

Aegean world in the Classical period. The dates in the subtitle are a little misleading: some of the material touched on is earlier than 650 BC, and some later than AD 350; Roman Macedonia is reasonably well represented; but it is the fifth, and even more the fourth centuries BC, that are the main focus.

The volume has an index, but no consolidated bibliography. Hatzopoulos' chapter on 'Macedonians and Other Greeks', Karamitrou-Mentessidi's on Aiani, Drougou's on Vergina and Akamatis' on Pella have individual bibliographies, but otherwise references to modern works are only to be found in the footnotes of the various chapters. There is the occasional misprint, but production values are high. What this volume does, it does very well.

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Vivienne J. Gray, *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes. Reading the Reflections*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. vii + 406 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-956381-4.

Vivienne Gray (henceforth G) is one of the leading scholars of Xenophon, having produced monographs on *Hellenika* and *Memorabilia*, as well as numerous shorter studies of these and other writings of Xenophon.¹ This book is her most ambitious to date. Here she makes use of her extensive knowledge of Xenophon's writings to offer a more comprehensive view of Xenophon as thinker and writer. The very idea of producing this kind of work is an important contribution in two ways. First of all, it helps emphasize the continuity between works that are often treated as belonging to separate genres. It is unfortunate that scholars working on Xenophon's historical writings often have little knowledge of his philosophical writings, and vice versa. This is especially lamentable because, as G shows, virtually all of Xenophon's writings belong to a single genre or at least display a single area of dominant interest: theory of leadership or human management. As G points out, Xenophon's greatest innovation in historical writing is precisely his conviction that leadership is the greatest achievement of all. In a series of acute observations she shows how this understanding explains many of Xenophon's authorial pronouncements, some of which have been mistaken for irony (see especially 80-83; 87-100; 111-118).

Secondly, G exploits the breadth of her Xenophonic knowledge to address what is perhaps the central conflict in Xenophonic studies today: his alleged irony. By bringing similar passages from different works together she reveals underlying literary patterns and political judgements. Her idea is that if Xenophon approves a mode of behavior in one work it stands to reason that he approves of it when he presents it in another work. There are of course dangers in such an approach. The researcher must be sure that there is no irony in the first passage and must insure that the second passage resembles the first in all the relevant ways. But these conditions usually hold, which means her conclusions are generally right.

One of the chief weaknesses of the ironic interpretations of Xenophon is the failure to begin with a clear assessment of what Xenophon does believe. G therefore begins with an account of Xenophon's theory of leadership, granting a special place to the Socratic presentation (9-24). This theory consists of the following central elements: communities are divided into leaders and followers; the aim of a good leader is the good of the community; this good consists in material increase and personal improvement; the ruler leads by inspiring willing obedience; the leader must

¹ See 'Xenophon's Defence of Socrates: The Rhetorical Background to the Socratic Problem', *Classical Quarterly*, 39, 1989, 136-140; *The Character of Xenophon's Hellenika*, London, 1989; 'Xenophon's Symposium: The Display of Wisdom', *Hermes* CXX, 1992, 58-75; 'Xenophon's Image of Socrates in the *Memorabilia*', *Prudentia*, 27, 1995, 50-73; *The Framing of Socrates. The Literary Interpretation of Xenophon's Memorabilia*, Stuttgart, 1998; *Xenophon on Government (Hiero, Respublica Lacedaemoniorum and Respublica Atheniensium)*, Cambridge, 2007.

possess knowledge of the relevant aspects of human management; since knowledge is crucial, women and even slaves can assume leadership roles; leadership skills can be transferred from one area of activity (directing a chorus for example) to another (training an army). Incidents in which such leadership achievements are described have sometimes been mistaken for ironical, when in fact, as G. argues, they simply represent the application of Xenophon's theory of leadership.

G. justifies her method by the assumption that Socrates, whom Xenophon clearly admires, cannot be presented as consistently deceiving his interlocutors, particularly on a matter such as leadership skills. Indeed, bad advice in this area would quickly reveal itself for what it is and bring embarrassment on the adviser. G. does not directly address the apparent contradiction between Socrates' advice to others and his own personal way of life as presented by Xenophon. Possibly this divergence reflects Xenophon's belief that superior people deserve a better life than their inferiors (see Lefèvre, cited on p. 151). If so, and if what is good for Socrates is not good for others, there is no contradiction between Socrates' words and his deeds, and hence no reason to see his words as ironical.

