

## TYRANTS AS IMPIOUS LEADERS IN XENOPHON'S *HELLENICA*\*

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*Abstract:* Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the consistent focus throughout Xenophon's large and disparate body of work upon articulating a very specific set of virtues that define a good leader. I examine the reverse side of this trend in scholarship by identifying the characteristics that Xenophon employs to define bad leaders. I argue that Xenophon deliberately shaped his narrative in the *Hellenica* to portray egregiously bad leaders as tyrants, focusing in particular upon their impiety, which he presents as the crucial explanatory factor in their downfalls. Appropriating the figure of the evil tyrant from Athenian democratic ideology, he bequeaths to the later Greek historiographical tradition the *topos* of the impious tyrant.

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*Keywords:* Xenophon, tyranny, impiety, the Thirty, Jason of Pherae, Euphron of Sicyon.

Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the consistent focus throughout Xenophon's large and disparate body of work upon identifying and articulating a very specific set of virtues that define a good leader.<sup>1</sup> I intend to examine the reverse side of this recent

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<sup>1</sup> While Xenophon's theory of leadership has been a topic of interest for scholars since the middle of the twentieth century, beginning with the seminal work of Breitenbach (1950) and Wood (1964), and much of it focusing upon how his own military experience influenced his conception of the ideal leader (e.g. Hutchinson (2000), Buzzetti (2014), Buxton in this volume), recently there has been a more integrated approach, emphasising the unity of Xenophon's moral and political

trend in scholarship that is, to identify the characteristics that Xenophon employs to define bad leaders. Because this is potentially a vast topic, I will confine my observations here to the *Hellenica*. The purpose of the *Hellenica* is proscriptive, in that Xenophon employs contemporary political and military events to illustrate how to behave and, more to the point perhaps, how not to behave in political and military life.<sup>2</sup> For that reason, it offers a useful vehicle through which to examine an important but understudied facet of Xenophon's conception of ideal leadership, his definition of the bad leader, for the isolation of the vices that constitute the bad leader offers a mirror image of the virtues that define the good leader and therefore serves to crystallise his views. Michael Flower demonstrates in this volume that the under-appreciated virtue of piety is central to Xenophon's definition of the ideal leader.<sup>3</sup> As I shall argue, the converse is also true, that impiety is central to Xenophon's conception of the bad leader; more specifically, when he singles out Greek leaders as egregiously bad, he does so by portraying them as tyrants (the stereotypical bad leaders of the contemporary Greek world), and by focusing in particular upon their impiety, which he presents as the crucial explanatory factor in their downfalls.

In the *Hellenica*, it is noteworthy that Xenophon has carefully and skilfully drawn even his villains as fully fleshed-out characters in order to illustrate how their bad leadership results in disastrous consequences, particularly on a personal level.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as scholarship of the last generation has increasingly recognised, his narrative is nuanced and sophisticated, not least in his portrayals of leaders. Melina Tamiolaki has recently argued that

thought across a wide variety of genres; see esp. Gray (2011); cf. Azoulay (2004), Tamiolaki (2012), Lu (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Pownall (2004) 65–112.

<sup>3</sup> Flower, below, esp. pp. 91–4; cf. Hutchinson (2000) 45–51; Parker (2004); Pownall (2004) 83 (with 34–5); Azoulay (2008) 151–2; Flower (2012) 190.

<sup>4</sup> On characterisation in Xenophon's *Hellenica*, see Gray (1989); Tuplin (1993); Dillery (1995), esp. 164–76; Pownall (2004) 65–112.

Xenophon's portrayal of leaders is ambiguous, in that even virtuous leaders are not always successful, because no political or military leader in the real world can measure up to the ideal virtue of Socrates.<sup>5</sup> Her observation is convincing, in that even the better, more ideal leaders in the *Hellenica* have their flaws (as, for example, in Agesilaus' scheming and ambitious path to the Spartan throne),<sup>6</sup> for Xenophon does not see the world in black and white, but in shades of grey. Again, it is constructive to look at the reverse side of this observation, that is, at how Xenophon's portrayal of bad leaders sometimes shades into the grey spectrum as well.

This ambiguity applies even to his portrayal of what the fourth-century Greeks of Xenophon's day considered the worst type of ruler, the tyrant, for tyranny was a form of government that was by this time usually associated with barbarians (particularly Persians) and Greeks on the periphery (particularly in Sicily), and represented in general as absolute and unconstitutional rule of the most decadent and corrupt type.<sup>7</sup> But on the other hand, absolute rule, of the enlightened kind naturally, also exercised a sort of appeal to Xenophon who, along with Plato, Aristotle, and other members of the intellectual elite, was opposed to democracy on the grounds that it pandered to the lowest common denominator and offered opportunities for unscrupulous demagogues to sway the crowd, resulting in at best popular sovereignty (as proponents of democracy put it) and at worst mob rule, as characterised by those who opposed democracy, whether we call them 'dissenters'

<sup>5</sup> Tamiolaki (2012).

<sup>6</sup> Compare Xenophon's account of Agesilaus' accession in the *Hellenica* (3.3.1-4) with that in his encomiastic biography of the Spartan king (*Agesilaus* 1.5).

<sup>7</sup> Tyranny was a slippery and therefore usefully malleable concept for the Greeks by this time. Recent scholarship has demonstrated how the term, once applied positively or at least with relative neutrality to the one-man rulers of the Archaic Age, after the Persian Wars underwent a semantic shift and began to designate oppression, unconstitutionality, and the abuse of power for selfish material gain; see esp. Anderson (2005), Lewis (2009), Mitchell (2013).

(along with Josiah Ober) or ‘discontents’ (along with Kathryn Morgan).<sup>8</sup> Hence, it is no coincidence that Xenophon’s most sustained treatise on leadership was his *Cyropaedia*, where he articulated the qualities of the ideal leader through the figure of Cyrus the Great,<sup>9</sup> the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty and first of a long line of Great Kings of Persia, who symbolised the absolute ruler *par excellence* as far as the Greeks were concerned and had done so since the Persian Wars.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Xenophon gives voice to some of the positive aspects of absolute rule in the dialogue between the poet Simonides and his patron, the Deinomenid tyrant Hiero in Syracuse, whose portrayal is somewhat ambiguous, as noted by Roberta Sevieri in her analysis of the dialogue:<sup>11</sup>

It could be said that Hiero starts as a kind of imperfect hero, one who retains only the negative aspects of this always ambiguous figure (both to be admired and to be avoided), and ends up as the perfect hero, one who uses his somewhat dangerous power to the benefit of the community.<sup>12</sup>

This ever-present ambiguity of both the hero and the tyrant is equally present in Xenophon’s cautionary portrayal of bad leaders in the *Hellenica*.

It is quite remarkable (and once again no coincidence) that some of the most detailed and vivid episodes in the *Hellenica* centre around Greek leaders whom Xenophon

<sup>8</sup> Ober (1998); Morgan (2003).

