, Pericles appears three times in the *Memorabilia*: as a character of a dialogue in the conversation with Alcibiades that we saw above (1.2.40–6); as a leader of the Athenian past mentioned by Socrates in his conversation with Critobulus in the second book (2.6.13); and as the father of Pericles II, who is Socrates' interlocutor in a lengthy conversation in the third book (3.5.1–28). Themistocles, by contrast, does not appear among the characters of the *Memorabilia*, but Socrates does refer to him three times: together with Pericles in the conversation with Critobulus (2.6.13); in the conversation with Glaucon (3.6.2); and in the advice he gives to Euthydemus (4.2.2).

Xenophon's attitude towards Pericles and Themistocles has sparked some controversy: while Xenophon is usually taken to adopt a positive stance towards Themistocles, scholars are divided as to his evaluation of Pericles.[40] Furthermore, Bernhard Huss has suggested that Aeschines was Xenophon's model for his positive assessment of Pericles and Themistocles.[41] In what follows I will analyse closely the references to Pericles and Themistocles and argue that Xenophon expresses a subtle criticism of Pericles, while he offers a no less ambivalent portrait of Themistocles. In order to complete my analysis, I will also take into account another joint reference to the two Athenian leaders that we find in Xenophon's *Symposium*

[40] See Dorion (2011) 204–8 for an overview of the relevant bibliography, and also below. Dorion subscribes to the thesis that Xenophon's evaluation of Pericles is positive.

[41] Huss (1999) 430–2.

(4.37). It will emerge, I hope, from my analysis that
Xenophon has his own agenda and proceeds to his own
adaptations of the Athenian past, which is why it is rather
unlikely that he followed Aeschines (or any other model) in
his depiction of the Athenian leaders.

2.1 Pericles

I start with references to either of the two leaders
individually. Pericles is introduced for the first time in the
conversation with Alcibiades about law and constitutions.
As we saw above, Xenophon avoids the Thucydidean
superlatives and simply characterises the Athenian
politician as 'leader of the city' (προστάτῃ δὲ τῆς πόλεως), an
expression which points to his democratic affiliations.
Regardless of the political implications of Pericles'
conversation with Alcibiades that we analysed above, the
image of a mature leader being carried away by a young
man in perverting (and even denying) the democratic
principles about the law is admittedly not very flattering for
the famous Athenian. In this conversation Xenophon
reduces the leader Pericles to a passive recipient of
Alcibiades' views and sophisms.

The second individual reference to Pericles does not
contribute to the correction of his image. Pericles is
mentioned alone for the second time in the third book of
the *Memorabilia*. Xenophon introduces the conversation
between Pericles II (the son of Pericles) and Socrates by
stating that Pericles II was the son of the 'great Pericles'
(Περικλεῖ δέ ποτε τῷ τοῦ πάνυ Περικλέους υἱῷ διαλεγόμενος,
3.5.1). Scholars usually comment on the weakness and
ignorance of Pericles II, who is presented as a shadow of his
famous father, soliciting Socrates' advice on how to lead
Athens to its past glory.[42] This interpretation, however,
overlooks the ironical dimension of the expression τοῦ πάνυ
Περικλέους. Despite the apparent contrast between the 'big'
and 'small' Pericles, the fact that Xenophon again avoids

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[42] McNamara (2009) 233: 'The younger Pericles is a decent man, but
he clearly lacks the talent and rhetorical skill of his great father.'

giving a more precise and detailed positive characterisation for Pericles creates some doubts as to the sincerity of praise implied in the expression τοῦ πάνυ Περικλέους. Furthermore, Pericles is never mentioned again in the conversation that follows between Socrates and his son. More alarmingly, Pericles II is led to question the policies of his father and praise Spartan institutions and practices instead (3.5.14–16). These Sparto-centric ideas add important nuances and qualifications to the expression τοῦ πάνυ Περικλέους. It is thus more probable that Xenophon wished to express a subtle criticism of the democratic leader, who after all exemplifies the destructive imperialist impulse of Athens.[43] It would also be tempting to see Xenophon here engaging again with Plato: in the *Meno* Plato had reflected on the fact that illustrious fathers usually produce less illustrious children, because they do not take care of their education (*Men.* 93c–e; cf. *Alc. I* 118d–e, *Prot.* 319e–20a; cf. Plu. *Per.* 36.1–3, who comments on Pericles' incompetence in domestic affairs). Xenophon seems to agree with Plato regarding the insignificance of Pericles' son and his lack of education, which is why he presents Socrates as an ideal educator for him. But he goes even further than Plato by illustrating more radically, through the words of Pericles' son, that the 'great' Pericles may not have been in the final analysis so great.[44]

Xenophon's critical stance towards the famous Pericles can be further confirmed by the content and orientation of the conversation between Socrates and Pericles II. Scholars

[43] See also McNamara (2009) 233–7. Cf. Azoulay (2010) 158–63, who places Xenophon with Plato as criticising Pericles; Bevilacqua (2010) 523 n. 38, who traces other ironical references to Pericles in the conversations of the third book of the *Memorabilia*.

[44] The adverb πάνυ is usually accompanied by verbs or adverbs, while the expression ὁ πάνυ + noun is rare; see *LSJ.*, s.v. For πάνυ as meaning 'actual, real' in Thucydides (8.1.1, 8.89.2), see Gomme–Andrewes–Dover (1945–81), *ad loc.* In modern Greek the adjective *o πολύς* (the very) + proper name, e.g. *o πολύς* Περικλής, is very often used with ironical connotations. The expression τοῦ πάνυ Περικλέους in the *Memorabilia* is not, I think, entirely unrelated to its modern equivalent.

have already noted some connections between this
conversation and Pericles' funeral oration.[45] I would like to
complete this analysis and pursue this line of argument
further: Xenophon seems in fact to propose an anti-
Epitaphios, a rewriting of Athenian history based on un-
Periclean principles.

