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Autor:	Jordovi, Ivan
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Hunting in Xenophon's Political and Ethical Thought

Ivan Jordović, Novi Sad

Abstract: Die vorliegende Untersuchung des *Kynegetikos*, der *Verfassung der Spartaner*, der *Memorabilien* und der *Kyrupädie* zeigt, dass Xenophons Motiv der Jagd über unterschiedliche literarische Gattungen hinweg kohärent und konsistent bleibt. Zudem wird die herausragende Bedeutung dieses Jagdkonzepts für sein Verständnis des Verhältnisses zwischen guter politischer Führung und (un)moralischem Handeln erläutert. Xenophon zufolge ist eine richtige Auffassung der Jagd ein hervorragendes Instrument zur Überwindung von moralischen Widersprüchen, die einigen grundlegenden Prinzipien der griechischen Populäretik innewohnen. Darüber hinaus dient sie als Grundstein für sein Bildungsprogramm, das darauf abzielt, Menschen zu befähigen, tugendhaft zu werden und dies beizubehalten, selbst wenn sie in der Not teilweise moralisch verwerfliche Praktiken anwenden.

Keywords: Xenophon, die Jagd, *paideia*, die Kunst der Führung, *Freunden Nutzen zuzufügen und Feinden schaden*.

A fundamental problem of Xenophon's political and ethical thought is that it seems highly ambiguous. On the one hand, it emphasises the significance of moral values such as justice, moderation and self-control; on the other, it condones behaviour that includes violence, deceit and manipulation. Hence, many scholars posit a need to decipher Xenophon's true intentions. Among the numerous proposed solutions, the most (in-)famous is the so-called *Darker Reading*, which creates complex theoretical constructs that rest on an inconsistent research methodology in its search for irony, ambiguity, concealment and dissimulation.¹ This paper aims to prove that Xenophon's ethical and political thought is not ambivalent. On the contrary, it will demonstrate that his concept of hunting combines moral principles and ethically questionable practices into a set of guidelines for political action. In this way, the pursuit of self-interest is reconciled with promoting the common good.

In line with this objective, the study abstains from reconstructing the relationship between the historical reality and Xenophon's depiction of hunting techniques and practices. Instead, it tries to elucidate why he believed that hunting is an effective agent for achieving and cultivating moral and political virtue. His concept of hunting has attracted considerable attention in academic circles. Still, scholars tend to single out a text and, in the course of examination, draw analogies with

¹ See, for example, V. J. Gray, *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes* (Oxford 2010) 56–67; T. Rood, "Political Thought in Xenophon: Straussian Readings of the *Anabasis*", *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 32 (2015) 143–165; M. Tamiolaki, "Straussian Readings of the *Cyropaedia*: Challenges and Controversies", in B. Jacobs (ed.), *Ancient Information on Persia Re-assessed: Xenophon's Cyropaedia. Proceedings of a Conference Held at Marburg in Honour of Christopher J. Tuplin* (Wiesbaden 2020) 367–387.

other writings. This paper follows a different approach. It will investigate all of Xenophon's works, which discuss hunting, excluding historical works in the full sense of the word. The latter are exempt because they do not always allow us to discern his views clearly. The analysis of these works will show that Xenophon carefully devised his concept of hunting. It will also reveal variations in his usage of hunting imagery and its manifold aspects. However, they are strongly affected by the structure and central subject of a particular writing. Since *Cynegeticus* is a hunting handbook, it is only consistent that it throws light on the educational role of hunting. Yet, this occurs in a condensed format so that the focus does not shift from the practical side of hunting. The *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* is a short treatise on Sparta's customs and organisation. Xenophon certainly idealises many aspects of the Spartan way of life, but the historical reality nonetheless limits him. As it is impossible to integrate his concept of hunting into this writing, Xenophon voluntarily restricts himself to showing that it shares some commonalities with the idealised society. The *Memorabilia* is structured as a series of encounters between Socrates and other people. Some of them touch upon hunting, yet always in a metaphorical sense and never as the main subject of discussion. This is because the widespread image of Socrates's manner of living is difficult to reconcile with hunting as an activity he practised. Furthermore, these dialogues are relatively short and discuss various more general topics (justice, friendship, *erōs*, political leadership, etc.) The *Cyropaedia* offers the most comprehensive account of the principles of Xenophon's notion of hunting and how these should be implemented in the political realm. There are several reasons for this. It is his most extensive writing and is, in essence, dedicated to one wide-ranging subject: the art of leadership. This fictional biography illustrates through numerous examples how hunting physically, psychologically and morally prepares individuals to face leadership challenges, helps to resist the corruptive influence of power and is an excellent tool for resolving conflicting elements in Greek popular morality and the education of young people. These characteristics of the individual writings inevitably shape the degree to which they are discussed and the structure of this article. It will first investigate *On Hunting*, the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* and the *Memorabilia*. However, the larger part of the analysis is devoted to the *Cyropaedia*.

1. The *Cynegeticus*

When presenting key political thoughts on the nature of leadership, Xenophon shows a strong affinity for metaphors, imagery and analogies. He regularly draws an analogy between the ruler-ruled relationship, on the one hand, and the helmsman-ship, physician-patient, shepherd-flock, guard-dog-flock, shepherd-guard-

dog, and queen bee-bees relationships on the other.² However, studies of Xenophon's political and ethical thought have so far directed no particular attention to his image of hunting (*thēran*) and its role as an instrument for expressing and achieving correct conduct.³ This is a little surprising given the *Cynegeticus* – a treatise on hunting the European hare with dogs.

Since no hounds were fast enough in the Classical age to catch the hare on their own, the traditional method was to track it down by scent and then drive it into nets previously set up at the anticipated escape routes.⁴ Xenophon's manual discusses the hounds, the hare, the nets, the accessories, and the actual hunting process at length.⁵ Chasing of other game (fawns, deer, boar and wild cats) is also mentioned, but the discussion is substantially shorter.⁶

Considering that this short treatise is first and foremost conceived as a hunting handbook, Xenophon devotes considerable attention to hunting as an instrument for achieving and cultivating moral and political virtue. The structure of the work is the best proof of the importance he attaches to this educational dimension. It begins and ends with a deliberation on the value of the educational side of hunting, while the middle part is concerned with its practical side.⁷ Vivienne Gray points out that this is not uncommon, as shown by Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which combines technical instruction with moral paraenesis.⁸ She notes furthermore that Xenophon draws attention to his role as advisor in the preface and epilogue. It is worth mentioning that the word *parainein* is the term Isocrates' applies when advising the young, and it occurs predominantly in his *Mirror of Princes* writings.⁹

In the preface (ch. 1), Xenophon discusses how the mythical educator Chiron was honoured by the gods with the gift of hunting and how many mythical heroes

² Helmsman-ship (*Xen. Mem.* 1.7.3; 2.6.38–39; 3.3.9,11; *Cyr.* 1.6.21–22); physician-patient (*Xen. Mem.* 3.3.9,11; 4.2.5; *Cyr.* 1.6.16,21–22); shepherd-flock (*Xen. Mem.* 1.2.31–38; 3.2.1; *Cyr.* 8.2.14); guard-dog-flock (*Xen. Mem.* 2.7.13–14); shepherd-guard-dog (*Xen. Mem.* 2.3.9; 7.13–14; 9.1–8); queen bee-bees (*Xen. Cyr.* 5.1.24–26); see R. Brock, *Greek Political Imagery. From Homer to Aristotle* (London 2013) 43. 45–47. 55. 70. 150. 159–160.

³ *Xen. Cyr.* 1.2.9–10; 4.5–8.10–11,16–17; 6.19,29,39; 2.1.29; 4.16–20; 3.3.5; 4.1.17; 2.10,46; 3.13,16; 6.3–4; 6.2.5; 7.5.62–63; 8.1.34–38,44; 6.10; 8.12.