<sup>9</sup> On Xenophon’s portrayal of leadership in the *Cyropaedia*, see the very different readings offered by Tatum (1989), Due (1989), Gera (1993), Nadon (2001), Sandridge (2012).

<sup>10</sup> Cf., e.g., Dewald (2003) 32–5.

<sup>11</sup> Sevieri (2004); cf. Gray (1986).

<sup>12</sup> Sevieri (2004) 279. Cf. Gray (2011) 2: ‘Xenophon believed also that leaders were fundamental to the success of any organisation, but he also knew the risk of the drift toward autocracy.’ It is worth noting in this connection that the virtue of piety (unusually for Xenophon) is conspicuous by its absence in the *Hiero*; cf. Lu (2015) 107.

deliberately identifies as tyrants:<sup>13</sup> Critias and the Thirty in Athens (2.3.11–2.4.43), the Corinthian rulers during the short-lived Argive-Corinthian sympolity (4.4.1–5.1.34, esp. 4.4.1–6), the Theban polemarchs who occupy the Cadmea on the Spartans' behalf (5.4.1–13), Jason of Pherae (6.1.2–19 and 6.4.20–32), and Euphron of Sicyon (7.1.44–6 and 7.3.1–12). In Xenophon's narrative, all these leaders serve as what Sian Lewis has called 'textbook' examples of tyrants,<sup>14</sup> in that they seize autocratic power unlawfully, motivated solely by personal aggrandisement, and maintain that illegitimate rule by force, particularly through the removal of actual or potential political opponents and the appropriation of private or sacred funds for their own selfish ends. With this use of force, often bolstered by bodyguards or mercenaries, the tyrant by definition rules over an unwilling populace; thus, by the criterion which Vivienne Gray has so brilliantly demonstrated to lie at the heart of Xenophon's theory of leadership, that is, the ability to obtain the willing obedience of the ruled,<sup>15</sup> a tyrant is the ultimate bad leader. Presumably this is precisely why Xenophon chooses to portray all of these regimes as tyrannical (I shall return to this question at the end), although it appears as we shall see that technically they do not necessarily wield unconstitutional rule by force, and Xenophon attempts to obscure the constitutional basis to their governments in his narrative.

Whatever may have happened in the later stages of their regime, the Thirty were elected to power legally (as even Xenophon concedes at 2.3.11), and so technically they did not in fact usurp power in a tyrannical fashion. Furthermore, although Xenophon tries very hard in the *Hellenica* to obscure any actual political or ideological basis for their

<sup>13</sup> As observed by, e.g., Higgins (1977), esp. 103–11; Tuplin (1993), esp. 43–4 and 120–4; Dillery (1995) 146–63 and 174–5; Pownall (2004) 99 and 108. For a complete list of Xenophon's usage of the *τυρανν*-root in the *Hellenica*, see the Appendix, below, *ad fin.*; Lewis (2004) also discusses Xenophon's 'theory of tyranny' in the *Hellenica*, but reaches somewhat different conclusions.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis (2004) 66.

<sup>15</sup> Gray (2011) 15–18 and *passim*.

government,<sup>16</sup> the Thirty were seriously engaged in the process of political reform, remodelling the constitution of Athens into an oligarchy on the Spartan model.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Xenophon portrays the rule of the Thirty as arbitrary (2.3.13), motivated only by personal advantage (2.3.16), and explicitly equates their government with tyranny, putting into the mouth of their leader Critias the following statement addressed to his erstwhile friend turned political opponent Theramenes (2.3.16): ‘And if, because we are thirty and not one, you think it is necessary to take any less care of this government than as if it were a tyranny (*ὡσπερ τυραννίδος*), you are simple-minded.’ Although Xenophon does not endorse *in propria persona* this equation of the Thirty with tyranny (a statement reminiscent of the Thucydidean Pericles’ and Cleon’s descriptions of the fifth-century Athenian empire),<sup>18</sup> his narrative of the rule of the Thirty emphasises their stereotypically tyrannical behaviour, focusing upon their disarming of the population (a standard device of tyrants to pre-empt any attempts to remove them from power), their absolute power giving them license to act arbitrarily in whatever way they wished, and their intimidation of the Council into endorsing their measures by stationing young men armed with daggers who serve as the equivalent of the tyrant’s bodyguard. Xenophon’s narrative of the reign of terror of the Thirty is bookended by a second conversation between Critias and Theramenes, in which this time the latter refers twice to the government of the Thirty as a tyranny (2.3.48 and 49).

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed examination of the tendentious nature of Xenophon’s narrative of the Thirty in the *Hellenica*, see Pownall (2012); see also Danzig (2014) 514–16.

<sup>17</sup> This so-called ‘revisionist’ view was developed by Krentz (1982) 57–68 and Whitehead (1982/3), and has more recently been demonstrated by Osborne (2003); Shear (2011) 166–87; Pownall (2012).

<sup>18</sup> Thuc. 2.63.2 and 3.37.2; cf. Tuplin (1993) 44 and Dillery (1995) 149. Note the distinction between Pericles’ statement that it is necessary for the Athenians to hold their empire ‘like a tyranny’ (*ὡς τυραννίδα*) and Cleon’s blunt reference to the empire as a tyranny.

Xenophon's portrayal of Critias and the Thirty serves an important programmatic function in the *Hellenica*, supplying models of typical tyrants (whose rule is destined by definition to fail), as convincingly demonstrated by Peter Krentz, Christopher Tuplin, and John Dillery.<sup>19</sup> But I would argue that Xenophon's goal is not just to exemplify the failure of Sparta's imperialism (for his narrative is certainly complex enough to have multiple messages), but also to illustrate the stereotypical features of tyranny (which simultaneously serve as an explanation for its inevitable fall). In particular, I would like to draw attention to one facet of Xenophon's portrayal of the rise and the fall of all the leaders or regimes whom he explicitly identifies as tyrants (and singles out for special treatment in his narrative), which has received little attention, his allegation that each of them acted impiously.

One of the most dramatic scenes in Xenophon's narrative of the Thirty occurs in the final showdown between Critias and Theramenes, when Critias violates the traditional rules of supplication by ordering Theramenes forcibly dragged away from the altar where he had taken refuge. Xenophon uses the character of Theramenes himself to underline this act of transgression against religious norms (2.3.53):

And by the gods, he said, I am not unaware of the fact that this altar will not help me at all, but I wish to make this point clear too, that these men are not only very unjust towards humans but also very impious towards the gods (*οὗτοι οὐ μόνον εἰσὶ περὶ ἀνθρώπους ἀδικώτατοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ θεοὺς ἀσεβέστατοι*).