The background of the conversation in the *Memorabilia*
bears some resemblances to the context of the Periclean
Epitaphios: both take place in a period of war. In the
Epitaphios Pericles praised the Athenians who had died
during the first battles of the Peloponnesian War; in the
Memorabilia Pericles II deplores the defeats of the Athenians
in their fighting with the Thebans. Moreover, like his father,
Pericles II praises the ancestors of the Athenians (3.5.3):
'none have inherited a past more replete with great deeds
than the Athenians (καὶ μὴν προγόνων γε καλὰ ἔργα οὐκ
ἔστιν οἷς μείζω καὶ πλείω ὑπάρχει ἢ Ἀθηναίοις); and many
are heartened by such a heritage and encouraged to care
for excellence and prove their gallantry.' Again like his
father, he establishes a threefold distinction between distant
ancestors, more immediate predecessors and the present-
day Athenians (Thuc. 2.36.1–3: προγόνων, πατέρες, ἡμεῖς;
Mem. 3.5.9: τοὺς παλαιτάτους προγόνους, 3.5.11: οἱ ἐκείνων
μὲν ἀπόγονοι, οὐ πολὺ δὲ πρὸ ἡμῶν γεγονότες).

However, important differences also emerge. The
Athenians of the era of Pericles II do not take pride in their
(contemporary) achievements like the Athenians of Pericles'
time. Xenophon illustrates this juxtaposition by adapting
themes that Pericles had commented on in his *Epitaphios*.
For instance, the use of the word ἐπιτηδεύματα in the
Memorabilia alludes to the word ἐπιτήδευσις of the *Epitaphios*.
But whereas Pericles had talked about the ἐπιτήδευσις of
contemporary Athenians (Thuc. 2.36.4), his son comments
on the ἐπιτηδεύματα of Athenian ancestors (3.5.14): 'If they
find out the practices of their ancestors and practise them as

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[45] Bevilacqua (2010) 519 n. 27 points out that this conversation can
be seen as an 'ironic (and ferocious) palinody of the famous funeral
oration'; cf. also Strauss (1972) 66–8.

well as they did (ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐξευρόντες τὰ τῶν προγόνων ἐπιτηδεύματα μηδὲν χεῖρον ἐκείνων ἐπιτηδεύοιεν), they will come to be as good as they were.' Moreover, the strong presence of envy in the life of the Athenians, as it is described by Pericles II (3.5.16: καὶ φθονοῦσιν ἑαυτοῖς μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις), contrasts with the Periclean description of Athenian relationships as 'deprived of negative feelings' (Thuc. 2.37.3: ἀνεπαχθῶς δὲ τὰ ἴδια προσομιλοῦντες). Overall, then, while Pericles had valorised his contemporary Athenians, his son denigrates them and praises either his ancestors or even the Lacedaemonians!

One could claim that these elements do not reflect a critical attitude towards Pericles, but simply highlight the opposition between the defeated Athenians of the fourth century and the glorious Athenians of Pericles' time.[46] However, this interpretation does not grasp the whole picture. First of all it is in my opinion telling that although Pericles II constantly praises his ancestors, he avoids praising his father's generation: he begins his praise of Athens from Theseus' time and ends with the 'war of the Athenians and Peloponnesians' (i.e. against the Persians). Pericles' generation is completely omitted (3.5.9–12). Furthermore, Socrates, in line with Isocrates, openly praises the Council of the Areopagos (3.5.20), whose role, however, had been drastically reduced by Pericles.[47] In this way, he tacitly criticises Periclean policy. Finally, the conversation between Socrates and Pericles II testifies to a transformation or even denial of Periclean principles. For example, in the conversation in the *Memorabilia*, fear is considered a positive sentiment (3.5.5): 'Confidence brings carelessness, slackness, disobedience; fear makes men more attentive, more obedient, more amenable to discipline.' This assertion contradicts the Periclean statement in the *Epitaphios* that 'ignorance is boldness, but calculation brings hesitance'

[46] See, for example, Dorion (2011) 293.

[47] Delatte (1933) 54–74 argued long ago that *Memorabilia* 3.5 is inspired by Isocrates' *Areopagiticus*, a view, however, rightly criticised by Bevilacqua (2010) 522 n. 34.

(λογισμὸς δὲ ὄκνον φέρει, Thuc. 2.40.3).[48] Similarly, Socrates' observation that the Athenians should imitate those who excel in Greece, namely the Lacedaemonians (3.5.14), clashes with the Periclean conviction according to which the Athenians, because of their excellent constitution, do not need to imitate anybody (Thuc. 2.37.1: παράδειγμα δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτοὶ ὄντες τισὶν ἢ μιμούμενοι ἑτέρους). Further, the suggestion of Pericles II that the Athenians should fall in love with their ancient virtue (3.5.7: ἀνερασθῆναι τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀρετῆς) constitutes a transformation of the Periclean advice that the Athenians should become lovers of their (present) city (Thuc. 2.43.1: πόλεως … ἐραστάς).

In sum, if we take into account that Xenophon presents both interlocutors in *Memorabilia* 3.5 as critical of Pericles, the allusions to the *Epitaphios* could be seen in a new light: by reworking themes of the *Epitaphios*, Xenophon does not only mean to suggest a contrast between the glorious Periclean Athens and the defeated Athens of Pericles' son; more radically, he intends to show that the elder Pericles' conception of his Athens was problematic and bound to fail.

2.2 Themistocles

We can now examine the individual references to Themistocles. Socrates mentions him twice in the *Memorabilia* as a model of high reputation and wisdom. Although these references seem at first sight positive, the close examination of their context reveals some ambiguity. The first one belongs to the testing to which Socrates submits Glaucon, an extremely ambitious young Athenian, who desires to enter politics before becoming twenty years old. Socrates, who eventually manages to restrain Glaucon, begins his conversation with him as follows (3.6.2):

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[48] Pericles also states that because of fear the Athenians abide by their laws (Thuc. 2.37.3: διὰ δέος μάλιστα οὐ παρανομοῦμεν). However, this passing reference does not amount to a positive (theoretical) evaluation of fear, like that found in the *Memorabilia*.

