AMBITION AND REBELLION: CITIZEN MOTIVATION AND THE SPIRITED PASSIONS IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF PLATO AND XENOPHON

Joshua Jon Vandiver

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ABSTRACT

This work advances a novel approach to the study of Greek political thought by uncovering a hitherto unnoticed dialogue between Plato and his contemporary Xenophon regarding citizen motivation and moral psychology. In the works of these thinkers, citizens are motivated to engage in political activity in part due to aspects of their psychology: desires for political recognition and comparative standing arising from a distinct class of spirited or irascible passions. Two spirited passions are particularly central to citizen motivation. The first is ambition, philotimia, the desire for status and honor in and for the political community. The second is political anger, reactive irascibility to perceived injustices to oneself, others, or the political community. While in Plato’s ideal theory these are non-ideal forms of citizen motivation, this approach reveals how Plato’s theoretical discourse reshaped Greek political language in ways which he did not expect or approve. I argue the first evidence of Plato’s impact is found in the concepts of the spirited passions subsequently embraced and deployed by Xenophon to conceptualize political rebellion, recognition, leadership, and change. By uncovering this dialogue, we better understand Greek theories of citizenship, the role of psychology and the passions in Greek political language, the complex nature of theoretical innovation and
reception, and the influence and relevance of Greek political thought to subsequent periods, including our own.
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IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF PLATO AND XENOPHON

BY

JOSH VANDIVER
for Henri
Ire is in soth executour of pride.

- Chaucer, *Sompn. T*. 302

For every man looks that his companion should value him at the same value he sets upon himself; and upon all signs of contempt or undervaluing naturally endeavors, as far as he dares...to extort a greater value from his contemners by damage and from others by example.

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. XIII

Freedom is a concept that only makes sense within the framework of a thumotic conception of the human being.

- Peter Sloterdijk, *Rage and Time: A Psychopolitical Investigation*, 20
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CHAPTER I – THE SPIRITED PASSIONS AND POLITICS

§1.1 INTRODUCTION

§1.1.1 Discourses of rebellion and control

What motivates a person to act politically, to become a political subject? What motivates a person to aspire to standing in a political community and to react to injustices and indignities within or to the community? These questions are at the root of this investigation of Greek political thought. It is an investigation which also begins with puzzlement. Near the start of Plato’s Republic it is declared that good persons, hoi agathoi, are not motivated to act politically by philotimia (347b), which can be rendered as the desire for honor or recognition within a community. Indeed, Socrates and his interlocutor agree that they would call a person shameful if he were a philotimos, a person motivated by that desire. Why should the desire for recognition and standing be shameful? From our perspective, the puzzle deepens due to the existence of many prominent renditions of Greek culture which portray the Greeks—with good reason—as highly motivated by desires for recognition and honor, including in the political realm. The obverse of what I call the aspirational desire for recognition is the reactive response to injustices and indignities, righteous indignation, and the Iliad itself begins by invoking the indignant wrath, menos, of Achilles. Socrates, in contrast, does not display the anger
of indignation either in response to his own conviction to death, as depicted in Plato’s *Apology*, or to the slandering of philosophy, as depicted in Plato’s *Republic*. Some of the most influential philosophic texts of the classical Greek world contravene central values we associate with the Greeks. What are we to make of this? And what did the Greeks?