And Theramenes is absolutely correct in this assumption, for immediately after he denounces the Thirty for their impiety, he is dragged away to his death by the Eleven led by Satyrus, whom Xenophon characterises as 'the boldest

<sup>19</sup> Krentz (1982) 145 and (1995) 122; Tuplin (1993) 43–7; Dillery (1995) 138–63.

and most lacking in reverence' (τοῦ θρασυτάτου τε καὶ ἀναιδεστάτου, 2.3.54). Xenophon further highlights the injustice and impiety of Theramenes' death by hemlock by attributing to him, with a somewhat self-conscious apology for the inclusion of this material that is not appropriate to a work of history,<sup>20</sup> two quips of gallows humour worthy of Socrates himself, one directed at Satyrus and the other directed at Critias (2.3.56).

Furthermore, it is surely no coincidence that Xenophon concludes his narrative of Theramenes' death with the only explicit statement in his own voice that the Thirty were tyrants (2.4.1): 'Theramenes died in this way. And it now seemed to the Thirty that they could act as tyrants without fear (τυραννείν ἀδεῶς).' Perhaps even more significantly, in the military campaign of Thrasybulus and the democratic resistance against the Thirty which immediately follows in Xenophon's narrative, the hand of the gods is prominent. When the Thirty attempt to blockade Thrasybulus and his forces in the border fortress which they have occupied, an unexpected snowstorm arrives and prevents them (2.4.2–3). Xenophon emphasises the providential nature of this snowstorm by remarking first that it appeared on a clear day and second that it was the storm alone that prevented the Thirty from carrying out their goal of laying siege to Thrasybulus and his forces.

This failure to dislodge Thrasybulus represents the beginning of the end for the Thirty, and the climactic battle, which results in the death of Critias and the decisive defeat of the Thirty, soon ensues. In his speech before the battle, Thrasybulus encourages his troops by saying that the gods are clearly on their side, for they sent a storm in fair weather to help them and arranged it so that the location of the upcoming battle was favourable to them (2.4.14–15). He concludes his speech with another reference to the help his troops can expect from the gods, and promises to follow the normal battle conventions of singing the *paean* and chanting

<sup>20</sup> On the significance of Xenophon's comments on his selection of material, see Rahn (1971) 498–9 and Pownall (2004) 80–2.



the war cry to the war god Enyalios (2.4.17). Thrasybulus' own piety is reinforced by his obedience to the instructions of the seer to refrain from battle until one of his own men is either killed or wounded (2.4.18). The unnamed seer then duly sacrifices himself to save his fellow soldiers, an action which Xenophon suggests was divinely inspired, for he falls in battle 'as if guided by some fate' (*ὡσπερ ὑπὸ μοίρας τινὸς ἀγόμενος*, 2.4.19). Xenophon once again juxtaposes the piety of Thrasybulus and the forces from Phyle to the impiety of the Thirty in a speech by Cleocritus, the herald of the initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries, who makes a battlefield plea for reconciliation after the victory of the democratic resistance over the Thirty (2.4.21–2):

By the gods of our fathers and mothers ... have reverence for both the gods and human beings (*αἰδούμενοι καὶ θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους*) and cease from committing wrongs against your country. Do not obey the most impious Thirty (*μὴ πείθεσθε τοῖς ἀνοσιωτάτοις τριάκοντα*), who for their own private gain almost killed more Athenians in eight months than all the Peloponnesians did in ten years of war. Even though it is possible for us to govern our city in peace, these men bring us to a war against each other that is most shameful, oppressive, impious and hateful to both gods and human beings (*τὸν πάντων αἴσχιστόν τε καὶ χαλεπώτατον καὶ ἀνοσιώτατον καὶ ἔχθιστον καὶ θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις πόλεμον*).

This unusually large number of references to the impiety of the Thirty is surely not accidental, coming as it does just after Xenophon's denunciation of their regime as a tyranny and Critias' refusal of sanctuary to Theramenes, which Xenophon has highlighted in his narrative with Theramenes' outburst in direct speech and his own apologetic authorial comments on Theramenes' self-possession in the face of death. The conclusion is inescapable that Xenophon intends the reader to view

Critias' death, and by extension the downfall of the Thirty, as divine retribution.<sup>21</sup>

I think, however, that we can go further than this fairly obvious conclusion, for this episode contains an important, but until now overlooked, dimension to Xenophon's portrayal of tyranny in the *Hellenica*, and that is the manner of Critias' death. For the stereotypical fate of a tyrant is to be assassinated, all the more so to an Athenian audience, for whom, according to the 'master narrative' of the Athenian democratic tradition,<sup>22</sup> the 'tyrannicides' Harmodius and Aristogeiton liberated Athens from the Peisistratid tyranny by their assassination of Hipparchus, and in doing so ushered in democracy. This strongly held, if utterly erroneous,<sup>23</sup> founding narrative of the Athenian democracy was continually reinforced, for Xenophon's contemporaries were accustomed to gazing upon the famous statues of the tyrannicides which were given pride of place in the Agora, singing the drinking songs celebrating the tyrannicides' deed, and were well aware of the privileges granted to the descendants of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the Athenians had even (in the aftermath of the oligarchic rule of the Four Hundred) enacted the decree of Demophantus, which explicitly authorised the violent assassination of tyrants by individuals in order to protect the restored democracy.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Pownall (1998) 259–60.

<sup>22</sup> The term is that of Forsdyke (2005) 242; cf. Steinbock (2013) 20 and n. 86.

<sup>23</sup> As demonstrated by Herodotus (5.55 and 62–5); Thucydides (6.53.3–59); [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 18–19.

<sup>24</sup> On the Athenian foundation narrative of their democracy and the very visible memorials commemorating the so-called tyrannicides, see Pownall (2013) and Azoulay (2014), both with earlier bibliography. On the renewed public interest in the tyrannicides at the close of the fifth century in the wake of the defeat of the Thirty, see Teegarden (2014) 43–7; cf. Raaflaub (2003); Shear (2012), esp. 51–2; Azoulay (2014) 97–120.

<sup>25</sup> On the decree of Demophantus and the role of other tyrant-killing legislation in support of democratic ideology, see Teegarden (2014); he discusses the late fifth-century historical context at 15–53.

But the manner of Critias' death does not match the stereotypical fate of tyrants, in that he was not assassinated but died in battle, if anything, an honourable death by the standards of his day (as in the advice of Solon to Croesus at *Hdt.* 1.30.4–5, for example), which is underlined by Xenophon's observation that the victorious democrats did not fully strip the corpses of their citizen opponents (2.4.19).<sup>26</sup> The nature of Critias' death in battle poses a problem for Xenophon (which is probably why he skates over it in his narrative) if, as it seems, Critias and the Thirty serve as paradigmatic examples of bad leaders, whose downfall is intended to provide a moral lesson.<sup>27</sup> It is likely that the desire to provide an explanation for Critias' 'unusual' death is precisely why Xenophon places so great an emphasis on divine retribution in this section of his narrative. Instead of being assassinated by an individual or a small group of conspirators, Critias is punished for his crimes by the gods. But in order for the gods to intervene, an act of impiety has to have occurred, which is why Critias' violation of sanctuary in particular, and the rather more vague allegations of the impiety of the Thirty in general, are given such emphasis in Xenophon's narrative.