Glaucon, have you made up your mind to be the leader of our city? … Well, there is certainly no more honourable ambition in the world; for obviously if you succeed, you will be able to get whatever you want, and you will have the means of helping your friends: you will lift up your father's house and exalt your fatherland; and you will make a name for yourself first at home, later on in Greece, and possibly, like Themistocles, among the barbarians as well (ὀνομαστὸς δ' ἔσει πρῶτον μὲν ἐν τῇ πόλει, ἔπειτα ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι, ἴσως δ', ὥσπερ Θεμιστοκλῆς, καὶ ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις); wherever you go, you will be a celebrity.

Themistocles is here mentioned at the end of an enumeration of the merits of political life and is hence considered to be a successful incarnation of it. However, this presentation is not free from some ambiguity. First of all, the phrase ὀνομαστὸς ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις recalls Themistocles' ambivalent political career: Themistocles did not gain a reputation among the barbarians only for his victorious deeds, but also because he stayed in Persia after his exile from Athens and even became a counsellor of the Persian king (Plut. *Them.* 27–9). More importantly, Socrates in this passage enumerates the *individual* benefits Glaucon would acquire if he obtained a high office in Athens. Socrates' opinion, however, as it will emerge in the course of the conversation (and in other conversations in the *Memorabilia*) is that a good leader should be interested not only in his individual profit, but also (*and above all*) in benefiting his community. Consequently, the reference to Themistocles at the summit of an argument centred on individual profit eventually undermines the portrait of the Athenian leader: Themistocles ends up representing the problematic and self-interested preoccupation with politics that Socrates rejects.[49]

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[49] This presentation is not wholly incompatible with the image of Themistocles that we have from Herodotus. Themistocles used his victory for his personal profit (Hdt. 8.112.1, 3). See in detail Blösel 2004;

The second reference to Themistocles occurs in the fourth book of the *Memorabilia*. Xenophon describes in this section how Socrates dealt with Euthydemus, a young man who took pride in his wisdom and education. Socrates went to Euthydemus' shop with his companions and the following conversation took place (4.2.2):

> At the first visit, one of them [i.e. Socrates' companions] asked: 'Was it by constantly being with some wise man or by natural ability that Themistocles stood out among his fellow citizens as the man to whom the city naturally looked when it felt the want of a great leader (Θεμιστοκλῆς διὰ συνουσίαν τινὸς τῶν σοφῶν ἢ φύσει τοσοῦτον διήνεγκε τῶν πολιτῶν, ὥστε πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ἀποβλέπειν τὴν πόλιν, ὁπότε σπουδαίου ἀνδρὸς δεηθείη)?' In order to set Euthydemus thinking (βουλόμενος κινεῖν τὸν Εὐθύδημον), Socrates said: 'if in the minor arts great achievement is impossible without competent masters, surely it is absurd to imagine that the art of statesmanship, the greatest of all accomplishments, comes to a man of its own accord (εὔηθες ἔφη εἶναι τὸ οἴεσθαι τὰς μὲν ὀλίγου ἀξίας τέχνας μὴ γίγνεσθαι σπουδαίους ἄνευ διδασκάλων ἱκανῶν, τὸ δὲ προεστάναι πόλεως, πάντων ἔργων μέγιστον ὄν, ἀπὸ ταὐτομάτου παραγίγνεσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις).'

This conversation contains no hint of negativity towards Themistocles. However, it should be noted that it is not Socrates who praises the Athenian leader, but one of his companions. More interestingly, Socrates' view of Themistocles runs counter to a whole tradition about the Athenian leader, according to which his success was due to his exceptional innate abilities. This tradition is eloquently transmitted by Thucydides, who stresses Themistocles' *natural* talent (1.138.3):

cf. also Ferrario (2014) 100, who considers Herodotus' presentation of Themistocles a model of 'problematic Greek leadership'.

> For Themistocles, displaying the very surest signs of natural ability (βεβαιότατα δὴ φύσεως ἰσχὺν δηλώσας), was far and away more worthy of admiration for this quality. By native intelligence, without preparing or supplementing it by study (οἰκείᾳ γὰρ ξυνέσει καὶ οὔτε προμαθὼν ἐς αὐτὴν οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἐπιμαθών), he was with the briefest deliberation the most effective in decisions about immediate situations and the best at conjecturing what would happen farthest into the future. … To sum up, this man by natural ability (φύσεως μὲν δυνάμει) with rapid deliberation, was certainly supreme in his immediate grasp of what was necessary.[50]

Socrates, on the contrary, emphatically attributes Themistocles' success not to his intelligence, but to his association with competent masters. Xenophon seems aware of the radicalness (even paradox) of this suggestion; that is why he notes that Socrates said this 'in order to set Euthydemus thinking'. But is Themistocles' paradigm compelling? There was no tradition in antiquity about him having received an excellent education or having associated with famous teachers, such as was the case, for instance, with Pericles.[51] What, then, is Xenophon's purpose in making this comment?

I would like to suggest that Xenophon contributes to the biographical tradition concerning Themistocles by redefining his relation to *sophia*. In the ancient sources Themistocles is praised for his *sophia*. The most characteristic references are in Herodotus (8.110.1; 8.124.1):

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[50] Cf. Hornblower (1991) *ad loc.*

[51] Interestingly, Plutarch questions the tradition according to which Anaxagoras was Themistocles' teacher and sides with another version concerning his education, which made him a disciple of Mnesiphilus, for whom, however, the biographer does not give a very flattering description (*Them.* 2.4): 'a man who was neither a rhetorician nor one of the so-called physical philosophers, but a cultivator of what was then called *sophia* or wisdom, although it was really nothing more than cleverness in politics and practical sagacity.' On the contrary, Plutarch relates in detail Pericles' famous teachers (Plut. *Per.* 4–6).

They [i.e. the Athenians] had judged him before to be
a clever man, but now he came out as the cleverest and
best counsellor possible (ἐπειδὴ γὰρ καὶ πρότερον,
δεδογμένος εἶναι σοφός, ἐφάνη ἐὼν ἀληθέως σοφός τε καὶ
εὔβουλος) and they were ready to listen to anything he
said.