The denigration of both aspirational and reactive concerns for recognition and standing particularly on display in the *Republic* is striking for an additional reason. The Greeks indeed had a rich conceptual vocabulary both for expressing forms of recognition and honor and for expressing types of anger occasioned by the denial of or slights to one’s standing. But for all its richness and variety, before Plato that language was also highly fluid—it lacked coherence. One of the great achievements of the *Republic* and a handful of related dialogues, it is here argued, was to pull together the rich Greek language for these types of motivations into a coherent conceptual web. That conceptual web links these concerns and motivations into a class of *spirited* desires and passions situated in a specific psychological seat: *to thumoeides*, the spirited ‘part’ of the psyche. The *thumoeides* is described with the greatest concision in the *Republic* relatively late in the work, as a kind of summation of many previous formulations, as being ‘wholly set on mastery (*kratein*), victory (*nikan*) and good reputation (*eudokimein*); thus it is designated ‘victory-loving (*philonikon*) and honor-loving (*philotimon*; IX.581a-b’). Plato achieved this theoretical task even as he subordinated these passions to intellective concerns, however: as is well known, the *Republic* advances tripartite models of the city and soul, and in both the
spirited component is hierarchically subordinate to the intellective. It is central to the argument here presented that not all Plato’s readers would follow him in taking that second step of thoroughly subordinating spirited desires and motivations. For example, Plato’s contemporary, and fellow Socratic, Xenophon would not accept that subordination. Instead, he would develop some of the possibilities inherent in Plato’s new conceptualization of the spirited passions. Those developments were central to his theoretical reaction to, and disagreement with, Plato in the realm of political theory. Xenophon should, on the whole, be seen as arguing that the spirited passions are essential to conceptualizing politics and political agency. Theories of the spirited passions are at the root of his political-theoretical project, which centers on problems of citizen motivation, leadership, and reactive responses to political governance.

This study is driven by a related set of questions for political theory more broadly: How is political subjectivity constituted? How is political agency gained? For Xenophon, the spirited passions are necessary for political agency, but neither Plato nor Xenophon takes for granted that these passions motivate all persons at all times and in the same way. Quite the contrary. The spirited desires for recognition and standing can be stronger or weaker, and can take different objects, in different persons. And, crucially, they can be eviscerated. A person or people can descend or be driven into a state of being athumos, the extreme dispirit or despair which lacks both the aspirational and the
reactive spirited passions. For Xenophon, being reduced to such a state is indicative of a person subjected to some form of oppression, including political oppression.

As an illustration of why this contrast between the spirited passions—and the political subjectivity and agency to which they give rise—and the state of being athumos, in which those passions are lacking, is important, consider the arc of mid-20th century civil rights movements in the U.S. and the colonial resistance movements which in part inspired them. One of the founders of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s in the U.S., Huey P. Newton, opens his work Revolutionary Suicide with the distinction between what he calls ‘reactionary suicide’ and his concept of ‘revolutionary suicide’. Reactionary suicide is ‘the reaction of a man who takes his own life in response to social conditions that overwhelm him and condemn him to helplessness’, conditions in which he is demeaned and robbed of dignity. For Newton, many black Americans had been afflicted by a related but ‘even more painful and degrading’ state, ‘a death of the spirit rather than of the flesh, lapsing into lives of quiet desperation’. This state is recognized by the following: ‘Its victims have ceased to fight the forms of oppression’. To this condition of helplessness and despair Newton offers the possibility of change which comes from struggle against the forces of oppression, a struggle motivated by hope—even a hope which doesn’t understand

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1 William V. Harris, Restraining rage: the ideology of anger control in classical antiquity (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 16, observes that ‘the complications are considerable’ for determining the meaning of athumos and declines to make such an attempt, offering the provisional definitions of ‘despondent’, ‘faintheartedness’, and ‘lack of courage’. The present work is a contribution to a more precise understanding of athumia and related concepts of the spirited passions.
the difficulty of the attempt. If such a struggle leads to death, it is revolutionary suicide, a death invested with a meaning wholly absent from reactionary suicide, for such a death is ‘the price of self-respect’.

Huey Newton called for a shift from a state of submission, a state which leads to reactionary suicide of the body or the spirit, to an embrace of the possibility of a revolutionary suicide: the staking of one’s life in the struggle against oppression. By so doing, such a person begins to gain political subjectivity and agency, and it is that process or moment—in which the self-awareness of the subjugated shifts and the possibility of resistance emerges—which is at the heart of the contrast between aspirational and reactive spirited passions and *athumia*, a dispirited despair which can lead to physical or spiritual suicide. What prompts that shift? How can a group go from being subjugated within their own minds to affirming a self-respect which can motivate them to the action which, however difficult, may effect their liberation?