Furthermore, Xenophon's highlighting of impiety as an explanatory factor in the downfall of Critias and the Thirty leads us to expect it in his narrative of other Greek leaders whom he singles out as tyrants: the Corinthian rulers during the Argive-Corinthian political union, the Theban polemarchs (and their Spartan allies) who seized the Cadmea, Jason of Pherae, and Euphron of Sicyon. Xenophon further draws attention to what he suggests is the singular nature of the regimes in the cases of the Corinthian and Theban rulers by engaging in rare first person denunciation, and in the cases of Jason and Euphron by devoting not only one, but two carefully demarcated digressions from his narrative

<sup>26</sup> *Pace* Krentz (1995) 145, who views this observation as 'another indication of the moral superiority of the democrats'.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Dillery (1995) 162: 'The paradigm gives Xenophon the opportunity to set out not just his understanding of why the Thirty fell but also how any regime falls.'

to each of them, notably for both sets of cases the only places in the *Hellenica* where he does so.<sup>28</sup>

After his programmatic narrative of the tyranny of Critias and the Thirty, the next Greek leaders whom Xenophon identifies as tyrants in the *Hellenica* are the Corinthian democrats. These men, having received bribes from the Persian king to effect the continuation of the Corinthian War, conspire with the aid of the Argives, Athenians, and Boeotians to massacre the Corinthian oligarchs, who advocate making peace with Sparta. In his narrative of this episode, Xenophon employs unusually strong language to denounce the Corinthian conspirators, condemning the timing of the massacre during a religious festival as ‘the most sacrilegious plan of all’ (τὸ πάντων ἀνοσιώτατον, 4.4.2), and referring to them as ‘utterly sacrilegious’ (ἀνοσιώτατοι) when they continued to slaughter their victims even when they took refuge at the statues of the gods in the marketplace and at the altars of the gods, an action which he explicitly characterises as impiety (ἀσέβεια) in the eyes of the law-abiding citizens who witnessed these atrocities (4.4.3). The survivors of the massacre piously obey a portent and remain in the city, which has by now undergone a full political union with Argos (4.4.4–6), but when they see that those in power are ruling as tyrants (τυραννεύοντας, 4.4.6), they summon the Spartans to liberate the city. The Spartans are successful, and in a scene replete with divine retribution (4.4.8: τύχη; cf. 4.4.7: ἐτύγχανε, 4.4.12: ὁ θεός, θεῖον) wreak terrible vengeance upon the perpetrators of the massacre.<sup>29</sup>

Although the Corinthian democrats certainly obtained power through violent means, their rule appears to be less a ‘tyranny’ in the usual sense of the word than a victory of the

<sup>28</sup> On the uniqueness of Xenophon’s vehement denunciations of the Corinthian rulers and the Theban polemarchs, see Pownall (1998) 253–5 and (2004) 85; of the double digressions on both Jason and Euphron, see Pownall (2004) 99–105.

<sup>29</sup> For discussion of this episode, see Gray (1989) 154–7, Tuplin (1993) 69–70, Pownall (1998) 284–5 and ead. (2004) 85 and 88–9; none of these scholars, however, draws the connection between impiety and tyranny.

stronger side in an episode of civil strife (a phenomenon endemic to the cities of Archaic and Classical Greece), which is presumably why Xenophon distances himself by placing the explicit identification of their government as a tyranny in the mouth of their political enemies and does not endorse it *in propria persona*. That said, however, through the narrative strategy of 'focalisation', that is, presenting what the characters subjectively perceive (or, in this case, say) on the basis of their own frame of reference, Xenophon privileges, and in fact reinforces, the negative portrayal of the regime of the Corinthian democrats.<sup>30</sup> For what it is worth, our other source for the Argive-Corinth political union, Diodorus (14.86), presents this episode straightforwardly as the result of civil strife,<sup>31</sup> and it seems that the reference to the Corinthian democrats as 'tyrants' and the focus upon their impiety as the explanatory factor of their downfall are elements unique to Xenophon.

Similarly, in the only other episode in the *Hellenica* where Xenophon resorts to explicit condemnation in the first person, he identifies the Theban polemarchs who handed over the Cadmea to the Spartans as tyrants, and further justifies their assassination by linking them to the Spartans' impiety in seizing the Cadmea in contravention of the oaths they had sworn in the King's Peace (oaths, of course, are guaranteed by the gods). The episode begins with a vehement denunciation of the Spartans for their oath breaking (5.4.1), which Xenophon identifies as the historical explanation for Sparta's ultimate failure to achieve lasting hegemony of Greece.<sup>32</sup> Xenophon stresses that divine

<sup>30</sup> On the application of the techniques of narratological analysis to Thucydides, see Rood (1998), esp. his discussion of the term 'focalisation' (11–14 and 20–1), and some of the problems inherent in its application (294–6). As he observes (296): 'the narrator selects from the information that is within the character's field of knowledge (or 'vision') what is relevant for the story.'

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Cawkwell (1979) 209, who observes that 'the plan to unite Corinth and Argos was perhaps popular enough (cf. 5.1.34)'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>32</sup> On Xenophon's use of the divine as a historical agent, see Dillery (1995) 179–237; esp. his observation (223–5) that in Diodorus' account (15.1.1–5), by contrast, the gods are absent and the Spartans' failure is

vengeance for the Spartans' act of impiety came about through the agency of the very people whom they had wronged (i.e. the Thebans at Leuctra), and states that the Thebans who had collaborated with the Spartans in the seizure of the Cadmea were included in the Spartans' divine punishment. Then he proceeds to narrate another of the most colourful episodes in the *Hellenica*, in which seven political exiles from Thebes conspire against the pro-Spartan government, gain entry to a symposium disguised as women and assassinate the Theban polemarchs once they have been plied with sufficient wine.<sup>33</sup> The political supporters of the polemarchs, whom Xenophon explicitly associates with their tyranny in a later context (7.3.7), are assassinated (although they have been granted safe conduct) by the Thebans, who even kill their children (5.4.11–12).

What is particularly interesting for our purposes, however, is the juxtaposition between the Theban leaders' impiety (by association with their collusion with the Spartans) and Xenophon's portrayal of them as tyrants. Although as polemarchs, and therefore legally elected rulers, the Theban collaborators are surely not technically tyrants by any definition,<sup>34</sup> Xenophon refers to them three times unambiguously as tyrants in his narrative of this episode, and a fourth time later on. In his introduction to the episode, in which he denounces with such vehemence the impiety of the Spartans, Xenophon comments that the Theban collaborators handed over the acropolis to the Spartans out of a desire to enslave the city so that they themselves might rule as tyrants (5.4.1: ὥστε αὐτοὶ τυραννεῖν). In the course of the narrative of this episode, he reinforces this portrayal of the collaborationist government as tyrants by employing once again the technique of focalisation, putting references to their 'tyranny' into the

attributed to their own human folly. For the scattered references to the Spartans' 'tyranny' in the *Hellenica*, see Appendix.