Themistocles was proclaimed and thought to be far the
cleverest of the Greeks through all the land
(Θεμιστοκλέης ἐβώσθη τε καὶ ἐδοξώθη εἶναι ἀνὴρ πολλὸν
Ἑλλήνων σοφώτατος ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα).

The Greek word *sophia* covers a wide range of meanings:
it usually refers to intelligence, dexterity, or even technical
skill, while in Plato it acquires the metaphysical meaning of
(superior) philosophical wisdom that is related to the
knowledge of the good. In the *Memorabilia* the term
encompasses all of these different nuances. It is no wonder
that Socrates knows the meaning of the true *sophia*, which
he characterises as the most important good (μέγιστον
ἀγαθόν, 4.5.6). More importantly, Socrates is presented as
knowing how to dispose of his *sophia*: not by receiving
money from anyone, like the sophists, but by choosing the
most gifted natures as his students (1.6.13).[52] Consequently,
if Socrates' *sophia* is related to his teaching and is thus
superior to conventional cleverness, it becomes more
intelligible why Themistocles' *sophia* is not emphasised in the
Memorabilia. His alleged association with wise men (διὰ
συνουσίαν … σοφῶν) constitutes a disguised hint at his well-
known *sophia* (cleverness), which is thus transformed from
innate talent to acquired (Socratic) knowledge. Xenophon

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[52] For the concept of *sophia* in the *Memorabilia*, see Dorion (2012), who
rightly stresses that this virtue does not occupy a central place in the
philosophical system of Xenophon, as in Plato. My student, Sofia
Stavroulaki (2015), has offered an extensive treatment of the different
meanings and nuances of the term *sophia* in the *Memorabilia* and its
connections with other Socratic virtues, such as temperance and self-
mastery.

seems to recognise Themistocles' skills, but rather timidly: he does not hesitate to propose an additional biographical detail regarding the Athenian leader, thus making him a (missed) student of Socrates. In this way, Themistocles, like all leaders in the *Memorabilia*, is ultimately placed in the shadow of Socrates.

2.3 Pericles and Themistocles

We can now turn to the most intriguing reference to the two Athenian leaders, which we find in the discussion of friendship (*philia*) in the second book of the *Memorabilia* (2.6). The discussion revolves around the techniques of acquiring good (in the sense of moral) friends. Socrates explains that a good friend cannot be acquired through force, like animals, but of his own free will. He then proposes an efficient means of acquiring friends: the use of spells and drugs (ἐπῳδάς ... καὶ φίλτρα, 2.6.10), like those with which the Sirens attempted to attract Odysseus. It becomes clear from the rest of the conversation that spells are a metaphor for praise; hence Socrates' suggestion amounts to the use of praise as a means to attract friends. Critobulus reacts to this by observing that if praises are exaggerated and untruthful, the praised person is ridiculed. The conversation then proceeds as follows (2.6.12–14):

> 'You mean, I take it, that the spell must be fitted to the listener, so that he won't take the praise for mockery.'
>
> 'Yes; for to praise for beauty, stature and strength one who is aware that he is short, ugly and puny, is the way to repel him and make him dislike you more.'
>
> 'Do you know any other spells?' (ἄλλας δέ τινας οἶσθα ἐπῳδάς;)
>
> 'No, but I have heard that Pericles knew many and cast them on the city, and so made her *love* him (Περικλῆς πολλὰς ἐπίσταιτο, ἃς ἐπᾴδων τῇ πόλει ἐποίει αὐτὴν φιλεῖν αὐτόν).'
>
> 'And how did Themistocles make the city *love* him (τὴν πόλιν φιλεῖν αὐτόν)?'

'Not by spells: no, no (μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἐπᾴδων); but by
hanging some good amulet about her.'

Based on the emphatic expression μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἐπᾴδων, which
suggests a contrast between Pericles and Themistocles with
regards to their technique of acquiring the benevolence of
the people, Olof Gigon maintained that Socrates' view of
Pericles in this passage is negative.[53] Gigon's opinion has
been questioned by Huss and more recently by Dorion.[54]
According to these scholars, Xenophon's evaluation of both
Pericles and Themistocles is positive. In order to contribute
to the interpretation of this controversial passage, it would
be worth examining more closely these references, their
context and implications. At least two issues are raised:
firstly, why is Pericles (and not Themistocles) presented as
having recourse to spells? Secondly, why does Xenophon
have recourse to the image of love for the leader?

Concerning our first question, it has already been
observed that Socrates' assertion about Pericles knowing
spells points generally to Pericles' speeches to his fellow-
citizens and to the rhetorical ability which enabled him to
charm his audience.[55] However, if spells are a metaphor for
praise, this passage could allude more specifically to the
Epitaphios. In this speech Pericles promises to praise the
dead of the first battles of the Peloponnesian War, but his
speech turns out to be a comprehensive praise of the
Athenians and their constitution.[56] Like Socrates, Pericles
seems aware of the risks of praise, but for different reasons:
he notes that if praise is exaggerated, it may not seem
credible, not because it is unworthy, but because envious
people will not tolerate it (Thuc. 2.35.2). Pericles is
considered a master of the art of praise, and that is why he
promises to speak with moderation (μετρίως εἰπεῖν).

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[53] Gigon (1956) 136–9.

[54] Huss (1999) 430–1, Dorion (2011) 203–8.

[55] Dorion (2011) 203–4.

[56] Occurrences of terms related to ἔπαινος in the *Epitaphios*: Thuc.
2.34.6; 2.35.1 and 2; 2.36.2 and 4; 2.41.4; 2.43.2; 2.45.1.