⁴ See S. Kidd, "Xenophon's *Cynegeticus* and its Defense of Liberal Education", *Philologus* 58 (2014) 76–96, esp. 78; cf. also J. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley 1985) 30–56; A. A. Phillips/M. M. Willcock (eds.), *Xenophon & Arrian: On Hunting, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by A. A. Phillips & M. M. Willcock* (Warminster 1999) 2–20.

⁵ *Xen. Cyn.* 2–8; see L. L'Allier, "Why did Xenophon write the last chapter of the *Cynegeticus*?", in F. Hobden/C. J. Tuplin (eds.), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Inquiry* (Leiden 2012) 477–497, esp. 482.

⁶ *Xen. Cyn.* 9–11.

⁷ *Xen. Cyn.* 1; 12–13 (*paideia*); 2–12.1 (*praxis*), esp. 12.1; see V. J. Gray, "Xenophon's 'Cynegeticus'", *Hermes* 113 (1985) 158.

⁸ See Gray, *loc. cit.* (n. 7) 160–161.

⁹ *Xen. Cyn.* 1.18; 12.14; 13.9,17; *Isoc.* 1.5; 2.46,54; 3.10,57; 12.1; 15.71; see also *Xen. Mem.* 1.3.1; *Cyr.* 2.3.15; 3.3.35,50; cf. Gray, *loc. cit.* (n. 7) 159–160; L'Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 480.

were his pupils (e.g., Nestor, Theseus, Odysseus, Achilles, etc.). After recapitulating their deeds and stating that through these men, Greece became victorious, Xenophon exhorts young men not to despise hunting nor the rest of *paideia*, for these pursuits prepare for war and all else from which comes excellence in thought, word and deed.¹⁰

These brief thoughts are elaborated in more detail in the epilogue (ch. 12–13) when new aspects are introduced. Xenophon praises hunting again as an excellent preparation for war. It makes young men physically and psychologically ready for its challenges by forcing them to undertake long marches across rugged terrain under adverse weather conditions, become accustomed to carrying arms, and sleep in rough places.¹¹ Still, the benefits of continuous toil extend beyond this point. The *ponos* removes base and insolent desires from body and soul. It turns young men into moderate (*sōphrōn*) and upright (*dikaios*) individuals who observe the laws and discuss and listen to what is just. All this makes hunting an education in truth (*to en tēi alētheiai paideuesthai*).¹² Another benefit of devoting oneself to hunting is that it trains one to act for the common good and, at the same time, not neglect his affairs. By educating individuals to be beneficial to their country in its most vital concerns, hunting enables them also to take care of their private matters since the household affairs of each individual are ultimately kept safe or lost along with their city. Consequently, many critics of hunting, blinded by jealousy and pleasure, take action to the detriment of their family, friends and the state. At this point, Xenophon reiterates the educational value of hunting by mentioning once again the *mega paradeigma* of Chiron and his pupils, and how their great virtue sprang from the various noble lessons they learned in youth, beginning with hunting.¹³ He supports this argument by implicitly referring to the parable of the thorny path of Virtue and the easy path of Vice, an antithesis for which he shows great affinity and which generally enjoyed considerable popularity in

¹⁰ Xen. Cyn. 1.1–18, esp. 1–2.17–18; see also 12.14–18; cf. W. Jaeger, *PAIDEIA: Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*, Bd. I–III (Berlin/New York 1989) I/50–51. 286–287; III/252–253; Gray, *loc. cit.* (n. 7) 159–163; Phillips/Willcock, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 4. 131; R. Doty, *Xenophon on Hunting* (Lewiston 2001) 12; S. Johnstone, “Virtuous Toil, Vicious Work: Xenophon on Aristocratic Style”, in V. J. Gray (ed.), *Xenophon* (Oxford 2010) 137–166, esp. 147; L’Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 481–482; H. Lu, *Xenophon’s Theory of Moral Education* (Newcastle upon Tyne 2015) 8. 73–74 with n. 27; M. Ehrmantraut, “An Introduction to *The One Skilled at Hunting with Dogs*”, in G. A. McBrayer (ed.), *Xenophon: The Shorter Writings* (Ithaca and London) 327–328.

¹¹ Xen. Cyn. 1–8; cf. Phillips/Willcock, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 163; Kidd, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 87–88.

¹² Xen. Cyn. 12.7–9; see Jaeger, *loc. cit.* (n. 10) 253; Kidd, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 87–90.

¹³ Xen. Cyn. 12.10–20; see Phillips/Willcock, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 129–131. 164; L’Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 483–485; Kidd, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 90–91. For the different views on the identity of these opponents of hunting, see D. Thomas, “The Enemies of Hunting in Xenophon’s *Cynegeticus*”, in G. Danzig/D. Johnson/D. Morrison, (eds.), *Plato and Xenophon. Comparative Studies* (Leiden 2018) 612–639, esp. 615–617; M. Ehrmantraut, *loc. cit.* (n. 10) 333–335.

antiquity.¹⁴ Xenophon depicts Virtue as an immortal woman. Though all men long for Virtue, many shy away from her since she is achievable only through toil. While labour is apparent to everyone, the achievement of virtue remains elusive for most people. Moreover, since Virtue is an incorporeal and invisible goddess, men erroneously assume that she does not watch them and that their wrongdoings remain hidden. For these reasons, Xenophon believes that if people knew the true state of affairs, they would eagerly undergo the toil and training needed to attain virtue.

The final chapter represents a fierce critique of the Sophists.¹⁵ At first glance, this approach might seem unconventional, but Plato's *Sophist* proves the opposite. In this dialogue, the hunting of rich, prominent young men is named as the expertise of the Sophists.¹⁶ The principal purpose of Xenophon's attack on Sophistry is to highlight the insuperable contrast between it and traditional hunting. He accomplishes this in two ways. One line of argumentation is to explain how the Sophists fail to achieve the goals of correct education: they are not leading the young to virtue, but to its very opposite; sophistic writings offer fruitless pleasure, which distracts from the useful, and teach what is bad (*kakon*); Sophists search for words instead of correct ideas, etc.¹⁷

The other line of reasoning directly compares sophistic teachings with the education that traditional hunting provides. In this respect, Xenophon makes three points. The first is that the Sophists are masters of deception. They exercise the sophistry of words, not ideas, because of which they ought to be distinguished from the philosophers. He underlines, at the same time, that his hunting manual is written by someone who truly knows the good (*tōn alēthōs agathon ti epistamenōn*), which is why its language and composition are intentionally unsophisticated. The reason for this is the conviction that thoughts (*noēmata*) and gnomic precepts (*gnōmai*) educate, not words. Since the purpose of the treatise is not to seem but actually be useful, it will make the reader wise and good rather than sophistical.¹⁸ Xenophon's second point is that Sophists write and speak to deceive people because they seek to exploit them.¹⁹ He makes it clear that the Sophists act like predators: they hunt (*thēran*) after the rich and young, while the philosophers are friends to all alike irrespective of their fortune; driven in public and private life by the desire to have more, the Sophists rob private persons of their property

¹⁴ Xen. *Cyn.* 12.18–21; see also *Mem.* 2.1.20–34; Hes. *Op.* 285–292; Simon. fr. 256; 257 Poltera [541; 579 PMG]; DK 84B2; Pl. *Prt.* 339a–340d; *Resp.* 364b–d; *Leg.* 718d–e; cf. D. L. Gera, *Xenophon's Cyropaedia. Style, Genre, and Literary Technique* (Oxford 1993) 50–54; L'Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 484–485.

¹⁵ See Gray, *loc. cit.* (n. 7) 158; L'Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 477–497; Kidd, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 79–82. For the different theories about the attack on the sophists, see Thomas, *loc. cit.* (n. 13) 623–637.

¹⁶ Pl. *Soph.* 221d–223b, esp. 223b; see also *Grg.* 500d.

¹⁷ Xen. *Cyn.* 13.1–3.

¹⁸ Xen. *Cyn.* 13.4–6; cf. L'Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 489–493.