<sup>33</sup> On Xenophon's narrative of this episode, see Gray (1989) 65–70 and Pownall (2004) 68–9.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Lewis (2004) 68–9.

mouth of the Theban conspirators (5.4.2 and 9) and Agesilaus (5.4.13), whose real motivation (according to Xenophon) in refraining from the recovery of the Cadmea was not to incur the ill-will of his fellow citizens for providing military assistance to tyrants (as the expulsion of tyrants was a long-held pillar of Spartan propaganda, probably dating from the time of their expulsion of the Peisistratids from Athens). In a later context, the assassins of Euphron justify their action by referring to the death sentence meted out to the supporters of the Theban polemarchs for attempting to become tyrants (7.3.7). Once again we find impiety serving as the historical explanation for the downfall of bad rulers, whom Xenophon deliberately tarnishes with the label of tyrant.

The two other portrayals of Greek leaders as tyrants in the *Hellenica* occur in Xenophon's two sets of paired digressions on Jason and Euphron. In the digressions on Jason (6.1.2–19 and 6.4.20–32), Xenophon provides a detailed and vivid portrayal of the Thessalian leader, to the point that the figure of Jason virtually leaps off the pages of the *Hellenica*, and he is clearly intended to represent a paradigmatic type of individual.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, for the whole of the first digression on Jason and for much of the second, Xenophon portrays him as a moral leader by the criteria that he has established for good leadership expressed in the *Hellenica* and elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> But, as noted previously, Xenophon's conception of good leadership is deliberately ambiguous, and even idealised leaders, such as Jason, are not wholly virtuous.

In the case of Jason, the idealising portrait of his leadership continues almost until the end of the second digression, where Xenophon takes the opportunity to portray him at the summit of his career, concluding with the memorable phrase (6.4.28): 'He was in fact the greatest man of his time.' The phrasing suggests that a *peripeteia* is

<sup>35</sup> So Dillery (1995) 171–6; cf. Tuplin (1993) 117–21; Pownall (2004) 99–103.

<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., Higgins (1977) 110; Gray (1989) 185–6; Dillery (1995) 171; Pownall (2004) 100–1; Buxton in this volume.

about to follow, and indeed one does. Xenophon now jumps ahead a year to Jason's preparations for the Pythian festival at Delphi, employing the technique of *prolepsis*, the anticipation of an event before its chronological spot in the narrative, in order to establish more emphatically cause and effect in his upcoming narrative of Jason's downfall.<sup>37</sup> Xenophon states that Jason intended, or so people said, to preside over the festival himself, but his real intentions regarding the sacred treasures remained unclear to his own day, and concludes (6.4.30): 'It is said that when the people of Delphi asked the oracle what they should do if Jason were to seize any of the sacred funds, the god replied that he would see to it himself.' Thus Xenophon implies that Apollo will punish Jason for his intended appropriation of the sacred treasures at Delphi, but does not vouch for the veracity of this rumour on his own authority.

Nevertheless, in the very next sentence after this speculation on Jason's prospective impiety, Xenophon turns immediately to a dramatic description of his assassination at the hands of seven young men (6.4.31–2). The juxtaposition of Jason's assassination with his alleged sacrilege and Apollo's vaguely ominous reply certainly suggests that Xenophon intends us to view his fate as divine retribution. Furthermore, it is important to observe that while Xenophon makes no authorial comment either on Jason's intended impiety or his assassination, he does conclude his narrative of this episode with the remark (6.4.32): 'These men (that is, Jason's assassins) were honoured in most of the Greek cities to which they came, and it was clear from this that the Greeks were greatly afraid that Jason would have become a tyrant.'

Although previously Xenophon has carefully portrayed Jason as the legally-elected *tagos* (executive officer of the four Thessalian tribal territories),<sup>38</sup> it is now after speculation upon his impiety that he labels him as a tyrant, although

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the discussion of the narrative purposes of temporal manipulation in Thucydides in Rood (1998) 109–30.

<sup>38</sup> On the legitimate and possibly hereditary basis to Jason's position in Thessaly, see Sprawski (1999), esp. 58–62, and (2004).



not, it should be noted, in his own voice. The impression that we are left with at the end of the Jason episode, that despite his previous good leadership, he was in fact a tyrant, is confirmed by Xenophon's subsequent summary of the messy aftermath of Jason's assassination (6.4.33–7), when he is succeeded to the office of *tagos* by his brothers Polydorus and Polyphron. Polydorus' sudden death led to speculation that he was assassinated at the hands of his brother (the murder of family members is a *topos* of tyranny both in Herodotus and in Attic drama). Polyphron then, as Xenophon says, conducted himself in the office of *tagos* as if it were a tyranny (6.4.34: *κατεσκευάσατο δὲ τὴν ταγείαν τυραννίδι ὁμοίαν*), and exiled and put to death the most powerful men in the city, that is, he eliminated his political opponents, another stereotypical feature of tyranny, as demonstrated perhaps most vividly in the Herodotean anecdote of the advice given to the Cypselid tyrant Periander at Corinth (5.92ζ). Polyphron too is assassinated, the proper fate of the stereotypical tyrant, as his assassin (a certain Alexander, who according to Plutarch was Polyphron's nephew)<sup>39</sup> claims (6.4.34), justifying his deed as avenging Polydorus' death and destroying the tyranny (*τὴν τυραννίδα καταλύοντος*), apparently fancying himself a Thessalian Harmodius or Aristogeiton. But his murder of a family member brands him as a tyrant too, as do his ensuing lack of justice, harsh rule, and appropriation of funds for his own selfish ends (6.4.35)—or so Xenophon presents him, at least, for his political and military success and reputation outside of Thessaly suggest rather that he enjoyed widespread support.<sup>40</sup> In Xenophon's narrative, however, Alexander is employed as 'a tyrannical cautionary tale',<sup>41</sup> and meets the appropriate fate of a tyrant, murdered in his bed by his wife and her brothers in a dramatic scene very reminiscent of Herodotus' narration of the accession to power of Gyges of Lydia (1.8–12), the very first ruler (and, it

<sup>39</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 29.4.

<sup>40</sup> Sprawski (2006); cf. Lewis (2009) 67–6.

<sup>41</sup> Lewis (2009) 67.

should be noted, an eastern foreign despot) whose rule is described as a tyranny (Archilochus F 19W), with the assassination of the reigning monarch at the instigation of a similarly nameless queen.<sup>42</sup> The emphasis on tyranny in this section of Xenophon's narrative suggests that if all of Jason's successors as *tagos* were tyrants, then he too must have been one by definition, although he does stop short of referring to Jason as a tyrant explicitly in his own voice.