However, it is not clear whether Socrates shares Thucydides' view of Pericles. When Critobulus asks him whether he knows other (i.e. positive) spells, Socrates replies that he does not. He then qualifies his answer by adding the vague assertion that Pericles knew many spells with which he made the city love him. This means that Pericles might have known *both* deceptive *and* good spells. Consequently, Pericles' connection with spells in this passage is rather ambiguous.[57]

We can now examine the second central idea of this passage, the love for the leader. Socrates and Critobulus agree that both Pericles and Themistocles managed to obtain the love of their city, the former through spells, the latter through benefaction. Strikingly, however, the image of love of the Athenians for either Pericles or Themistocles is not corroborated by ancient sources. Thucydides recounts in detail the ambivalent attitude of the Athenians towards Pericles and eloquently describes their turbulent relationship as follows (2.65.8):

> The reason [for his success] was that he, influential through both reputation and judgement and notable for being most resistant to bribery, exercised free control over the people and was not led by them instead of leading them (κατεῖχε τὸ πλῆθος ἐλευθέρως, καὶ οὐκ ἤγετο μᾶλλον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἢ αὐτὸς ἦγε), because he did not speak to please in order to acquire power by improper means but, since he had this through his prestige, even contradicted them in their anger.[58]

In a similar vein, Plutarch also comments on Themistocles' relationship with the Athenians (*Them.* 18.3):

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[57] For another ambiguous use of spells, see also the conversation between Socrates and the courtesan Theodote (*Mem.* 3.1.16–17): Socrates seems to comically appropriate the technique of using spells, but this is not entirely compatible with his ideal of acquiring friends.

[58] See now Ferrario (2014) 106–20, for an analysis of Pericles' relationship to the Athenian *demos*.

> He used to say of the Athenians that they did not really
> honour and admire him for himself, but treated him for
> all the world like a plane-tree, running under his
> branches for shelter when it stormed, but when they
> had fair weather all about them, plucking and docking
> him.

It is obvious then that Xenophon's image of love for the
leader is not inspired by the historical reality or the literary
tradition regarding these Athenian leaders. It would be
tempting to interpret the Xenophontic image of the love for
the leader as another transformation of the metaphor of the
lovers of the city (ἐρασταὶ πόλεως) used by Pericles in the
Epitaphios. Pericles urges the Athenians to become lovers of
their city and of its power (ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὴν τῆς πόλεως
δύναμιν καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἔργῳ θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους
αὐτῆς, Thuc. 2.43.1). This metaphor, as Victoria Wohl has
masterfully demonstrated, occupied a central position in the
democracy's ideology and united all citizens through a
powerful image of male dominion.[59] Interestingly,
Xenophon eliminates political (democratic) *eros* and replaces
it with political *philia*. This adaptation has further
implications: the leader (and not the polis) becomes the
object of love. In this way, the fusion between the polis and
the *politai* implied in Pericles' metaphor is denied: an
asymmetry is established between the leader (the object of
love) and the people (who are loving). We never hear of a
leader loving his followers or subjects.[60] Finally, and more
importantly perhaps, political *philia* (contrary to the
Periclean *eros*) is no longer associated with democracy.
Indeed, Xenophon's most compelling paradigms of leaders
who acquired political *philia* are the two Persian kings,
Cyrus the Great and Cyrus the Younger, who are described
as the most beloved leaders (*Cyr.* 1.1.3, 1.6.24, 5.1.24; *An.*

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[59] Wohl (2002) 30–72.

[60] Cyrus is characterised as φιλάνθρωπος, but this quality describes
more his offers to his subordinates than the emotions he experiences
towards them; cf. *Eq. Mag.* 6.2.

1.9.28). From this perspective, Socrates' description of Pericles and Themistocles as leaders who acquired the love of the city corresponds to a kind of Persianisation of the Athenian leaders.

A relevant passage from the *Symposium* can complete Xenophon's vision of the Athenian democratic leaders. In this passage Socrates advises Callias how to gain the benevolence of Autolycos, his potential *eromenos* (8.38–9):

> In your case, Callias, I think the gods deserve your thanks for inspiring you with love for Autolycos. ... So if you want to be in his good graces (εἰ οὖν βούλει τούτῳ ἀρέσκειν), you must try to find out what sort of knowledge it was that enabled Themistocles to liberate Greece (Θεμιστοκλῆς ἱκανὸς ἐγένετο τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐλευθεροῦν); you must try to find out what kind of knowledge it was that made Pericles *gain a reputation* for being his country's best counsellor (Περικλῆς κράτιστος ἐδόκει τῇ πατρίδι σύμβουλος εἶναι); you must reflect further, how it was that Solon by deep thought established in his city the best laws (Σόλων φιλοσοφήσας νόμους κρατίστους τῇ πόλει κατέθηκεν); you must search out what kind of practices there are that give the Spartans *the reputation* of being preeminent military commanders (Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἀσκοῦντες κράτιστοι δοκοῦσιν ἡγεμόνες εἶναι).

The political relationships between leaders and their people are presented as models for private relationships. The implication is again that those leaders managed to gain the love of their followers; consequently, their paradigm should function as a model for Callias: just as the leaders' superior knowledge led them to success and persuaded their followers, Callias should persuade Autolycos that he possesses superior knowledge in order to attract him. Leaving aside the oddity of the proposition that political models should inspire the private sphere, the selection of these four models is intriguing. Although it is difficult to find common features among all of them, it is possible to discern

two pairs: Themistocles–Pericles, Solon–Lacedaemonians.[61] For the first member of each pair (Themistocles, Solon), Xenophon reserves a positive evaluation, while he seems to offer a qualified judgement concerning the second member (Pericles, Lacedaemonians), by the use of the verb δοκεῖν, which points to how these leaders are perceived by others.[62] We can thus surmise that Pericles and the Lacedaemonians are praised more timidly than Themistocles and Solon. This is no surprise, if we consider that both Pericles and the Lacedaemonians are leaders of empires who were met with much contestation and criticism in Xenophon's time. Consequently, if Themistocles and Solon appear in a better light, it is because they have not been directly linked with imperialist practices.[63]

To sum up, our analysis has shown that the portraits of Pericles and Themistocles in the *Memorabilia* are more complex than is usually assumed. Xenophon does not openly criticise the two leaders, but he presents some ambivalent features of them and he avoids explicit praise of them. This is certainly telling, given that he does not hesitate to praise openly leaders whom he really admires. Athenian democratic leaders are viewed positively only *to the extent* that they can be potentially assimilated with the Persian monarchs, who have gained Xenophon's appreciation, or *to the extent* that they possess Socratic qualities. In this way, Xenophon rewrites the history of Athens by proposing a Persianisation and Socratisation of its leaders: Pericles is no longer the representative of

[61] The enumeration of these four models creates a misleading assimilation among them: Pericles and Themistocles indeed managed to acquire (at least temporarily) the benevolence of their people, but it is difficult to imagine an *erastēs–eromenos* relationship for Solon and the Athenians, let alone for the Lacedaemonians and their allies or the rest of Greece!