But even without privileging Socrates' advice, it is hard to believe that Xenophon would present in his other writings a consistent, coherent and plausible theory of leadership with which he fundamentally disagrees. In many respects, the theory is difficult to second-guess. Does Xenophon *not* believe that the good leader should strive for the good of the community? Does he *not* believe that a leader must possess knowledge of all the practical aspects of human management? No one I think would genuinely doubt these almost self-evident truths. But to the extent that there is a clear continuity between these and other aspects of Xenophon's leadership theory, it is difficult to accept that other aspects of this seamless whole are meant ironically.

The argument and method is therefore a good one both in general terms and in many of the particulars to which she applies it. Her arguments effectively refute a vast array of widely accepted ironical interpretations and should be carefully examined by anyone working on these texts. There are however some points where greater clarification would be helpful. For example, G. shows clearly that Xenophon places a great emphasis on obtaining willing obedience from followers, especially in the Socratic context (15-18). But she also acknowledges that Xenophon's theory 'allows for coercion' (29, see 38-43). How do these two features fit together? Is there a discrepancy between the Socratic and the non-Socratic writings on this point? Moreover, if violence is condoned by Xenophon, what are his reasons and in what circumstances does he condone it? G. argues that violence and fear are justified when they serve the common good (167-8, 278-9), but this seems too vague for a coherent theory of political leadership.

G. directs attention to the very important question of the audience for which Xenophon composed his writings, making the interesting claim that Xenophon directed his work primarily to former members of the Socratic circle (6, 53-4, 83, 86). But she reaches this conclusion on the basis of very little argumentation. Similarly she offers two slightly different descriptions of the *kaloi kagathoi* who make up most of this audience. At one point she quotes Socrates' description of them as those who 'are *able* to handle well their household and members of the household, servants and relations, and friends and *polis* community and *polis* members (*Mem.* 1.2.48)' (6). But later, referring to the same passage, she describes them as 'those who had a special *interest* in leadership and *desired*, as he said, to be successful managers of relations with their families and households, their kinship groups and friends, their *polis* and their fellow members of the *polis* (*Mem.* 1.2.48)' (53, italics added). Similarly, it is not clear whether Xenophon has a single message for all audiences or not. On p. 6 and p. 53 he does, but on p. 83 and p. 86 different audiences with divergent understandings are envisioned.

There are other places where the vast scope of the book makes it impossible to offer sufficiently detailed discussions. For example, her argument that Cyrus was correct in awarding the big coat to the big boy in *Cyropaedia* 1.3 (212-232) seems right and is well-supported by the pertinent examples she offers in which the wise commander deviates from the strict letter of the

law in order to provide benefit to the community. But she does not discuss the arguments that can be adduced for the opposite position, such as the fact that the identification of the just with the lawful, as espoused by Cyrus' teacher, also appears to be affirmed by Socrates in *Memorabilia* (4.4). By her own privileging of Socratic opinion, that evidence ought to show that the teacher, not Cyrus, is in the right; alternatively, she would have to present an argument showing that Socrates agrees with Cyrus.²

In her later discussion of Socratic ironies she does discuss the passage, arguing that Xenophon considers the legal and the just to be identical (364-8). This seems to contradict her earlier discussion, since the identification of the legal and the just was the position held by Cyrus' teacher, not by Cyrus. But after showing that Xenophon considers them identical she wavers, acknowledging that 'Xenophon does question the equation that 'lawfulness was justice', when he has Cyrus produce a higher justice that served the common good in the dispute about the stolen shirt' (368). She argues that this deviation from the law in the service of justice does not show any conflict between the divine and the written law, as has been alleged. But this does not answer the difficult question of whether Xenophon considers the legal and the just identical or not.

But setting aside these kinds of weakness, G. offers so many useful insights and analyses that her book is well worth careful study. For example, she shows that the division of people into leaders and followers is a reasonable division which is not meant ironically (9-11), that the use of animal-imagery to portray followers is not necessarily an indication of exploitation (48-51), and that phrases such as 'seems to be' or 'is said to be' do not signify irony or even any severe doubt about the proposition in question (44-7; 74-5; 100-105). These and other arguments remove the basis for many of the worst excesses of the ironic interpretations of Xenophon. But one still wonders whether phrases such as 'seems to be' do not signify something, possibly a mild affirmation in cases of uncertainty (see for example *Cyropaedia* 1.2.1).