It seems that for Xenophon Jason's intended crime against the gods is what constitutes the justification for abruptly transforming him from an ideal leader into a tyrant, and it is interesting that in this section of his narrative, immediately before Jason's assassination, we find an emphasis upon Jason's use of mercenaries (6.4.21, 22, 28) and a personal bodyguard (6.4.21 and 28), both stereotypical features of tyrannies, for they lend force to the tyrant's regime. In the *Hellenica*, if one looks carefully enough, the downfall of every leader, even those portrayed as good leaders up to that point, comes as the result of some sort of moral vice.<sup>43</sup> Jason's impiety, therefore, represents *the* crucial explanatory factor in his downfall and makes the parallel with the other Greek leaders depicted as tyrants in the *Hellenica* even more pronounced.

The final example of a Greek leader whom Xenophon portrays as a tyrant is Euphron of Sicyon, the only other historical figure to be singled out in two separate digressions from his narrative (7.1.44–6 and 7.3.1–12).<sup>44</sup> As in the previous examples of 'tyrannical' Greek leaders, Xenophon appears to be obscuring the legal basis of Euphron's power in order to portray him as a tyrant. After gaining the support of the Argives and Arcadians, Euphron establishes an anti-Spartan democracy in Sicyon, and summoning his fellow citizens into the marketplace, orders them to elect generals (7.1.44–5). After his own (unsurprising) election as

<sup>42</sup> On the Herodotean echoes in this episode in Xenophon, see Gray (1989) 70–2.

<sup>43</sup> Pownall (2004) 65–112.

<sup>44</sup> On Xenophon's narrative of Euphron, see Gray (1989) 134–6; Tuplin (1993) 121–4; Pownall (2004) 103–5; Lewis (2004).

one of the generals, Euphron creates what Xenophon characterises as a private mercenary army, which he then employs in characteristic tyrannical fashion to seize autocratic power for himself; as Xenophon concludes (7.1.46): 'in this way he brought everything under his own control and was clearly a tyrant' (*καὶ σαφῶς τύραννος ἦν*). But as Sian Lewis has observed,<sup>45</sup> Xenophon also states that Euphron was legally elected by the *demos* of Sicyon and implies that he never lost favour with his fellow citizens, who honoured him after his assassination with a public burial 'as if he were the founder of the city' (7.3.12). Thus, by definition at least, Euphron is not technically a tyrant, and Xenophon has to engage in special pleading, highlighted by his use of the adverb *σαφῶς* ('clearly') to transform him into one, just as he does with the previous Greek rulers whom he portrayed as tyrants.

It is important to notice that one of the 'tyrannical' activities in which Euphron engages at the beginning of his regime is his appropriation of sacred money to pay the mercenaries on which Xenophon implies his power rested (7.1.46). Now Xenophon does not emphasise Euphron's impiety here, but I do not believe that it is coincidental that the intervening narrative between this digression on Euphron and the following one is devoted to a lengthy account of the virtue of the Phliasians (7.2.1–3.1), the Sicyonians' Peloponnesian neighbours, who receive special praise from Xenophon for their continued loyalty to Sparta in the aftermath of the battle of Leuctra.<sup>46</sup> Not only are the Phliasians loyal, but Xenophon is careful to underline their piety as well. The Phliasians approach their ally, the Athenian commander Chares, and persuade him to help them attack a fort that Euphron and the Sicyonians are building on their border. Xenophon quotes a short speech in direct discourse that the Phliasians make to Chares, in which they encourage him to consult the gods with sacrifices as to whether or not to assist them, suggesting that

<sup>45</sup> Lewis (2004), esp. 70–2.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Pownall (2004) 103–4.

the gods are on their side and will encourage him to do so (7.2.20). Chares duly sacrifices, and he and an unnamed seer announce to the Phliasians that the sacrifices were favourable; then and only then do Chares' troops join the Phliasians and rush out into battle, as Xenophon says, 'in a kind of divine enthusiasm' (*θεία τινὶ προθυμία*, 7.2.21). Not surprisingly, in light of these explicit references to the support of the gods, the Sicyonian defenders of the fort flee in panic, leaving behind their provisions for the Phliasian troops to feast upon. Xenophon is careful to report the pious behaviour of the Phliasians after their victory: they pour libations for their good fortune and sing the *paean* (7.2.23). The clear implication is that the victory of the Phliasians is a reward from the gods for their piety. In fact, this section of Xenophon's narrative, with its emphasis on the piety of the Phliasians, the battlefield role of the unnamed seer, and the role of the gods in the military success of the Phliasians over the Sicyonian troops, is very reminiscent of the victory of Thrasybulus and the democratic resistance over Critias and the Thirty in the battle of Munychia.

Xenophon returns to his narrative of Euphron immediately after this section on the pious behaviour of the Phliasians, Euphron's opponents, and it will therefore come as no surprise to the careful reader that Euphron receives his just deserts for his impiety and tyrannical behaviour. When Euphron returns home after his defeat by the Phliasians, he is removed from power by an aristocratic faction, whom he succeeds in dislodging with the help of yet another mercenary army (this time from Athens), but remains unable to gain control of the acropolis, which was held by a Theban garrison. When he goes to Thebes to persuade the authorities there to hand back control of the city to him, he is assassinated by a group of aristocratic exiles (7.3.1–5). In his defence speech, one of the unnamed killers justifies the assassination to the Thebans by emphasising Euphron's tyranny. He begins by associating Euphron with the supporters of the Theban polemarchs who collaborated with the Spartans in the seizure of the

Cadmea (7.3.7), whom the Thebans themselves justifiably condemned to death, a euphemism for the massacre that actually occurred (5.4.11–12), on the grounds that they had committed unholy acts (*ἀνοσίων*), were traitors, and were attempting to rule as tyrants (*τυραννεῖν ἐπιχειρούντων*). He then proceeds to enumerate Euphron's crimes, which are essentially the standard vices of a tyrant, including the liberation of slaves,<sup>47</sup> the arbitrary killing and exiling of his political opponents, and the seizure of their property for himself (7.3.8). It is notable, however, that the unnamed killer also expresses strong moral indignation for Euphron's pillaging of the sanctuaries in Sicyon. The assassin concludes his defence speech by stating that Euphron 'was unquestionably a tyrant' (*ἀπροφασίστως τύραννος ἦν*), a verbal echo that seems designed to recall the similar statement with its special pleading at the end of the first digression (7.1.46). In Xenophon's digressions on Euphron, there is once again an explicit and emphatic connection between tyranny and impiety, and the suggestion of divine punishment for an act of sacrilege, particularly when his assassination is juxtaposed with the string of military successes experienced by his exceptionally pious opponents, the Phliasians.