¹⁹ Xenophon uses different terms (*ōphelein, pleonexia, kerdainein, philokerdeia, aischrokerdeia*).

and despoil the state; and finally, they attack their friends instead of wild beasts. Therefore, one should not emulate (*zēloun*) the Sophists, who rightfully enjoy a poor reputation. Moreover, this perverted notion of hunting leads to moral and physical decay, as it does not involve toil and sagacity but effrontery, maliciousness and greed. Contrary to the Sophist and self-seeking politicians, the huntsmen enjoy a high reputation because they surrender their bodies and property to their fellow citizens in perfect condition for the common good. In line with this, the *kynēgetai* are not assailing friends and bringing harm to others for sordid gain but attacking beasts that are the enemies of the entire city. In doing so, they also practise fighting against all other enemies (*polemioi*). Finally, the laboriousness, well-reasoned devices, and manifold precautions needed to capture wild game enable the huntsman to be wiser and more self-restrained.²⁰ Xenophon's third and last point is that the Sophists are impious, while hunters are the most pious of men. Thus, the young who submit to hunting will be good to their parents, friends, fellow citizens and the entire city.²¹

This brief account of Xenophon's arguments demonstrates that *Cynegeticus* provides a rather well-thought-out concept of hunting. According to him, it is a type of *paideia* that, on several levels, exerts a profoundly positive effect. Its central tenet is toil, as it leads to the huntsmen's physical, psychological and moral improvement. The physical and mental training prepares the young for the challenges of war. The moral effect manifests itself in multiple ways. Hunting makes the young moderate, upright, good and wiser. Moreover, it teaches that self-interest and the common good are not mutually contradictory but mutually supportive. An essential aspect of Xenophon's image of hunting is that the sophistic teachings are portrayed as the antipode to traditional hunting. In contrast to the *kynēgetai*, the Sophists hunt people, not wild animals. Motivated purely by greed, they treat the young, their friends, fellow citizens and the city like someone dealing with prey or his enemies. Their means and ends are not virtue, truth, ideas, being useful or contributing to the common good, but vice, deception, words, the appearance of usefulness and short-sighted selfishness. It follows that Xenophon distinguishes between a good (beneficial) and a bad (harmful) type of hunting. Finally, by contrasting sophistry with traditional hunting and philosophy, he implies that the latter kinds of *paideia* share some essential principles and goals (moderation, the common good, etc.).²²

²⁰ Xen. *Cyn.* 13.3,6–16; see also 12.4; cf. Gray, *loc. cit.* (n. 7) 158.

²¹ Xen. *Cyn.* 13.16–18.

²² Cf. L'Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 486–488. Isocrates states that in the “good old days” education consisted of horsemanship, *gymnasia*, hunting and philosophy (Isoc. 7.45); see Kidd, *loc. cit.* (n. 4) 92.

2. The *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum*

Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* is written primarily for an audience that looks to Sparta as a model. In this relatively short *politeia* treatise, Spartan institutions, laws, customs, and practices are presented as paradigmatic.²³ Spartans over the age of 30 constitute the group from which the most significant offices are filled. According to Xenophon, Lycurgus mandated that hunting represented their finest occupation unless some public duty prevented it. In this way, these Spartans could keep their physical strength and endure the toil of war no less than young men. The exemplary character of this practice is emphasised by noting that other Greeks failed to make similar provisions.²⁴ The mythical law-giver further created a system for sharing hunting dogs and provisions during the hunt.

These explanations reveal that Xenophon believes that hunting has not only an educational purpose but that it is also an effective instrument for maintaining physical and military prowess. The significance he attributes to it is further reflected in the circumstance that these measures are mentioned in conjunction with rules related to some of the most important social relationships: all Spartans have authority over other men's children as well as their own, and they can use each other's slaves in case of necessity.²⁵

3. The *Memorabilia*

The *Memorabilia* elucidates further aspects of Xenophon's image of hunting and confirms its significance for understanding his thought. In this Socratic work, hunting is used as a metaphor in the context of establishing genuine *philia*, which aims at political activity. Socrates explains during his conversation with Critobulus that true friendship is founded upon self-mastery, self-sufficiency, and endurance.²⁶ When the young Athenian asks how friends are to be hunted (*thēratoeis*), Socrates responds that friends cannot be chased, as if they were a hare, trapped as a bird, or taken by force like wild boars.²⁷ He then claims that there are

²³ Xen. *Lac.* 1.1–2; see S. Rebenich, *Xenophon: Die Verfassung der Spartaner*, Herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert von Stefan Rebenich (Darmstadt 1998) 14–20; M. Lipka *Xenophon's Spartan Constitution. Introduction. Text. Commentary* (Berlin 2002) 31–32.

²⁴ Xen. *Lac.* 4.7; see Lipka, *loc. cit.* (n. 23) 147–148; Rebenich, *loc. cit.* (n. 23) 107; N. Humble, *Xenophon of Athens. A Socratic on Sparta* (Cambridge 2021) 121–122.

²⁵ Xen. *Lac.* 6, esp. 6.3–4; see Rebenich, *loc. cit.* (n. 23) 113; Lipka, *loc. cit.* (n. 23) 160–163.

²⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.1–7.

²⁷ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.8–9. Henry Graham Dakyns and Peter Jaerisch correct the Greek text by introducing *kaproi* instead of *echthroi*. Several reasons speak in favour of this change. Though Xenophon explains that hounds and nets are used to hunt wild boars, his main focus of attention lies on the process of killing the animal, as this is an extremely violent affair that can be perilous for the hunters and their hounds as well (Xen. *Cyn.* 10.8–22). Thus, if it is translated as “taken by force as

chants which can be used to win the friendship of anyone one likes. However, his responses about how these spells can be learned cause the young Athenian to conclude that, in truth, there are no such charms and that becoming good both in word and deed is the right way.²⁸ Socrates then explains that the *ponēroi* are incapable of friendship for all the above reasons. One should only be a friend of the *kaloi kagathoi* since only they can act in the private and public realm for mutual benefit and the common good.²⁹ Having laid down these principles, Socrates offers Critobulus help in the hunt for the noble and good. He considers himself well-suited for the task, as he understands the ways of love (*erōtikos einai*). But, as the discussion continues, Socrates points out that genuine *philia* is not compatible with physical intimacy but only with the heavenly *erōs*. He, furthermore, asserts by referring to the example of the helmsman, general, juror, statesman, and estate manager that the quickest and best path to being thought good at anything is to try to be good at it.³⁰

Socrates' encounter with Theodote is another example of how in the *Memorabilia* the hunting metaphor is associated with genuine friendship, the ennobling *erōs* and giving precedence to being over seeming. In many ways, it is constructed as a negative image of the conversation between Socrates and Critobulus. Though the young Athenian initially shows a questionable attitude to *philia* and *erōs*, he is at the same time amenable to Socrates' instruction on their true nature. In contrast to him, there is no doubt that Theodote has no potential to be a good and noble person. From the outset, it is strongly suggested that she is a *hetaira* who employs attractive looks to lure and bind men. Strong emphasis is put on her affluence and that her sole motivation for providing companionship is material benefit.³¹

This dialogue shows that Socrates exhibits an approach opposed to the one in the discussion with Critobulus. This time, he introduces the hunting metaphor, intending to address an essential aspect of Theodote's relationship to her *philoī*. After noting that a herd of generous friends is much better than a flock of sheep, goats or cattle, Socrates asks the courtesan whether she employs some contrivance

boars", not only are all three main methods of hunting listed in a negative sense, but this occurs in a progressive fashion (chase, deceit and violence), amplifying the point of the whole sentence. The word *echthroi*, in contrast, does not necessarily imply hunting, let alone a specific part of hunting as it is in the case of the hare, the bird and the wild boar. Consequently, it impedes a clear-cut distinction between the three methods and blurs the sentence's message. It is also noteworthy that in this sentence, the analogies to animals (hare, bird) prevail, while the next sentence consists only of analogies to different types of interhuman relationships, amongst others, not only to the antithesis friend – slave but also friend – enemy.

²⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.10–14.

²⁹ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.15–27.

³⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.28–39; see also 1.6.13; *Symp.* 8.9–43.

³¹ Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.1–6; see V. Azoulay, *Xenophon and the Graces of Power. A Greek Guide to Political Manipulation* (Swansea 2018) 230–231.