[62] I cannot follow Gray (2011) 100–5, who does not discern a difference between the verbs εἶναι and δοκεῖν in Xenophon. See further Tamiolaki (forthcoming, b).

[63] The work of Herodotus and Thucydides shows that Themistocles could be viewed as the representative of a proto-empire. Xenophon, on the contrary, does not dwell on this aspect of his career.

powerful imperialist Athens and Themistocles is not the cunning saviour of Greece who paved the way to Athens' rise to power. Xenophon establishes a new (and rather questionable) connection between them, not as democratic leaders, but as leaders who, like Cyrus, have gained the love of their 'followers'.

3. Prospective Athenian Leaders: Socrates' Interlocutors in the Third Book of the *Memorabilia* (3.1–7)

Xenophon introduces the conversations of the third book of the *Memorabilia* as follows (3.1.1): 'I will now explain how he helped those who were eager to win noble things by making them qualify themselves for what they aimed for.' This introduction, which seems only loosely connected with the defence of Socrates, is broad enough to accommodate a variety of topics. Indeed, the conversations of the third book cover many themes: politics, virtue, courage, wisdom, leisure, friendship, arts, the body, and social relationships. The first seven conversations (3.1–7) present Socrates giving political advice to Athenian individuals who have the ambition to enter into politics and hence can be examined as a coherent whole. Socrates' political advice is of course dispersed throughout the *Memorabilia*, but this section of the third book enables us to form a clearer picture of the Athenian leaders who constitute Socrates' interlocutors and their role in this work.

It is noteworthy that Socrates is not presented conversing with successful military leaders of Xenophon's time, such as Iphicrates, whom Xenophon praises in the *Hellenica* (6.2.32), Conon, or Timotheus. Of the seven Socratic interlocutors of the third book, the first three are anonymous; the fourth is Nicomachides, a rather obscure figure not attested elsewhere;[64] then follows Pericles II, the son of Pericles I, an unfortunate leader who was among the generals condemned to death after the battle of Arginusae; while the

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[64] Nails (2002), s.v.

last two interlocutors are individuals of aristocratic background, known also from Plato's dialogues: Glaucon and Charmides. The group of Socrates' interlocutors is thus far from homogeneous: it contains anonymous and named individuals, democrats and oligarchs. However, the common feature that unites all these individuals is an ambition to rule. Xenophon highlights this element by introducing in the same way Socrates' anonymous interlocutors as people who had obtained or wished to obtain a high office in Athens (3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.3.1):

> …one of his companions wished to obtain the office of general from the state.

> …one day he met a man who had been elected a general.

> Again I know that he conversed with someone who had been elected leader of the cavalry in this way.

The named interlocutors also express similar concerns: Nicomachides complains to Socrates because he failed to be elected general; Socrates then gives detailed advice to Pericles II about how he will lead Athens to its past glory; he further tries to restrain Glaucon's extreme political ambition; conversely, he encourages Charmides to cease to be shy and enter into politics.

All these individuals stand to profit from Socrates' advice and hence serve to underline Socrates' authority. It has already been observed by commentators that Socrates attempts to prove to all of them that their knowledge of politics is insufficient or problematic.[65] In my opinion, Xenophon's aim in these conversations is not limited to the demonstration of Socrates' (superior) knowledge in political matters. By showing Socrates conversing with a variety of Athenian leaders, of different fame and background, Xenophon might have wished to hinder a hasty

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[65] McNamara (2009).

classification of Socrates as 'democratic' or 'oligarchic', based solely on the background of his interlocutors.[66] These conversations highlight, on the contrary, the universal and paradigmatic dimension of Socrates' teaching. At the same time, however, they can be seen as an occasion to put to the test important Socratic ideas: Socrates' interlocutors question some of these and it is not certain that they are convinced by the whole Socratic edifice. In what follows I would like to suggest that the Athenian leaders who appear in the third book of the *Memorabilia*, despite their insufficiency, eventually contribute to the disclosure of some limitations of Socratic teaching and of its application in a democratic context. I will focus on this in two areas: (a) benefaction as a prerequisite to rule; and (b) Socratic analogies regarding leadership.

A pervasive element of Socrates' teaching is that benefaction constitutes the most important prerequisite for rule. This assertion is repeated with variations in all the conversations of the third book of the *Memorabilia*: the aim of the military leader should be to care for the well-being of his soldiers (3.2); the aim of the leader of the cavalry should be to make his subordinates (men and horses) better (3.3); the aim of the politician should be to benefit his city (3.6); efficient people should participate in politics because this will entail profit both for themselves and for the city (3.7). Xenophon elaborates on this idea in the *Cyropaedia* as well: in the conversation between Cambyses and the young Cyrus, Cambyses advises his son that the only way to gain the love of his followers is benefaction (1.6.24). And, of course, all the model leaders that Xenophon admires, such as Cyrus or Agesilaus, possess this quality.

This idea is certainly compelling and Xenophon takes pains to develop it at length in various of his works. Some questions arise, however, when Socrates attempts to apply it to democratic leaders. In his discussion with the anonymous

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[66] For instance, Gray (2004) considers Socrates democratic because he converses with Athenian democratic leaders.