The final leader whom Xenophon explicitly characterises as a tyrant is not a Greek, but a foreigner, Mania, who became sub-satrap of the province of Aeolis in northwest Asia Minor after the death of her husband. She is the subject of a lengthy and dramatic anecdote at the beginning of Book 3 of the *Hellenica* (3.1.10–28),<sup>48</sup> and the placement of her story in Xenophon's narrative is significant, for it comes immediately after the fall of the Thirty in Athens, when the Spartans are campaigning against the Persians in Asia Minor in order to restore their reputation among their fellow Greeks after accepting Persian gold during the final stages of the Peloponnesian

<sup>47</sup> A hallmark of tyranny, according to Aristotle (*Pol.* 5.1313b32–4).

<sup>48</sup> On the dramatic qualities of Xenophon's narrative of Mania, see Gray (1989) 29–35 and Pownall (2004) 105–8.

War. Mania is a good example of the ambiguity of leadership for Xenophon; although she proves herself to be an effective leader, she is nonetheless a tyrant,<sup>49</sup> as indeed she must be, as an eastern despot ruling over Greek subjects for the Persian king. After the death of her husband who served as sub-satrap in the region, Mania pays a visit in person to the Persian satrap Pharnabazus, bringing gifts for him and his court, and she requests him politely to allow her a trial period as her husband's replacement to prove her worth. When he agrees, she turns out to be more loyal and energetic than her husband had been. Nevertheless, although Mania's leadership is well received by Pharnabazus, she does fit the Greek stereotype of an intriguing and manipulative oriental woman, and it is telling that Aristotle, in the *Politics* (1313b32), comments upon the dominance of women (as well as slaves) in the tyrant's household. Furthermore, Mania conquers the coastal Greek cities of Larisa, Hamaxitus, and Colonae, adding them to Pharnabazus' territory, but Xenophon subtly comments that she does so using a Greek mercenary force and looking on from a covered carriage (*ἀρμάμαξα*), a form of transport that he usually associates with Persian women (3.1.13).<sup>50</sup> The scene of Greek mercenaries conquering other Greeks on the Persians' behalf with Mania looking on in a carriage must have been morally repugnant. It is therefore no surprise perhaps when Mania is assassinated by her own son-in-law Meidias, who strangles her and slaughters her teenage son as well. Xenophon concludes his narrative of Mania's murder with the comment that Meidias took advantage of his family connection to gain access to her presence, for Mania guarded herself against others, as is fitting in a tyranny (3.1.14: *ὥσπερ ἐν τυραννίδι προσῆκεν*). Thus, Xenophon explicitly refers to Mania's rule as a tyranny and draws attention to one of the stereotypical features of a tyrant, the personal bodyguard.

<sup>49</sup> Tuplin (1993) 49; Krentz (1995) 163–4; Pownall (2004) 108.

<sup>50</sup> *Cyr.* 3.1.40 and 6.4.11; cf. *Hdt.* 7.83.2; cf. also *Hdt.* 7.41.1 and *Ar. Ach.* 70, where the emphasis is on Persians rather than women. See Krentz (1995) 164.

Now if Mania herself is a tyrant, as one would expect in a Persian environment, by definition Meidias, who has killed his own mother-in-law and usurped her position, is even more tyrannical, that is, he represents a substantively tyrannical figure as opposed to a situationally tyrannical one.<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, retribution is swift and comes in the form of the Spartan commander in the region, Dercylidas, who arrives on the scene and retakes in a single day the Greek cities of Larisa, Hamaxitus, and Colonae; they came over to him willingly, as Xenophon tellingly observes (3.1.16). He immediately proceeds to a detailed description of a series of unfavourable sacrifices that delayed Dercylidas from undertaking any subsequent military action for a number of days (3.1.17). Xenophon makes it very clear that we are intended to view Dercylidas' heeding of the inauspicious sacrifices as properly pious behaviour, for he observes that one of the allied commanders, impatient at the continued delay, attempted to cut off the water supply of Cebren, another Greek city that the Spartan army was attempting to recover from the Persians, but was immediately repulsed, suffering a wound in the process and losing two of his men (3.1.18). It is then that the inhabitants of Cebren voluntarily offer to surrender the city to Dercylidas, on the grounds that they would rather be on the Greek side than the barbarian one and, not coincidentally it seems, the sacrifices finally turn out favourably for Dercylidas and the city opens its gates (3.1.18-19).

It is only then that Dercylidas finally approaches the city of Scepsis, Meidias' headquarters. Meidias immediately surrenders, because he does not trust his own subjects to defend him (ruling over unwilling subjects is of course Xenophon's definition of a tyrant). Dercylidas then sacrifices to Athena twice in three chapters (3.1.21 and 23), which Xenophon emphasises in his narrative by including in direct discourse his conversation with Meidias about the sacrifices. Afterwards, Dercylidas dismisses Meidias' garrison and personal bodyguard (once again, the

<sup>51</sup> I thank the editor and one of the anonymous referees for *Histos* for clarifying my thinking on this point.

stereotypical attributes of a tyrant) and magnanimously spares his life, in sharp contrast to the perfidy with which Meidias murdered his own predecessor in the tyranny. While strictly speaking neither Mania nor Meidias (unlike the Greek leaders portrayed as tyrants) actually commits impiety, Xenophon's emphasis upon the ostentatious piety of Dercylidas is clearly intended to highlight his opponents' corresponding lack of this crucial (and particularly Greek?) virtue. It seems likely that Xenophon very deliberately dwells upon the Mania and Meidias episode just after his narrative of the fall of the Thirty in order to underline the impiety of tyranny, a form of government fit only for barbarians and unworthy of Greek leaders.

To conclude, I have argued that not only does Xenophon single out certain Greek leaders as egregiously bad by portraying them as tyrants and narrating their downfalls in particularly colourful and detailed passages, but he also emphasises their alleged crimes against the gods as *the* crucial explanatory factor in their downfalls. This appears to be a new development in the Greek historiographical tradition, as impiety is an aspect that is curiously underplayed in Herodotus' depiction of the Greek tyrants. As Carolyn Dewald has recently demonstrated, the Greek tyrants in Herodotus are generally portrayed as harsh and violent, and increasingly as what she describes as 'potential wicks drawing foreign domination and real, systemic autocracy . . . down into Greece'.<sup>52</sup> But instances of impiety associated with Greek tyrants in Herodotus' narrative are few, isolated and generally contain no whiff of divine retribution, such as Pheidon's usurpation of the presidency of the Olympic Games from the Eleans (which Herodotus characterises at 6.127.3 as 'the greatest act of *hybris*'), Periander's necrophilia and violation of *nomos* in stripping the women of Corinth of their clothing at a festival as an offering to the ghost of his dead wife (5.92η), and perhaps Peisistratus' ruse of dressing up a tall and striking woman as Athena in order to establish himself as tyrant for