(*mēchanē*) to draw companions to her or leaves it to chance. When Theodote counters by asking how she could devise such a contrivance, Socrates says she could do it with far greater ease than a spider, which hunts by spinning delicate webs and feeding on anything that flies into them. He suggests, however, that there is a far better method of hunting friends, who are the most valuable prey of all. This is to rely on the services of a human hound, who will drive rich men of taste into her nets. Though these remarks spark her interest, Theodote insists that she lacks the ways and means for this type of hunting. Socrates replies that one net is her ensnaring body, while the other is her mind, which teaches her how to look charming, talk gaily, and simulate affection. The *hetaira* tries once again to assure him of her naiveté. But instead of criticising her conduct, Socrates now approves of it. He observes that capturing a friend by kindness and pleasure is much better than by force. The rejection of *bia* in conjunction with the approval of *euergesia* chimes with Socrates's advice to Critobulus, but the affirmative attitude towards *hēdonē* contradicts it. This praise convinces Theodote to let her guard down and openly agree with Socrates. He, in turn, instructs her on how to inflame her companions with intense longing for what she has to give while concealing her appetite for material reciprocation. This final stroke by Socrates persuades Theodote to ask him to help her in the hunt for friends.³² But in a surprising twist, the philosopher replies that the *hetaira* must first convince him to consort with her. Despite her thinly veiled invitation to sexual intercourse, Socrates remains utterly immune to her charms and continues to stoke her desire to turn him into her bloodhound. As a result, Theodote gives up the effort to attract Socrates to herself and is willing to come to him, entreating him to let her in. This shows that the courtesan has succumbed to the philosopher.³³

The course of the discussions allows for several conclusions. The fine irony of this dialogue is that the courtesan wants to become Socrates' "pupil" for all the wrong reasons and that it is explicitly left open if she has any success in this regard. Socrates abstains from passing any favourable judgement on Theodote's character.³⁴ The *hetaira* falls into the category of the *ponēroi* from the dialogue with Critobulus, who are incapable of true friendship. Like the Sophists in the *Cynegeticus*, she is driven by a longing for gain, which she acquires through deception. Hence, it is only appropriate that Socrates uses this predatory instinct to hunt her down. He achieves this by providing an understanding of hunting that is entirely

³² Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.5–15; see also 1.2.24; 3.13; 2.1.5.

³³ Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.15–18; see also 1.3.11–13; cf. Azoulay, *loc. cit.* (n. 31) 230–231. 249–251.

³⁴ Since Theodote never exhibits any capacity for good and noble sentiments, any comparison with Aspasia is out of place. Xenophon's Socrates cites Aspasia not only as an authority but also says explicitly during the conversation with Critobulus how she professed that matchmaking is incompatible with deception. In contrast, deceit is an intrinsic part of Theodote's approach to her "friends" (Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.36; see also *Oec.* 3.14); cf. also L.-A. Dorion/M. Bandini, *Xénophon: Mémorables, Tome II, 1re partie: Livres II–III. Texte établi par: Michele Bandini, Traduit par: Louis-André Dorion* (Paris 2011) 378.

congruent with the logic of the vulgar *erōs*, by signalling that he accepts Theodote as she is and by offering to assume the role of the human bloodhound. Unsurprisingly, the courtesan fails to recognise that she should not take Socrates' labelling of his disciples as "girlfriends" seriously or his claim to have enchanted these *philai* with the help of charms.³⁵ As shown by Socrates' dialogue with Critobulus, the philosopher was adamant that the hunt for friends was incompatible with pederastic love and that it was a fallacy to believe that there were spells for winning *philoī*. Equally revealing is Theodote's failure to comprehend Socrates's irony about his *apragmosynē*, which is so pronounced that Xenophon explicitly underlines its sarcastic nature. The encounters with the Sophist Antiphon in Book I show that Socrates claimed to be politically active to the highest degree despite not participating in public life. He justified this by declaring that he makes his pupils fit for political life. It is indicative that in the course of these conversations with Antiphon, Socrates also argues that the Sophists have the same mindset as male prostitutes (*pornos*) since both are motivated by material gain.³⁶

Socrates' encounters with Critobulus and Theodote make it clear that Xenophon's good (beneficial) type of hunting has two sides. On the one hand, as in the case of the young Athenian, it may be associated with the establishment of genuine *philia* with good and noble individuals, where the ultimate aim is to engage in political affairs for the common good. On the other, it can stand for recourse to manipulation and deception in order to prevail over a selfish and unscrupulous person like the beautiful *hetaira*. Though the good type of hunting, in this case, resorts to the same means as the bad, its beneficial value is not diminished. This is because the conduct of the individual being "hunted" is harmful since it acts like a predator and an enemy in the first place.

4. The Cyropaedia

Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* can primarily be classified as Mirrors of Princes writing with elements of an encomium, a historical novel, and a military handbook. Its fictive and didactic nature was recognised even in antiquity, and modern scholars reached the same conclusion quite some time ago.³⁷ In the first few sentences of this work, Xenophon makes it unequivocally clear that the rule of the founder of the Persian Empire serves as a counterexample of the failed exercise of power in all types of political regimes. Hence, in idealising Cyrus's life and achievements, Xenophon outlines the basic principles of conduct for those who exert political au-

³⁵ Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.16–18.

³⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 1.6.11–14; see also L'Allier, *loc. cit.* (n. 5) 489–490.

³⁷ Cic. *QFr.* 1.1.23; see Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 1–13, esp. 2–3. 6; Chr. Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen zu Xenophons Kyrupädie* (Stuttgart/Leipzig 1995) XIV, 1–2; P. Stadter, "Fictional Narrative in the *Cyropaedia*", in V. J. Gray (ed.), *Xenophon* (Oxford 2010) 367–400, esp. 367–387; Lu, *loc. cit.* (n. 10) 63–66.

thority.³⁸ This shows that a consideration of the role of hunting in the *Cyropaedia* may well contribute to a better understanding of Xenophon's views on the nature of leadership. On closer examination of the hunting theme, four aspects may be noted, revealing important concurrences between this fictional biography and the already examined writings of Xenophon.

The first aspect of hunting in the *Cyropaedia* is that it serves as a bond for friendship. This goes a step further than the *Memorabilia*, which only mentions the hunting metaphor in the context of establishing friendship. As the young Cyrus grew, he asked his grandfather to permit him to hunt in the wild. However, Astyages withdraws his initial consent when his grandson exhibits foolhardiness in the course of the chase. While pressuring his grandfather to allow him to try again, Cyrus reveals his concern for the other boys who were his friends. He distributes among them the venison from his first actual hunt and takes the leading role in their campaign to be allowed to go hunting in the wild. During this struggle, he even refuses to hunt until all his agemates obtain the same privilege.³⁹ Later, many of these companions were eager to join Cyrus in high-risk military endeavours because they liked his manner when they had gone hunting together.⁴⁰ The link between friendship and hunting is also addressed in the episode of the Armenian king. He rebelled against Persia but was taken captive and put to trial by the Persian prince. Tigranes, the heir to the throne, plays a prominent role in the affair because, thanks to him, Cyrus decides to show clemency to the Armenian ruler. A striking feature of the depiction of Tigranes is that at three key points, Xenophon notes that the Armenian prince was Cyrus's hunting companion: the first time when his character is introduced, the second at the beginning of the defence of his father. This can be hardly a coincidence, as shown by the restoration of good relations between the Armenians and the Persian prince: it reaches its culmination when Cyrus and Tigranes resume their practice of jointly going hunting.⁴¹

The second aspect of Xenophon's hunting image is, like in the *Cynegeticus*, a strong association with war. It is manifested in two ways.⁴² The first is the depiction of hunting as an excellent practice which physically, psychologically and morally prepares young men for war. According to Xenophon, hunting is an integral part of Persian upbringing from the moment boys finish the school of justice. As the Persians hold hunting to be the best preparation for war, it is led by the king. The young men are trained to rise early, use weapons, suffer cold, heat and

³⁸ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1–6, esp. 1; see B. Zimmermann, "Roman und Enkomion – Xenophons 'Erziehung des Kyros'", *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* (1989) 97–105, esp. 98–99; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 2. 6. 280. 284–285; Stadter, *loc. cit.* (n. 37) 392. 399.