Posing such questions calls us to follow the thread of this form of resistance thinking. Newton was a close reader of Frantz Fanon, who in the context of anti-colonial resistance in Africa argued that the recognition of one’s humanity initiates the psychological shift which is the germ of resistance: ‘it is precisely at the moment [the colonized native] realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which

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he will secure its victory’. Fanon was deeply engaged with Hegel’s master-slave dialectic and played a pivotal role in recasting that dialectic into a more concrete theoretical framework which could be used to analyze existing structures of racial subjugation under colonialism. Fanon’s Hegel was in turn shaped by a Parisian intellectual milieu highly influenced by Alexandre Kojève’s interpretation of the master-slave dialectic, as presented in his lectures at the École des Hautes Études from 1933-9 and attended by Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Lacan among others. Kojève’s Hegel provides ample philosophical resources for thinking about the struggle of the subjugated for recognition, but through Fanon’s reworking, those resources also became, as seen in case of Huey Newton but also many others, fruitful for actual movements of political resistance.

Alexandre Kojève’s thinking on the Hegelian struggle for recognition also influenced a very different strain of 20th century political thought, that associated with

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3 Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth* (New York, 1965), 35. On Newton’s close study of this work, see Bobby Seale, *Seize the time: the story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (New York, 1970), 25-6. In exile in Algeria as a consequence of his own revolutionary mobilization, in a 1970 interview Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of Information in the Black Panther Party, focused on the crucial importance of Fanon in ‘explaining and analyzing the consciousness of a colonized people and showing how they move from an awareness of being oppressed all the way to the ultimate, the height of consciousness: the point where they’re willing to fight for their freedom’; Lee Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver* (New York, 1970), 90-1.

4 See, for example, ‘The Negro and Hegel’ in Frantz Fanon, *Black skin, white masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (1952; New York, 1967), 216-22, though Fanon’s engagement with Hegel’s master-slave dialectic extends far beyond that work and can be readily discerned in his earlier book *The Wretched of the Earth*; Hussein Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression* (New York, 1985), 101-130.

5 Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression*, 102, 113.
Leo Strauss, which has conditioned the study of Xenophon. Kojève and Strauss first met in Berlin in 1920, grew closer when both were based in Paris from 1932-4, and maintained an active correspondence through the mid-1960s. In 1948, Leo Strauss published *On Tyranny*, an interpretation of Xenophon’s *Hiero*, and in 1954 a French edition was published which included a response by Kojève making much of the ‘striving for honor’ and the desire to be ‘recognized’ he discerned in the *Hiero*. These concepts did not receive disproportionate emphasis in Strauss’ commentary, though he does reflect upon them, nor have they been central to the now rather large body of scholarship on Xenophon in political theory which is indebted to Strauss. In the French edition, however, and in an English edition appearing in 1963, Strauss included a ‘Restatement’ in reply to Kojève which does devote considerably more attention to honor and recognition.

Strauss’ exchange with Kojève over Xenophon’s *Hiero* might have been a minor footnote in the history of 20th century political thought, however, were it not for Strauss’ students. Allan Bloom studied directly with Strauss and would go on to produce a popular translation of Plato’s *Republic*, but Bloom had also studied with Kojève and was

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7 Both the original interpretation, and Kojève’s reply are to be found in Leo Strauss, *On tyranny: revised and expanded edition*, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (Chicago, 2000). This University of Chicago edition is the fourth since the original publication, an indication of the currency, in certain quarters, of this Xenophontic text.
8 The ‘Restatement’ is included in the Gourevitch/Roth edition and was first published in English in Leo Strauss, *What is political philosophy?* (Glencoe, Ill., 1959).
responsible for the English publication of Kojève's *Introduction to the reading of Hegel.* In turn, Bloom’s student Francis Fukuyama would go on to write the best-selling *The End of History and the Last Man*, which drew together a Kojèvean-Hegelian conceptualization of the desire for recognition with the Platonic concept of *thumos*, which Bloom had translated as ‘spiritedness’: Fukuyama argued that Platonic *thumos* should be identified as the ancient Greek equivalent for the desire for recognition. Fukuyama’s book became famous in international relations circles not for that claim, however, but for his thesis that, with the end of the Cold War, Western-style liberal democracy was destined to triumph over the globe. It took two decades for a respected scholar of international relations, Richard Ned Lebow, to take up the potential of the concept of Platonic spirit, *thumos*, for the field; it enabled him to conceptualize how concerns for national honor and status can motivate international political actors. Central to Lebow’s theory is the role of anger in response to slights to national honor and status, but the work was quickly followed by a friendly critique of Lebow’s theory on Fanonian lines arguing that he