<sup>52</sup> Dewald (2003) 40.



the second time, which leads Herodotus to comment upon the gullibility of the Athenians, rather than offering any explicit denunciation of Peisistratus' action in and of itself (1.60.3–5). And Thucydides, as Simon Hornblower has observed, generally neglects to inform us on the religious dimension to the Peloponnesian War,<sup>53</sup> and so it is not surprising that he comments only on the desire for personal aggrandisement of both the Greek and Sicilian tyrants (1.17). He does not mention impiety as a characteristic of tyranny, but instead mentions in passing the concern for cult and ritual by both Peisistratus and Polycrates (3.104.1–2; cf. 1.13.6). Perhaps most famously Thucydides dismisses the popular conception that the mutilation of the Herms and the profanation of the Eleusinian Mysteries on the eve of the Athenian departure for Sicily in 415 were an oligarchical or tyrannical conspiracy designed to sabotage the expedition, using the example of the Peisistratid tyranny to show how little the general population in Athens knew about its own history, for as he demonstrates it was not actually oppressive at all until the assassination of the tyrant Hippias' brother Hipparchus (6.53.3–60.1; cf. 1.20.1–2).

It is only with Xenophon that impiety becomes one of the standard *topoi* of tyranny, and serves as the crucial explanatory factor for the downfall of the tyrant. The association of tyranny and impiety is not particularly surprising, for condemnation of the impious is certainly one of the organising principles of the *Hellenica*.<sup>54</sup> What is perhaps more surprising, however, is Xenophon's deliberate portrayal of bad leaders as tyrants. As noted above, hatred of tyranny was a particular concern of Athenian democratic

<sup>53</sup> Hornblower (1992).

<sup>54</sup> Pownall (1998). That is perhaps why the link of tyranny with impiety (curiously) seldom appears elsewhere in Xenophon, even in the *Hiero*, where one might expect it (apart from the reference to the tendency of tyrants to rob temples to satisfy their desire for money at 4.11; a point not made, however, in a similar context at *Smp.* 4.36); generally Xenophon associates tyranny with unwilling subjects; see, e.g., *Mem.* 4.6.12 and *Oec.* 21.12, as well as implicitly throughout the *Hiero*. Cf. n. 12.

ideology, according to which the tyrant-slayers Harmodius and Aristogeiton were credited with the expulsion of the tyrants and the foundation of Athenian democracy. Furthermore, Athenians of all social classes regularly witnessed tyrants being brought to life on the tragic and the comic stage.<sup>55</sup> It is interesting, therefore, that Xenophon, who was writing for the educated elite, deliberately shaped his narrative to portray bad leaders as tyrants, thereby employing the ideology of the Athenian democracy (which generally comes off in a very bad light in the *Hellenica*). It may be, as Kurt Raafflaub simply puts it, that ‘tyranny was good to think with’.<sup>56</sup> For someone who was as interested in leadership as Xenophon was and who was thoroughly imbued with the ideology of Athenian democratic culture (even if he did not necessarily agree with it), the paradigm of the tyrant offered the very best negative *exemplum* for the bad leader, and was as useful as well as a familiar tool for his aim of preparing the elite to play a more socially responsible and constructive role in contemporary political leadership.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the desire to dissociate oligarchy from tyranny, to which the concept had become inextricably linked by the end of the fifth century, as Thucydides’ misguided Athenians illustrate, was at the forefront for Xenophon.<sup>58</sup> By portraying those individuals whom he considered the worst possible leaders as tyrants who exemplified impiety, the worst of the vices as far as

<sup>55</sup> Tragedy: Seaford (2003); Comedy: Henderson (2003) and McGlew (2006). Rosenbloom (2012) has recently argued that late fifth-century Athenian drama was intended to subvert the democracy and restore the oligarchic elite to political power, a goal shared, not coincidentally, by Xenophon himself (Pownall (2004) 111–12 and (2012) 13–15).

<sup>56</sup> Raafflaub (2003) 83; cf. Mitchell (2006) 185–6 and (2013) 153–63. Parker (1998) argues that the concept of tyranny as a whole arose in Athens.

<sup>57</sup> On Xenophon’s concern to rehabilitate aristocratic ideology, see Pownall (2004) 110–12 and (2012) 14–15; see also Johnstone (1994) and Balot (2001) 230–3.

<sup>58</sup> On the conceptual link between tyranny and oligarchy in Greek popular thought, see Mitchell (2006).

Xenophon was concerned, he could provide a clear separation between the two constitutional forms of oligarchy and tyranny, and open the door to a rehabilitation of government by the educated elite. In so doing, Xenophon appropriates the figure of the evil tyrant, central to democratic ideology, for his own subversive purposes, and introduces the *topos* of the tyrant's impiety, one that becomes especially useful to later fourth-century and Hellenistic historians.

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**Appendix:**  
**Xenophon's Usage of the *τυρανν*-root in the *Hellenica***  
 (compiled with the *TLG*)

*τύραννος*

1. Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse (2.3.5, but section is an interpolation).
2. Theban exiles announce death of Theban polemarchs (5.4.9).
3. Agesilaus on the Theban polemarchs (5.4.13).
4. The Greeks feared that Jason would become a tyrant (6.4.32).
5. The Spartans appeal to Athens in 370 on grounds that they had helped expel the Peisistratid tyrants (6.5.33).
6. 'Euphron was clearly a tyrant' (7.1.46).
7. The assassin of Euphron: 'Euphron was unquestionably a tyrant' (7.3.8).
8. The assassin of Euphron, more generally (7.3.10).

*τυραννεῖν*

1. Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse (2.2.25, but section is an interpolation).<sup>59</sup>
2. Theramenes on Critias and the Thirty (2.3.48).
3. The Thirty (2.4.1).
4. Theban speech to Athenians at beginning of Corinthian War; Greek cities 'tyrannised' by harmosts and decarchies established by Lysander (3.5.13).
5. Opponents on the Corinthian rulers during the Argive-Corinthian sympolity (4.4.6).
6. The Theban polemarchs who occupy the Cadmea on the Spartans' behalf (5.4.1).
7. The assassins of Euphron in reference to Euphron himself as well as the supporters of the Theban polemarchs (7.3.7).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Lewis (2004) 67–8.

*τυραννίς.*

1. Critias to Theramenes on the Thirty (2.3.16).
2. Mania (3.1.14).
3. Theban exile on the Theban polemarchs occupying the Cadmea (5.4.2).
4. Autocles accuses the Spartans of imposing decarchies and boards of thirty (6.3.8).
5. Polyphron, successor to Jason (6.4.34).
6. Alexander of Pherae on Polyphron (6.4.34).

*τυραννικός*

1. Theramenes to Critias (in opposition to *δημοτικός*), referring to oligarchy (the Thirty? the Four Hundred?) (2.3.49).

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