³⁹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.5–15, esp. 10–15.

⁴⁰ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.18–24; 2.10.

⁴¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.12–3.3.5, esp. 2.4.15–17; 3.1.7–8, 14, 35–37; 3.5.

⁴² See Pl. *Soph.* 222c; see Mueller-Goldingen, *loc. cit.* (n. 37) 80; Johnstone, *loc. cit.* (n. 10) 149; D. Gish, "Xenophon's Cyrus in Paradise: Hunting and the Art of War in Antiquity", *Classical World* 117.2 (2024) 118–119. 134–139.

the march, and put their courage to the test.⁴³ In a conversation on the nature of good leadership, Cambyses advises his son not to confine himself to the lessons he has learned but also to be an inventor of stratagems against the foe. He adds that Cyrus would make considerable progress in the art of taking advantage of the foe if he applied to human beings the contrivances (*mēchanē*) he learnt to use against the smallest game.⁴⁴ Cyrus himself has realised the instructive value of hunting. Before the first battle, following news that the enemy is approaching, the Persian prince takes upon himself the task of making the soldiers fit for war. One of these is to take them hunting, as toil will give them a zest for food, increase their endurance and make them gentler towards one another.⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, while preparing for the subsequent great battle that decided the war, the Persian prince stimulates his soldiers to outperform one another by taking them out to hunt and rewarding those who distinguished themselves.⁴⁶ It is only consistent that Cyrus, once he became ruler of Asia, laid down rules that echo the measures of Lycurgus in the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. He established the practice of the Great King and his court spending their leisure hours at the chase. Behind this stood the recognition that hunting was the best exercise in military excellence, ultimately leading to *enkratēia* and the endurance of toil, cold, heat, hunger and thirst. Convincing that the ruler must be superior to his subjects, Cyrus devoted himself eagerly to the sport, putting himself at the head of the hunting party and never touching the meal until he had sweated for it. Setting this example and rewarding according to merit, he filled the hearts of his companions with the ambition (*philotimia*) to outdo one another.⁴⁷ The founder of the Persian empire further commanded that his satraps lead their courtiers out to hunt and train them in the art of war. He also obliged them to lay out game parks and never to touch food until they had worked for it. This ensured the well-being of the satraps because they were able to help Cyrus to protect them all. In other words, their private interests coincided with the welfare of the Persian empire. The *Cynegeticus* declares that the reconciliation of these types of interests is a major benefit of hunting.⁴⁸ In the final chapter of the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon reflects upon the reasons for the decline of Persia. One of the causes he cites is that in his time, the Great King and his court became prone to wine, and the old custom of going hunting as an exercise faded away. Moreover, individuals who went hunting with their friends were represented.⁴⁹

⁴³ Xen. Cyr. 1.2.9–11.

⁴⁴ Xen. Cyr. 1.6.38–41; B. Due, *The Cyropaedia: Xenophon's Aims and Methods* (Aarhus 1989) 94. 107; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 50–72, esp. 59.

⁴⁵ Xen. Cyr. 2.1.20,29.

⁴⁶ Xen. Cyr. 6.2.4–5; Due, *loc. cit.* (n. 44) 106–108.

⁴⁷ Xen. Cyr. 8.1.34–40.

⁴⁸ Xen. Cyr. 8.6.10,12 ; Cyn. 12.10–11; 13.10–14

⁴⁹ Xen. Cyr. 8.8.12.

The second way is the explicit association or comparison of hunting with war. The hunt serves as an introduction to the war with Assyria, from which Cyrus's vertiginous ascent begins. The first clash between the Assyrian and Median forces took place during Astyages's lifetime. It occurred because the notorious son of the Assyrian king at the time of his wedding wished to go hunting.⁵⁰ Since the border area between Assyria and Media was especially rich in game, he assertively and wilfully trespassed on his neighbour's territory. Learning of the intrusion, Astyages immediately hurried with his cavalry to the border and forced the enemy to flee. Cyrus played a prominent part in this, and this was his first fighting experience.⁵¹ Another piece of advice that Cambyses gives to his son during their exchange of views on the nature of leadership is that an excellent military commander must be capable of inspiring his soldiers while being careful not to rouse false expectations. He illustrates this by using the example of the huntsman who always calls his hounds with the view-halloo. At first, the hounds will obey eagerly, but after they have been cheated several times, they will refuse to respond to his call even when the quarry is really in sight. Later, when Cyrus went after the renegade Armenian king, he used hunting as an excuse to conceal the fact that he had come to the borders of Armenia to invade it. At the campaign's outset, a favourable omen is interpreted as a sign that "the hunt", otherwise the campaign, will have a positive outcome. Then, he explains his war plan by comparing military action with hunting.⁵² After the first victory, Cyrus and Cyaxares debate whether the enemy should be pursued or allowed to flee in peace. The Median king emphasises the danger of the pursuit, comparing it with hunting a wild swine, which runs away only until its young are not in danger, whereupon it rushes at the hunters.⁵³ Despite this warning, the Persian prince decides to pursue the enemy. Numerous Median volunteers join him. Their reasons vary; some follow Cyrus out of friendship, personal gratitude, patriotism, ambition, and love of gain; others follow him because they hunted with him and learned to admire his character.⁵⁴ Xenophon makes the most fascinating comparison of hunting and war when he reflects on Cyrus's reasons for introducing eunuchs as his bodyguards. The eunuchs are compared to horses, bulls and hounds. Vicious horses, when gelded, cease to bite but will charge as gallantly as ever; bulls, when castrated, become less fierce but not less strong; and hounds, when neutered, stop deserting their master but are no less useful for keeping watch or hunting. So, too, the eunuchs; though they become gentler, their conscientiousness, skilfulness and ambition

⁵⁰ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.16–17.

⁵¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.18–25.

⁵² Xen. *Cyr.* 2.4.16–20, 25–27.

⁵³ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.17.

⁵⁴ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.18–24; 2.10.

(*philotimia*) are not diminished by the castration. War and the hunt show plainly that in their hearts, they have preserved the passion for victory (*philonikia*).⁵⁵

The third aspect of the hunting theme in the *Cyropaedia* is that Xenophon uses it to portray how the irrepressible desire to win is an inherent part of Cyrus's character.⁵⁶ While still a boy, he hunted in Media in a menagerie built for this purpose.⁵⁷ As he grew, this was no longer sufficient. Even with the best intentions, Astyages could not gather as many animals as he wanted; keen for a real challenge, Cyrus asked his grandfather to allow him to hunt in the wild. Aware of his exceeding eagerness to hunt, the king of the Medes consented on condition that the grandson listened to his escorts, who were supposed to restrain him from hunting dangerous game over adverse terrain.⁵⁸ At the start, Cyrus listened to his escorts, but when he spied a deer, he embarked on a reckless chase after it. Although he almost fell from his horse, in the end, he caught up with his prey. Even while the escorts admonished him that he could have been killed because of his reckless behaviour, the Persian prince saw a wild boar charging and valiantly attacked and killed it.⁵⁹ Cyaxares scolds his nephew for his foolhardiness, but in vain. The young man is so proud of this feat that he insists on giving all the game as a present to his grandfather, even if this means that Astyages learns of his boldness and punishes him. Remarkably, Cyaxares eventually not only gives in but does so by saying: "Do as you wish; for now it looks as if it were you who is our king (*basileus*)".⁶⁰ The next time Astyages organises a hunting party for his grandson, he gives the royal command that no one is to shoot until Cyrus has hunted to his heart's content. But when his grandson protests vehemently against this order, Astyages allows him and his agemates to hunt together and strive to outdo one another. The Persian prince is again carried away by such excitement that Xenophon compares him to a well-bred hound that bays when it closes in on its prey. The Median king was so pleased by this that whenever possible thereafter, he accompanied his grandson and his young comrades in the chase.⁶¹

If we consider that hunting is akin to war for Xenophon, then we can assume that this suggests that the Persian prince is a born warrior. The assumption is confirmed by Xenophon's linking of Cyrus's demeanour in his first battle to the hunt.