Athenian who desired to be a general, Socrates states (3.2.2–4):

> Why do you think Homer dubs Agamemnon 'shepherd of the people'? Is it because a shepherd should care that his sheep are safe and have what they need, and that the purpose for which they are kept is achieved, and a general should take care that his men are safe and have what they need, and that the purpose for which they fight is achieved? … A king is elected (βασιλεὺς αἱρεῖται) not to take good care of himself, but for the good of those who have elected him (ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἑλόμενοι δι' αὐτὸν εὖ πράττωσι); and all men fight in order that they may get the best life possible, and choose generals to guide them to it. Therefore it is the commander's duty to deliver this for those who have elected him as a general (τοῖς ἑλομένοις αὐτὸν στρατηγόν).

The comparison of a democratic general with a king blurs constitutional boundaries. Socrates seems here to suggest that the qualities of a good leader may not be dependent on constitutions. However, in order to defend this idea, he has recourse to a paradox: he states that the king is elected (βασιλεὺς αἱρεῖται, ἑλόμενοι). Yet election is a democratic procedure *par excellence*, while royalty is based on hereditary rights. This paradox obscures the fundamental differences between a king and a democratic general and points to a fusion between constitutions: the democratic leader should resemble the king regarding benefaction, while the king is supposed to resemble (?) the military leader in that he is elected. This image obviously serves Socrates' paradigm, but at the same time reveals its limitations: to what extent are kings and military leaders really comparable? This conversation is very short and we never hear whether Socrates' interlocutor was convinced by this comparison.

We can now turn to the analogies that we find in Socrates' conversations with Nicomachides, Glaucon and Charmides: between chorus–polis, *oikos*–polis, and the public–private spheres. It is remarkable that these analogies

are met with contestation from Socrates' interlocutors. First, Nicomachides complains that Antisthenes was elected general instead of himself and questions the criteria of this election: the Athenians elected Antisthenes not on the basis of his military competence, but because he was a good chorus-trainer (*chorēgos*).[67] Socrates tries to convince him that the qualities needed to be a good *chorēgos* or a good household manager do not essentially differ from the qualities of a good general (3.4.6): 'If a man controls something, if he knows what he wants and can get it, he will be a good leader, be it of a chorus, an estate, a city, or an army.' Nicomachides is not persuaded by this assertion, so Socrates undertakes to convince him by urging him to a joint inquiry on the convergences between the art of household management (οἰκονομική) and the art of politics (πολιτική). Socrates starts enumerating some similarities between the two spheres, but Nicomachides responds that fighting is not a shared feature in them. When Socrates replies that the household manager also has enemies, Nicomachides is again not convinced (3.4.11): 'But you don't say how business capacity will help when it comes to fighting.' Socrates rebukes his point in detail (3.4.11–12):

> The good household leader, through his knowledge that nothing profits or pays like a victory in the field, and nothing is so utterly unprofitable and entails such heavy loss as a defeat, will be eager to seek and furnish all aids to victory, careful to consider and avoid what leads to defeat, prompt to engage the enemy if he sees they are strong enough to win, and, above all, will avoid an engagement when he is not ready. Don't look down on businessmen, Nicomachides. For the management of private concerns differs only in quantity from that of public affairs. In other respects they are much alike, and particularly in this, that neither can be carried on without people, and the

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[67] For the chorus as a model of government, see Athanassaki (2015), who rightly observes that the paradigm of the chorus is not a viable political model.

> people employed in public and private transactions are
> the same.

Socrates' argumentation at this point has prompted scholars
to stress the interdependence of public and private spheres
in Xenophon's thought.[68] However, Socrates' reply is far
from satisfactory. The image Socrates employs to support
his thesis is much more suitable for a general than for a
household manager. He does not clarify who are the
enemies of a household manager and what kind of victory
he is supposed to fight and win. It seems that Socrates
'politicises' the household manager rather than shows his
similarities with the political leader. Furthermore, it should
be noted that Socrates' conclusion about the quasi-
identification of the private with the public sphere leads him
eventually to justify the election of a good *chorēgos* as a
general. This justification, however, contradicts Socrates'
conviction, amply expressed throughout the *Memorabilia*,
according to which *epistēmē*, in the sense of competence in a
specific field, is the most essential prerequisite for successful
leadership.[69] From this perspective, the knowledge of a good
chorēgos is indeed essential for his occupation, but not
necessarily transferrable to the field of politics. It is thus
perhaps no coincidence that we do not hear whether
Nicomachides was eventually persuaded by Socrates'
lengthy argumentation, which turns out to be fragile.

The analogy between the *oikos* and the polis appears also
in the conversation with Glaucon. After having uncovered
Glaucon's ignorance about matters of the city, thus proving
him unworthy of ruling it, Socrates proceeds to the
following argument (3.6.14–16):

> 'But you know, no one will ever manage even his own
> household successfully, unless he knows all its needs
> and sees that they are all supplied. Seeing that our city
> contains more than ten thousand houses, and it is

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[68] See Dorion (2011) 288–92, Azoulay-Pontier (2012).

[69] See Dorion (2011) 286–9.

difficult to look after so many families at once, you must have tried to make a start by doing something for one, I mean your uncle's? It needs it; and if you succeed with that one, you can set to work on a larger number. But if you can't do anything for one, how are you going to succeed with many? If a man can't carry one talent it's absurd for him to try to carry more than one, isn't it?'

'Well, I could do something for uncle's household if only he would listen to me.'

'What? You can't persuade your uncle, and yet you suppose you will be able to persuade all the Athenians, including your uncle, to listen to you? Do take care, Glaucon, your desire for reputation may lead you to an opposite result!'

Socrates here again establishes an analogy between persuading one person and persuading a multitude: according to his view, if somebody can persuade one person, this entails that he can also persuade many. This analogy is again questionable. Masses usually function in a very different way from individuals, and it is often easier to persuade a multitude than a single individual. Herodotus expressed this most clearly concerning Aristagoras' request for help at the beginning of the Ionian revolution. The historian succinctly comments on the fact that the multitude of the Athenians was convinced, whereas the Spartan Cleomenes was not (Hdt. 5.97): 'It seems that it is easier to fool many men than one; Cleomenes the Lacedaemonian was only one, but Aristagoras could not fool him, though he managed to do so with thirty thousand Athenians.' As in the case of Nicomachides, Xenophon does not inform us whether Glaucon was eventually convinced by Socrates.