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10 Francis Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man* (New York, 1992), 162-3. At 368, n. 2, Fukuyama explicitly credits Bloom’s long commentary on the *Republic*, published in the edition above, as a source for his views on *thumos*.

‘effectively denies subaltern agency’, including that of ‘the non-European colonized masses’, because he denies them the capacity to express such anger.\(^\text{12}\)

Thus, we have come full circle, back to Fanon and the question of how the subjugated can express a spirited passion like righteous indignation arising from their desire for recognition. For colonized peoples, Fanon argues, a primary obstacle to recognition is the imputed subhuman status imposed by an oppressive colonial power as an essential tool in its arsenal of oppression.\(^\text{13}\) To struggle against, and perhaps overcome, so carefully constructed a system of oppression, persons in such a resistance must first overcome their own psychological subjugation. Fanon argued this psychological shift could be aided by the most demeaning insult hurled by the oppressor at the oppressed: ‘the former slave needs a \textit{challenge} to his humanity’—much worse is the oppressor’s ‘indifference, or a paternalistic curiosity’.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{12}\) Robbie Shilliam, ‘A Fanonian critique of Lebow’s \textit{A Cultural Theory of International Relations}’, \textit{Millennium - Journal of International Studies} 38, no. 1 (2009), 121. Among other examples, Shilliam adduces Lebow, \textit{A cultural theory of international relations}, 69: ‘Anger is a luxury that can only be felt by those in a position to seek revenge. Slaves and subordinates cannot allow themselves to feel anger. It is also senseless to feel anger towards those who cannot become aware of our anger.’

\(^{13}\) Bulhan, \textit{Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression}, 122-7, summarizes this aspect of Fanon’s thought on internalization and psychological auto-oppression—usefully drawing on the work of Orlando Patterson, \textit{Slavery and social death: a comparative study} (Cambridge, Mass., 1982)—concluding: ‘[A] distinctive feature of the slave was his generalized condition of dishonor. For in his eyes and those of others, his person and status lacked integrity, worth, and autonomy’ (122); this state is also described as one in which ‘humanity’ of the oppressed is denied both by the oppressor and by himself (114).

\(^{14}\) Fanon, \textit{Black skin, white masks}, 221, emphasis added. On such grounds he saw the possibilities for racial reconciliation to be greater in the U.S.—as opposed to areas in
expressed indignity, in inciting the reactive response of righteous indignation which drives a struggle against the oppressor. These are not prominent features of the Kojèvean-Hegelian desire and struggle for recognition and are characteristically Fanonian; perhaps surprisingly, they also feature in the thought of Plato and Xenophon on the spirited passions.

As we have seen, it is Kojève’s focus on the desire for honor and recognition which is the crux of these divergent intellectual and political trajectories. Kojève saw such desire playing an important role in Xenophon’s thought, while Strauss and his students focused primarily on Platonic *thumos*. The potential link between Plato and Xenophon on these spirited passions was left unpursued. That lacuna was an original impetus for the approach taken in the present study, which argues that the Socratics Plato and Xenophon together constituted a distinctive discourse on such passions.