⁵⁵ Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.58–65, esp. 62–64; see Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 287–288.

⁵⁶ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.21; 1.4.14–15; see also 7.5.63–64.

⁵⁷ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.14. Xenophon introduces the term "paradise" (*paradeisos*) for the royal hunting park; see Gish, *loc. cit.* (n. 42) 117, 123–130.

⁵⁸ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.4–7. D. Gish (*loc. cit.* (n. 42) 134–138) argues that Xenophon distinguishes between a Median and Persian hunting mode.

⁵⁹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.7–8; see R. Harman, *The Politics of Viewing in Xenophon's Historical Narratives* (London 2023) 123–126.

⁶⁰ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.9–10 (trans. Walter Mill); see also 1.2.10; cf. S. Erasmus, "Der Gedanke der Entwicklung eines Menschen in Xenophons *Kyropaädie*", in W. Müller (ed.), *Festschrift für Friedrich Zucker* (Berlin 1954) 111–125, esp. 119–120; Gish, *loc. cit.* (n. 42) 135–136.

⁶¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.14–15.

This was the aforementioned intrusion of the young Assyrian heir to the throne into the hunting grounds in the Median border area. Despite the enemy's strength, at Cyrus's insistence, Astyages decides to attack. Cyaxares heads the strike, but in his eagerness, Cyrus comes up to the front.⁶² According to Xenophon: "As a well-bred but untrained hound rushes recklessly upon a boar, so Cyrus rushed on, with regard for nothing but to strike down everyone he overtook and reckless of anything else."⁶³ After the fighting died down, Astyages did not know what to say to his grandson. On the one hand, he was aware that the Persian prince had forced the Assyrians into flight; on the other, he witnessed his frenzied daring.⁶⁴ A few years later, during the first battle with the Assyrians, Cyrus was again so caught up in the heat of battle that he began running towards the enemy from a walking pace, crying out, "Who will follow? Who is brave? Who will be the first to lay low his man"?⁶⁵

From the above scrutiny of the second and third aspects of the hunting theme in the *Cyropaedia*, we may conclude that Cyrus has the nature of a true warrior. Thus, it seems only consistent that the ideal ruler during the different campaigns and his rise to absolute power expresses ideas that befit a belligerent and ambitious personality: the Persians should strive to rule over Asia;⁶⁶ it is a law (*nomos*) established for all time amongst all men that the winner takes all and that it is no injustice (*adikia*) to keep the spoils of war; the lives and property of the defeated depend solely on the generosity and humanity of the victors;⁶⁷ in war one can either fight or submit to the stronger;⁶⁸ victory is happiness (*eudaimonia*), a glorious feast and brings blessings (*agathon*); the fruits of victory are the land with its inhabitants and their possessions;⁶⁹ it is justified to kill those who pose a threat to the prize seized in war;⁷⁰ while the victors are in pursuit, dealing blows and death, acquiring loot, fame, freedom, power and glory, cowards can expect quite the reverse.⁷¹ Given these positions, one might get the impression that Cyrus supported the idea that might is right and eagerly advocated ruthless expansionism. However, we might ask if Xenophon would deliberately risk his view of ideal leadership by associating it with the type personified by the notorious Alcibiades and Callicles.

The fourth aspect of the hunting theme resolves this dilemma, as it addresses the conundrum of how it is possible to act belligerently and morally simultaneous-

⁶² Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.16–20.

⁶³ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.21 (trans. Walter Mill); see Gish, *loc. cit.* (n. 42) 138–139.

⁶⁴ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.22–24.

⁶⁵ Xen. *Cyr.* 3.3.62 (trans. Walter Mill).

⁶⁶ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.5.16; see also 6.2.21–22.

⁶⁷ Xen. *Cyr.* 2.3.2; 3.1.6–13; 4.2.31–33; 7.5.72–73; see also 1.6.11.

⁶⁸ Xen. *Cyr.* 5.3.5; see also 7.26.

⁶⁹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.11; 5.4.25; 7.1.10–12; 2.6

⁷⁰ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.4.4–6; 7.5.31,34.

⁷¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.2.26; 7.1.13; 5.72–75.

ly. In the course of the conversation between Cyrus and Cambyses on the essence of leadership, this question is raised:⁷²

"But, father, what would be the best way to gain an advantage (*pleon echein*) over the enemy?" – "By Zeus," said he, "this is no easy or simple question that you ask now, my son; but, let me tell you, the man who proposes to do that must be designing and cunning, wily and deceitful, a thief and a robber, overreaching the enemy at every point." – "O Heracles, father," said Cyrus with a laugh, "what a man you say I must become!" – "Such, my son," he said, "that you would be at the same time the most righteous and law-abiding man in the world." – "Why then, pray, did you use to teach us the opposite of this when we were boys and youths?"

Cambyses replies that the Persian upbringing was well done and introduces the dichotomy of friend/fellow-citizen – enemy.⁷³ While Persian youths were raised to behave correctly towards friends and fellow citizens, they were at the same time taught various villainies by which they could harm their enemies. The instrument through which they learned vicious behaviour such as killing, being wily, using trickery and taking unfair advantage (*pleonexia*) was hunting.⁷⁴ Confused by this answer, Cyrus admits that they were indeed taught such practices when dealing with animals but points out that they were severely punished if they acted in this manner towards human beings. Cambyses explains that Persian youths were not trained to use these skills against friends but in the case of war. Dissatisfied with this response, Cyrus asks why they were not instructed from the beginning in the case of men, how to be beneficial to and harm them. Cambyses's reply ultimately explains it all. He tells about a teacher who taught in the days of their forefathers. This teacher used to teach the boys to lie and not to lie, to cheat and not to cheat, to calumniate and not to calumniate, and to take and not to take unfair advantage (*pleonektein*). He instructed the boys to practice these skills on one another. However, the teacher introduced an ethical barrier by drawing the line between what one should do to one's friends and what to one's enemies. He further expanded it by clarifying that it is right even to deceive a friend and steal from him, provided it is for his good. These barriers proved insufficient, and some of his pupils, who got a taste for avarice, used the acquired skills to deceive and take unfair advantage even of their friends. And so in Persia, an unwritten law was passed, which is valid to the present time, teaching the boys to tell the truth, not to deceive and not to take unfair advantage. The same ordinance provides that those who do otherwise

⁷² Xen. Cyr. 1.6.27–28 (trans. by Walter Miller); see also Mem. 3.1.6.

⁷³ See Xen. Cyn. 13.10–12,15; see C. Nadon, "From Republic to Empire: Political Revolution and the Common Good in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*", *The American Political Science Review* 90 (1996) 361–374, esp. 368–369; P. J. Rasmussen, *Excellence Unleashed. Machiavelli's Critique of Xenophon and the Moral Foundation of Politics* (Lanham 2009) 9; Johnstone, *loc. cit.* (n. 10) 149–150.

⁷⁴ Xen. Cyr. 1.6.28, see also 19,39–41. For the Assyrian, Babylonian, Median and Persian tradition of hunting as a part of the royal education and activity see Gish, *loc. cit.* (n. 42) 120–122.

are punished so that the boys grow into humane and law-abiding citizens. But when the boys reach manhood, they are taught what is lawful (*nomimos*) against their enemies because it seems unlikely that they will break out in savagery against their fellow citizens. For the same reason, sexual matters are not discussed in the presence of the young (*neos*) so that they are not tempted to give free rein to their passions.⁷⁵

Cambyses' anecdote about the mysterious teacher and the educational function of hunting directly contradicts the view of some scholars that Cyrus reveals the same attitude to war as the Assyrian king, who is the prototype of a tyrant, or that he is a moral black hole because he lusts for domination and has an appetite for killing.⁷⁶ This is unambiguously reflected in the fact that Xenophon has conceptualised hunting to affirm and complement a fundamental tenet of Greek popular ethics: to treat friends well and enemies badly; in other words, justice is to give each his due.⁷⁷ He clearly approves of this principle in his writings.⁷⁸ However, the tenet of giving back what one has received can, for several reasons, be extremely destructive: it can cause a vicious circle of violence and revenge, take precedence over other moral and social norms (e.g., piety, family bonds) and have the opposite effect to the initially intended one (e.g., harm friends).⁷⁹

Cognizant of these inherent contradictions, Xenophon addresses them. As some scholars have noted, Cambyses' line of argument concurs with that of Socr-

⁷⁵ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.30–34; see Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 13) 65.

