

REVIEW

XENOPHON AND ISOCRATES

Melina Tamiolaki, ed., *Xenophon and Isocrates: Political Affinities and Literary Interactions*. Special Issue of *Trends in Classics*, 10.1. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018. Pp. 253. Paperback, €96.00/\$144.00/£79.00. ISSN 1866-7473.

Though Xenophon and Isocrates were contemporaries, came from the same Attic deme, and shared an interest in political problems, scholars have only just begun to study them together with an eye toward possible intertextual dialogue. In her introduction, Melina Tamiolaki summarises each chapter concisely and lucidly, noting the challenge presented by the disputed dating of the authors' various works.

She has arranged the chapters in four groups. In the first group, Attitudes Towards Persia and Sparta, Christopher Tuplin focuses on the Persian material in Xenophon and Isocrates. He does not find much evidence for intertextual readings except that he thinks Xenophon's encomium of Agesilaus responds to Isocrates' encomium of Evagoras in such a way as to emphasise Xenophon's scepticism about Isocrates' Panhellenic project.

Noreen Humble looks at Isocratean passages related to Sparta that scholars have identified as critical of Xenophon. She argues that understanding Xenophon as analytical rather than eulogistic allows readers to see the two men from Erchia as largely in agreement about Sparta.

The second group of papers focuses on the concepts of wonder, courage, and love of honour. John Dillery discusses the convention of using *thaumazein* (to wonder at or to admire) at the start of a speech or other literary work to express a hidden truth that, once expressed, the writer takes to be self-evident and does not defend. Dillery argues that this convention, while found in works featuring Socrates, is not necessarily part of his 'voiceprint', since it occurs in non-Socratic works too, and can be traced back to Homer and Pindar. This insightful chapter was a pleasure to read, though it would fit better in the last section of the volume on literary techniques.

Pierre Pontier explores how Xenophon's *Agesilaus* responds to Isocrates' *Evagoras*, particularly with regard to courage. Neither regards courage as the highest virtue: Isocrates gives priority to greatness of soul (*megalophrosunê*), which manifests as courage on the battlefield, whereas Xenophon takes a broader view, subordinating courage to decision-making, perhaps to defend Agesilaus against possible criticism for taking unreasonable risks at Coronea.

Evangelos Alexiou examines *philotimia* (love of honour). Both Isocrates and Xenophon use the term about three dozen times. Neither condemns it, but both authors are aware of the dangers of personal ambition and try to channel it in a civic direction. Isocrates integrates *philotimia* into his pedagogical system, linking it with political virtues, while Xenophon focuses more on the ideal army that a *philotimos* leader creates.

Three perceptive chapters in Part Three focus on politics. Frances Pownall shows that while Isocrates and Xenophon do not challenge the ‘democratic master narrative’ directly, both undercut it deliberately. Unlike the Attic orators, who credit the tyrant-slayers with liberating the city from tyranny, Isocrates plays up the role of Cleisthenes (never named by the orators), ascribing standard democratic virtues such as equality, mildness, and obedience to the laws to Solon and Cleisthenes, while accusing the democracy of his own day of licentiousness and lawlessness, the standard vices of tyrants. Similarly, Xenophon subverts the refoundation narrative after the oligarchy of the Thirty by stressing the role of the Spartans in negotiating the settlement and by drawing attention to the democrats’ faithlessness by noting the amnesty clause just after they had violated it and just before they violate it again. Xenophon avoids sounding too much like an oligarch by likening the Thirty to a tyranny. By applying the typical conceptions of tyranny to extreme oligarchy and extreme democracy, Isocrates and Xenophon advocate a moderate oligarchy as a viable alternative.

Richard Fernando Buxton takes as his topic factional conflict (*stasis*), a prominent theme in both Isocrates and Xenophon. He begins with differences: Xenophon describes instances of both ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ *stasis*, or mixtures of the two, while Isocrates focuses on vertical factors such as rampant poverty; Isocrates sees exiles-turned-mercenaries as part of a vicious cycle of *stasis*, while Xenophon takes a more positive view of mercenaries (he was one) and does not link them to poverty. Buxton also finds similarities: both writers understand wars for hegemony in Greece as the primary catalyst of *stasis*. Isocrates pays attention to *stasis* primarily when he can use it to build his case for a Panhellenic conquest of Persia; Xenophon also uses *stasis* for one of his main themes, model leadership. A good leader is one who can heal factionalised communities.

Carol Atack discusses how both writers use idealised versions of past Greek communities to comment on current political problems. They participate in the same debates, make similar argumentative moves, and locate ancestral constitutions further back in the past than was typical, on the boundary of historical and mythical time (for instance, Xenophon puts Lycurgus at the time of the return of the Heraclids, and Isocrates credits the origins of Athenian democracy to Theseus).

The final section includes two papers on literary techniques. Roberto Nicolai contributes an essay on Xenophon's *Anabasis*, using Isocrates (and Homer and Thucydides and, especially, Herodotus) as points of reference. Free of the constraints of composing for a particular occasion, Xenophon employed components taken from various genres, such as encomium, descriptions of characters, comparison of Greeks and Persians, and the themes of war and the journey, as he aspired to be a new educator, a new Homer.

Yun Lee Too argues that Isocrates fashioned himself as a quiet Athenian, a man with a small voice who avoided public speaking but advised the elite in writing, as did Xenophon, who employed irony, so that only perceptive readers understand his real meaning, which lies below the surface of the text. This thesis works better for the *Hiero*, the *Oikonomikos*, and the *Cyropaedia* than for the *Apology*.

Each chapter has its own bibliography and stands on its own. The authors do find convergences and divergences, as the editor hoped, but it has to be said that the search for intertextual dialogue yields pretty slim pickings, aside from Tuplin and Pontier on how Xenophon's *Agesilaus* responds to Isocrates' *Evagoras*.

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