Finally, we turn to the shy Charmides. Contrary to Glaucon, Charmides is reluctant to appear in public, whereas he does not hesitate to display his qualities in private. Socrates appreciates his qualities; that is why he encourages him to enter into politics. It is interesting that in the course of this conversation, Socrates twice asserts that

Charmides' competence in private affairs can help him with his career in public, while Charmides twice contests this assertion. Socrates offers an empirical and a theoretical explanation of his point of view (3.7.3 and 4):

> *Empirical*: In your (private) associations with public men (I appreciated your qualities). Whenever they take counsel with you, I find that you give excellent advice, and whenever they make a mistake, your criticism is sound.

> *Theoretical*: A man who is good at figures counts as well in a crowd as in solitude; and those who play the harp best in private excel no less in a crowd.

Charmides challenges both these assertions: 'A private conversation is a very different thing from a crowded debate, Socrates' (3.7.4); 'But don't you see that bashfulness and timidity come naturally to a man and affect him far more powerfully in the presence of a multitude than in private society?' (3.7.5). More importantly, Socrates ends up qualifying his belief in the absolute convergence between the private and the public sphere. He proceeds to a description of the Athenian multitude, explaining to Charmides that the Athenian assembly consists of fullers, cobblers, builders, smiths and farmers, all of whom have never thought about politics (3.7.6–7). His aim is to show that in reality the people with whom Charmides converses in private are more difficult to persuade than the multitude of the Athenians who are members of the Assembly. Consequently, he should not be afraid of their criticism, since he is evidently superior to them. In this way, however, Socrates considerably nuances his conception of the analogy between the private and the public sphere: somebody who is successful in the private sphere is not *automatically* successful in the public sphere, as he had suggested before, in his conversation with Nicomachides; he *can be* successful, *to the extent that* the public sphere is composed of ignorant and intellectually inferior people.

According to some commentators, Charmides' subsequent career as a member of the Thirty proves the destructive consequences of following Socrates' advice.[70] However, Socrates' advice concerned democracy and Charmides did not literally follow it. On the contrary, he participated in a government that considerably restrained the number of the citizens in the Assembly.[71] So Charmides eventually was not convinced by Socrates' arguments and remained faithful to his principle not to interfere with the mass of the Athenians.

In brief, the Athenian leaders who converse with Socrates in the third book of the *Memorabilia* may not be so famous, but their function is to bring to light Socrates' political teaching. More specifically, the fact that these leaders are not passive interlocutors, but react often with intelligent arguments and questions to Socrates' ideas shows that Socrates' teaching contained some ambivalent features that could not be easily digested. The reason for this may be that Socrates' advice was not as easily applicable in every context as he wished to present it. For example, a tension can be observed between Socrates' effort to advertise his ideas as universal and applicable to all constitutions and the limitations posed by democracy: the assimilation of a democratic leader with a king is subject to ambiguity, while his most cherished analogy, that between the public and the private spheres, does not immediately gain the approval of his fellow citizens and Socrates has to try hard, even with strained arguments, in order to convince them. Overall, then, the Athenian leaders, despite their insufficiencies, reveal, through their questioning of Socrates and their hesitant admission (or even denial) of his ideas, the limitations of Socratic teaching, and also highlight the difficulty of imposing these ideas in a democratic context.

[70] See the discussion in Dorion (2011) 322–4.

[71] For the restriction of citizens in the Assembly under the Thirty, see Krentz (1982) 64–8.

Conclusion

This study has treated the Athenian leaders who appear in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. These leaders cover a great span of time (from Themistocles to Xenophon's contemporaries) and are of various reputations, backgrounds, and moral standards: they are named or anonymous, democrats or oligarchs, morally good, bad or indifferent. It is time now to return to Badian's assertion about Xenophon's positive evaluation of Athenian leaders in the *Hellenica* and inquire whether our investigation can confirm or qualify it. Our analysis has shown that Xenophon does not adopt a hostile attitude towards any of the Athenian leaders. Even his account of the notorious Critias and Alcibiades does not fully support the negative characterisations with which he had introduced the two individuals. This could place the *Memorabilia* in line with the *Hellenica*. Unlike the *Hellenica*, however, Xenophon avoids explicit praise of Athenian leaders. On the contrary, we are acquainted with their weaknesses: Critias and Alcibiades failed to exploit the potential of their nature and origin; Pericles and Themistocles are subtly criticised or very timidly praised; the political skills of the Athenian leaders of the third book are either absent or dubious, or in the best case latent. Furthermore, despite their weak achievement in politics, Athenian leaders in the *Memorabilia* are presented as skilled in dialectic, since they actively participate in conversations about important and debated political issues (e.g. about law and constitutions, democratic leadership and kingship, public and private spheres). In sum, then, Xenophon recognises some qualities in Athenian leaders, although he does not seem to particularly admire them.

The reason for Xenophon's presentation is related to the nature and purpose of the *Memorabilia*. In this paper I have argued that Xenophon pursues two agendas in the *Memorabilia*: an apologetic one and a political one. The apologetic agenda is related to his defence of Socrates, while the political agenda concerns the elaboration of political matters that preoccupied him and his contemporaries. Xenophon's treatment of Athenian leaders reflects these

two agendas: on the one hand, the avoidance of explicit praise for them or the insistence on their insufficiency serves the apologetic agenda, since it underlines *a contrario* Socrates' superiority in both moral and political matters. On the other hand, the active participation of Athenian leaders in theoretical discussions enables Xenophon to respond to contemporary political debates. These discussions are more loosely connected with the apologetic purpose of the *Memorabilia*. The fact that most of the time they are left pending illustrates Xenophon's wish to provoke reflection on political matters of his times.

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