⁷⁶ See Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 112–113; J. R. Reisert, “Ambition and Corruption in Xenophon’s Education of Cyrus”, in D. Gish/W. Ambler (eds.), *The Political Thought of Xenophon, Polis* 26 (2009) 296–315, esp. 300–302.

⁷⁷ Hom. *Il.* 2.354–6; 14.470–475; *Od.* 3.193–217; 6.184–185; Hes. *Op.* 264–266, 341, 706–713; Thgn. 337–340, 363–364, 869–872, 1089–1090, 1107–1108, 1219–1220; Sol. fr. 13.5–6 W (1 G.-Pr.); Pind. *Pyth.* 2.83–83; *Nem.* 4.32; Aesch. *Cho.* 142–144; Soph. *Ant.* 643–644; *OC.* 90–95; Eur. *Ion* 625–630; Ar. *Av.* 419–420; Hdt. 3.140.4; 6.87; 8.105–6; 144.2; Thuc. 2.67.4; 7.68.1–2; Lys. 9.20; Isoc. 1.26,29; 9.32; Lycurg. *Leoc.* 88; Pl. *Grg.* 492b–c, *Men.* 71e; *Resp.* 331–332d; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1169b16–22; Rh. 1367a19–20; see F. Dirlmeier, *Philos und Philia im vorhellenistischen Griechentum* (München 1931) 27–28; L. Pearson, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* (Stanford 1962) 14–18, 86–89; K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford 1974) 180–184; W. Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies. A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics* (Cambridge 1989) 28–31, 54–57; G. Vlastos, *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge 1991) 179–183.

⁷⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.18–19,28; 2.2; 3.14; 6.35; 4.2.12–19; 5.10; *Cyn.* 13.11–12,15; *Cyr.* 1.4.25; 6.11; 4.6.1–10; 5.3.30–33; 8.7.6–7,28; *Hier.* 2.2; see also *An.* 1.3.6; 9.11; *Symp.* 4.2–3.

⁷⁹ Aesch. *Cho.* 306–315, 930; Soph. *OC.* 1189–1200; *Aj.* 1316–1345; Eur. *Ion* 1045–1047; *Med.* 797–810; *El.* 905–906, 968–979; Hdt. 9.78.3–79.2; Thuc. 3.40.6–7; 47.5; 82.8; 4.19.2–3; Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.12–9; Pl. *Prt.* 324a–c (Protagoras); *Dissoi Logoi* 19B frg. 3.1–3 TEGP (=DK 90.1–3); Pl. *Grg.* 456d–457b, 460, 469b–c, 477a, 479c–d, 480c–e, 482b, 508d–509c, 522c–e; *Resp.* 331c–332d, 334a, 335d–e, 358d, 362e–366b, 366e, 505a; *Cri.* 49a–d; *Prt.* 333d–e, 341b–e; see also Hes. fr. 221 Most (=286 M–W; 174 Rzach); Archil. 177W (=94D); Thgn. 323–328; cf. Dirlmeier, *loc. cit.* (n. 77) 28; A. Dihle, *Die goldene Regel. Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgärethik*, (Göttingen 1962) 14–27, 30–39, 41–71, 80–81, 85, 96–102, esp. 61–66, 80–81, 101; H.-J. Gehrke, “Die Griechen und die Rache. Ein Versuch in historischer Psychologie”, *Saeculum* 38 (1987) 129–135; Vlastos, *loc. cit.* (n. 77) 121–149, esp. 179–199.

tes in the *Memorabilia*, while the anonymous *didaskalos* exhibits similarities with famous Sophists.⁸⁰ A fact that has received little attention but coincides with these observations is that Cambyses' account also echoes Xenophon's critique of sophistry in the *Cynegeticus*. The corrupted pupils of the unknown teacher act by the sophistic *modi operandi* outlined in this treatise (deceit, trickery, *pleonexia*, abolishing the distinction enemy – friend/fellow citizen). It is also noteworthy that Cambyses and Cyrus agree on the importance of piety, of the primacy of being over seeming, and that the ruler (general) while seeking to prevail over the enemy, takes care of his friends and subordinates (fellow citizens).⁸¹ Furthermore, the view that it is not only possible but expressly desired that adults apply hunting methods to engage the enemy corresponds with Socrates' course of action during his encounter with Theodote in the *Memorabilia*. The same applies to the emphasis on the importance of sexual self-control for young men in the dialogue with Crito-bulus.

Xenophon incorporates into these juxtapositions his concept of hunting and the tenet of helping friends and harming enemies by associating them with the teachings of Socrates and setting them against those of the Sophists. Through this approach, he shows how hunting allows one to teach and adopt this principle without internalising its deficiencies.

The parallels between Cambyses' explanation and Socrates' encounter with the young Euthydemus in Book IV of the *Memorabilia* corroborate this interpretation. This dialogue was not examined before as it refers to the hunting image only indirectly through the hound metaphor. At the beginning of this book, Xenophon speaks about the nature of Socrates' usefulness to others and how he instructed the young to take the path of virtue. He explains in this context that the philosopher taught that the best natures are in the greatest need of education. Socrates supported this view by pointing out the example of the puppies, which are tireless and good tacklers of the game: if well trained, they become the best and most valuable hounds, while without rearing, they turn out wild, mad and intractable.⁸² The dialogue with Euthydemus exemplifies Socrates' commitment that young people must first understand fundamental ethical values before they begin dealing

⁸⁰ Socrates (H. v. Arnim, *Xenophons Memorabilien und Apologie des Sokrates* (København 1923) 186–190; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 60–64); Protagoras (O. Gigon, *Kommentar zum zweiten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien* (Basel 1956) 87–88); Gorgias, *Dissoi Logoi* (W. Nestle, "Xenophon und die Sophistik", in W. Nestle (ed.), *Griechische Studien. Untersuchungen zur Religion, Dichtung und Philosophie der Griechen* (Stuttgart 1948) 434–441; cf. also T. M. Robinson, *Contrasting Arguments: An Edition of the Dissoi Logoi* (New York 1979) 179–180; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 68–70; Mueller-Goldingen, *loc. cit.* (n. 37) 127–128). The question of the teacher's responsibility for the misconduct of his pupils has a strong sophistic connotation, as shown by Aristophanes' *Clouds*, Isocrates' *Antidosis* and Plato's *Gorgias* (Ar. *Nub.* 877–1114; Isoc. 15.231–233; Pl. *Grg.* 456c–457c, 519c–520b; see also *Resp.* 492a–c, 493a–c).

⁸¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.2–29, esp. 1.6.2–8, 22–25.