G.'s discussion of literary allusions (Chapter Three) offers some excellent insights on the presence of Homer in Xenophon's writings. G. not only enriches our reading by considering Xenophon's explicit references to Homer, but her evident familiarity with Homeric literature enables her to consider scenes and motifs that Xenophon shares with Homer, such as the arming-motif (132-141), that do not always receive much attention. She also discusses Xenophon's relation to Herodotus' portrait of Cyrus, arguing that while there is reworking and sometimes disagreement with Herodotus, there is also a substantial measure of agreement. Her comparative approach is useful in correcting misinterpretations of the meeting between Cyrus and Croesus, as for example the meaning of Croesus' calling out for Cyrus (152-3). She shows nicely how on occasion Xenophon replaces Herodotean divine intervention with philosophical insight: 'Xenophon does not let Apollo tell Croesus why he had lost his happiness. Instead, he makes Croesus describe the process of Socratic self-knowledge...' (150). Not all of her arguments are clear-cut, and there is room in many cases for further analysis, but these arguments certainly have raised the bar for any ironical or "darker" interpretation.

Her discussion of the darker readings of *Cyropaedia* (Chapter Five) are generally innovative and, in my view, reach the correct conclusions. But they do not always adequately represent the ironist thesis, and therefore fail to explain some of the interesting features of the text. For example, in describing the way in which Cyrus arranges to withdraw from his companions and take up private residence in a palace, she omits to mention his use of a well-orchestrated plan to demonstrate the difficulties of maintaining contact with them. I do not think that we are meant to reject Cyrus' behavior here as dark ironists would claim. But justifying Cyrus' behavior and explaining Xenophon's reasons for presenting it as he does requires a fuller presentation of the

² See G. Danzig, 'Big Boys and Little Boys: Justice and Law in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and *Memorabilia*', *Polis*, 2009, 271-295.

detail of the text.³ This will probably demand a greater acknowledgment of the fact that Xenophon approves of practices that cannot be easily squared with modern liberal and democratic ideology.

In Chapter Seven G. makes a valuable contribution to the debate over leadership theory and irony by providing a broad account of Xenophon's theory of friendship in personal and political contexts. As she shows, Xenophon's heroes neither abuse their friends nor humiliate them by overwhelming them with goods they cannot reciprocate. In Chapter Eight she offers a very interesting discussion of Socratic and other ironies, pointing out that Xenophon frequently advertises his ironies, either by direct authorial statements ('so they mingled seriousness and joking') or by exaggerations so patent that they make the irony obvious (336; one might include here cases of sarcasm such as at *Ap.* 14 and elsewhere). This latter category obviously opens the door to those who would claim that some of the dark ironies are obvious: obviousness being sometimes in the eye of the beholder. But it is certainly instructive to pay attention to the places in which Xenophon advertises the jokes. If there are indeed other cases of irony, one needs to explain why he advertises it in some places but not in others. This puts the ball squarely in the ironists' court.

As G. shows, there is little merit in the extreme forms of the ironic interpretation which argue that Xenophon believes the opposite of what he seems to be saying. But why is it that so many readers find irony when none is there? G. suggests that this derives from two sources: the modern obsession with irony, and the modern skepticism about leaders. Indeed, the negative portraits of Cyrus certainly derive in great part from this latter prejudice. But is our interest in irony really an anachronism? G. notes that Aristotle never discusses irony (68, note 93). But surely this does not imply that we are mistaken to perceive irony in Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Herodotus. If it signifies anything — which I am not certain that it does — might Aristotle's failure to mention irony (for which there is no exact Greek equivalent — *eironeia* meaning something somewhat different) show that irony was so widespread in Greek culture that it was hardly seen as a special phenomenon? On the other hand, if Xenophonic irony is merely a modern invention, why have we not foisted it upon Thucydides, for example?

There are many directions to pursue in explaining Xenophon's modes of expression, and the obsession with irony or non-irony is probably an obstacle rather than a vehicle to better comprehension. The truth may be somewhere in the middle, in the recognition that he employs many modes of speech aside from the flat-footed and the darkly ironic. In some places it seems helpful to note the divergence between the impression Xenophon makes and the literal meaning of his words. This can be seen in *Mem.* 1.4.1, for example, where Xenophon implies, but does not actually say, that Socrates was able to lead others to virtue. This restraint or reticence does not need to imply that Xenophon ironically denies that Socrates was able to do so, but may indicate merely an unwillingness to commit himself to a proposition that may seem dubious. There are many more cases in Xenophon's writing where one is surprised to see how exact he is in his formulations. Rather than speaking of irony, we may do well to speak of his mastery of *nuance*.

In conclusion, this is a rich and wide-ranging book which offers a very important contribution to the study of Xenophon, both in confronting the ironist readings, and in a multitude of other ways. It will be useful to anyone with an interest in Xenophon, and certainly for anyone involved in research on his various writings.

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³ For understanding the virtues of Cyrus' regime the best study is still A.B. Breebart, 'From Victory to Peace: Some Aspects of Cyrus' State in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*', *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983), 117-134.