⁸² Xen. *Mem.* 4.1.1–4.

with public affairs.⁸³ The thinking behind this is that it is more important to inculcate *sōphrosynē* in the young than for them to make a living as skilled orators since those who are able but imprudent are, to that extent, more capable of injustice and evil deeds.⁸⁴ Confident of surpassing his peers in wisdom, Euthydemus believes that he does not require further instruction. He has set his heart on acquiring the excellence that makes a good statesman, i. e. *basilikē technē*.⁸⁵ However, Socrates makes him realise that he knows nothing about the most important questions. He achieves this by showing Euthydemus that, first and foremost, he has insufficient knowledge of what it means to be just or unjust because he is unmindful of all aspects of the principle of giving each his due. Socrates illustrates this by showing how blind adherence to this principle can cause a person to harm his friend, while acts usually perceived as unjust can lead to just results.⁸⁶

This is also the message of *Cyropaedia*. As a child, the future ideal ruler has already embraced a critical principle which prevents any abuse of the tenet to give each his due. In the school of righteousness in Persia, he was let sit in judgment on other boys. During these trials, Cyrus was punished only once for not passing a just verdict. This occurred when he was judging two boys – the first a big one with a little tunic and the other a little one with an oversized tunic. So when the big boy stripped the little boy and gave him his little tunic, Cyrus decided it was better for both parties to have the coat that fitted him best. Thereupon, the teacher flogged him, saying that such a verdict would only apply if he judged what was a good fit. But if the trial was about whom the tunic belonged to, he should have investigated whose tunic it was, who took it by force, made it for him, or bought it. And the master then said that what was lawful (*nomimon*) is just (*dikaion*), and what is unlawful (*anomon*) is violent (*biaion*). In Cyrus's own words, he had, in this manner, gained a thorough knowledge of justice.⁸⁷ Thanks to this Persian upbringing, these ethical principles are so deeply embedded in Cyrus that up to the conversation with his father, he is utterly unaware of how he has acquired and internalised the skills of realpolitik through hunting. Realisation dawns when he passes from the company of youths into the company of adult men and is elected commander of the Persian army. In other words, when his journey to the position of Great King begins.⁸⁸ Interestingly enough, Socrates' criticism in the *Republic* of the inconsistencies of the too-literal application of the logic of giving back what one has received leads to the discussion on the ethical

⁸³ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.23,39–40.

⁸⁴ Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.1–2; see also 4.1.3–4.

⁸⁵ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.1–11.

⁸⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.11–23; see also 3.8.6–7.

⁸⁷ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.6–8; 3.1,16–17; cf. also *Mem.* 1.2.40–46; 4.4.12–13; see Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 74–75; Mueller-Goldingen, *loc. cit.* (n. 37) 76–77, 93–94; *contra* G. Danzig, “Big Boys and Little Boys: Justice and Law in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* and *Memorabilia*”, in D. Gish/W. Ambler (eds.), *The Political Thought of Xenophon*, *Polis* 26 (2009) 271–295, esp. 276–286.

⁸⁸ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.5.4–5.

foundations of genuine politics.⁸⁹ These are, in turn, primarily embodied in the philosopher-king.

Socrates' conversation with Euthydemus coincides in another crucial aspect with Cambyses' and Cyrus' exchange of views. While reflecting on the appropriate application of the principle of doing good to friends and harm to enemies, Socrates and Euthydemus agree that it is just to deceive, plunder and enslave an unjust and hostile polis in war.⁹⁰

The parallels between these two dialogues prove that Xenophon retains the binary differentiation of the principle of benefiting friends and harming enemies, drastically heightening its severity by introducing the hunting analogy. It imposes an absolute obligation to treat friends and fellow citizens with justice and kindness, while personal enemies and those of the state may be treated in a manner which will yield the desired outcome: to catch the beast or be victorious in war. The person who abuses these two principles essentially removes himself from human society. Cambyses says that such citizens degenerate into savages (*agrioi politali*).⁹¹ Even more telling is the example of the young Assyrian king, the paradigm for the worst kind of ruler.⁹² According to Xenophon, he revealed his vile character as a young prince while out hunting. On the eve of his marriage, he decides to hunt game for this occasion in a border region of Media and does so, escorted by a substantial military force. This entirely unjustified and hostile action provokes the first military clash of Assyria with Media and Persia.⁹³ More importantly, the Assyrian prince commits a truly heinous crime in the hunt. Gobryas was a member of the Assyrian higher nobility, and it was arranged that his remarkable son should marry the daughter of the old Assyrian king. Despite this arrangement, the Assyrian prince murdered his future brother-in-law and friend out of base envy. In contrast to Cyrus, who enjoyed competing with his fellow hunters, the Assyrian prince was furious that Gobryas' son was a better hunter than he. When the Assyrian heir to the throne missed a bear and lion, he ran a spear into his more successful brother-in-law. In other words, instead of killing the beast, he murdered his *philos*. The death of his son made Gobryas turn his back on his master and create an alliance with Cyrus, who correctly understood the underlying propositions of hunting and the tenet of doing good to friends and harm to ene-

⁸⁹ Pl. *Resp.* 331c–336a; see also 382c, 389b–c; cf. Gigon, *loc. cit.* (n. 80) 87–88; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 68–70; Mueller-Goldingen, *loc. cit.* (n. 37) 81. 127–128.

⁹⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.15; see also 2.1.28; 2.2; cf. Due, *loc. cit.* (n. 44) 160–161; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 113; contra D. M. Johnson, "Xenophon at his most Socratic (*Memorabilia* 4.2)", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 29 (2005) 39–73, esp. 55–58.

⁹¹ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.6.34.

⁹² Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.16–20; 4.6.2–6; 5.2.27–28; 3.6–8; 4.30–31; 6.1.45; 7.5.29–30.

⁹³ Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.16–20.

mies.⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, following the victory over Assyria, their relationship is crowned by marriage between Cyrus's friend and Gobryas's daughter.⁹⁵

5. Conclusion

Examination of the *Cynegeticus*, the *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum*, the *Memorabilia*, and the *Cyropaedia* shows that Xenophon's notion of hunting is coherent and consistent across different literary genres. There are variations in how the hunting imagery is employed and the aspects addressed, but the main subject of each work predominantly determines these alterations. In Xenophon's eyes, hunting is an important form of *paideia* whose educational impact rests on two pillars. The first is the principle of toil. The physical and psychological efforts of hunting prepare for the challenges of war and hence for the defence of the state, i.e. the common good. In addition, toil has a beneficial effect on the attitude to morality by advancing the attainment and cultivation of self-control, endurance and moderation. However, the second pillar is equally or even more important in this respect. It stands for a fundamental assumption of hunting: humans and wild beasts are two antipodes. When the distinction between moral and immoral behaviour is linked to this presupposition, the chasm between just and unjust conduct widens considerably. Though linking both types of behaviour with animals is still possible, there are substantial differences. Exemplary conduct is associated with the dog, a domesticated animal that helps chase wild beasts and is the human's best friend. In contrast, improper conduct is identified with the spider, a predator that traditionally embodies only negative human traits. This, in turn, means that when other dichotomies are linked to hunting, they also fall under this strict division between ethical and unethical behaviour. Consequently, dichotomies like *kaloi kagathoi – ponēroi*, friend/fellow citizen – enemy, philosophy – sophistry, philosopher – *hetaira* and ideal ruler – tyrant clearly stand for irreconcilable opposites that unequivocally state which conduct is to be seen as paradigmatic and which is not. At the same time, Xenophon defines the aims, means, and conditions of hunting even more precisely by associating them with these dichotomies. As he shows, there are two kinds of hunting. The bad and harmful type is motivated by a false sense of ambition: greed is its driving force, and the young, friends, fellow citizens and the city are treated as prey or enemies. Though the good and beneficial type of hunting is motivated by the desire to win, it is subordinate to what is good and just. It aims to establish genuine *philia* with good and noble individuals in order to engage in political affairs for the common good. Thus, it can include manipulation, trickery and even violence, but only when directed against unscrupulous individuals or the enemy. In these cases, such behaviour is not only desirable but just.

⁹⁴ Xen. *Cyr.* 4.6.2–10; 5.3.6–8; see Due, *loc. cit.* (n. 44) 61–62. 90; Gera, *loc. cit.* (n. 14) 247–248.

⁹⁵ Xen. *Cyr.* 8.4.13–26.

Xenophon believes on these grounds that his hunting concept can be an excellent instrument for overcoming the moral contradictions inherent in a key tenet of Greek popular ethics – do good to friends and harm to enemies. Besides, it can help achieve an educational agenda with seemingly conflicting goals: to enable the correct use of moral and immoral practices depending on the circumstances without causing moral corruption.

Ivan Jordović, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History, Dr Zorana Djindjića 2, RS-21000 Novi Sad, ivan.jordovic@ff.uns.ac.rs, ivanjordovic@yahoo.de