On close inspection of this Platonic-Xenophontic discourse on the spirited passion for recognition, however, I discovered that the suggestive work of Kojève on Xenophon and that of Strauss and his followers on Plato needed to be supplemented in several ways, including a sharper focus on the phenomenon of political and psychological subjugation and the problem such subjugation poses to the possibility of resistance. I did not start this which black persons were oppressed by France—precisely because black Americans suffered greater perceived insults, insults which occasioned their reaction: ‘In the United States, the Negro battles and is battled’ (221), concluding that, at the end of the struggle underway in the U.S., ‘I can already see a white man and a black man hand in hand’ (222, original emphasis).
study with such a ‘Fanonian’ focus—rather, the study led me to it. I discovered that Xenophon in particular considered such issues to be of great importance; indeed, they are crucial to understanding his thought as expressed in one of the longest and most influential works of classical Greek antiquity, his *Cyropaedia* or *Education of Cyrus*, which stands at the heart of this study. Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* is, I argue, a Socratic reflection on imperialism.

As a Socratic reflection on imperialism, the *Cyropaedia* is a Janus-faced work. Towards its end, in Books VII and VIII, Xenophon reveals the techniques Cyrus used to establish his colonial empire. As we will see, it is Cyrus’ ability to manipulate and, in some cases, suppress and eviscerate the spirited passions of his subordinates and subjects which is at the heart of his methods. But in the earlier books a very different Cyrus is revealed. He motivates a small, select force of Persians—who in various ways are described so as to evoke the Spartans of Xenophon’s day—to become the vanguard against the empire Cyrus’ will replace, the empire of the Assyrians centered on Babylon.15 Cyrus’ vanguard gathers behind it, and motivates in turn, disaffected peoples beneath the yoke of the imperial power. Those peoples are led by men like Gobryas and Gadatas, both of whom had been subjected to extreme indignities by the Assyrian king—in Gadatas’ case,

15 The Greeks often referred to Babylonians as Assyrians; Steven W. Hirsch, *The friendship of the barbarians: Xenophon and the barbarian empire* (Hanover, 1985), 175 n. 52. The seminal modern work on military-political vanguardism is Régis Debray, *Revolution in the revolution?: armed struggle and political struggle in Latin America* (New York, 1967).
castration—and a high point of the work is the taking of Babylon and the personal execution of the king by Gobryas and Gadatas. In the case of the historical Cyrus, who is distantly but not wholly unrelated to the idealized Cyrus given us by Xenophon, one people who were the beneficiaries of the Cyrus' successful overthrow of the Assyrian empire were the Israelites. Indeed, in the Judeo-Christian tradition Cyrus is considered a ‘Messiah’, the ‘anointed one’ selected by God to free the Israelites from subjugation under Babylon, as in Deutero-Isaiah 45:1-8. The trope in which ‘Babylon’ is the representation of an oppressive power features heavily in the Christian Book of Revelation and would have a long afterlife. Cyrus in the Cyropaedia is, for the greater part of the work, a revolutionary political figure.

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18 To again take a recent example, Black Panther Party leaders would appropriate the language of Revelation to name the oppressive power against which they struggled in the U.S. See a 1970 work by Eldridge Cleaver, ‘Uptight in Babylon’, in Target zero: a life in writing, ed. Kathleen Cleaver (New York, 2006), the editorial comment to which elaborates upon the link to Revelation, and numerous entries in the Party newspaper, e.g., Anonymous, ‘The new constitution will be the guidelines upon which we will build a new world, founded on the ruins of decadent Babylon’, Black Panther 5, no. 12 (1970), a report on how the Party-organized Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia had addressed ‘self-determination for national minorities, women, street people, male homosexuals, lesbians, the family and rights of children’ among other issues.
Thus, the *Cyropaedia* portrays not only the institution of empire effected in Books VIII and VIII but also the resistance against empire which occupies the previous books. Cyrus builds a coalition of the disaffected, and he is himself the model of the ‘revolutionary ascetic’.\(^{19}\) As we shall see, Cyrus’ natural psychological endowment and subsequent education combine to create a character type who displays extreme temperance in respect of appetitive desires—like those for food, drink, physical comfort, and sexual relations—with the result that he can single-mindedly pursue spirited desires including the desires for political recognition, victory, and a role in governance. This psychological constitution is crucial to the model political agent Xenophon portrays in Cyrus.

In the *Cyropaedia* there is an interplay between the spirited passions tending toward rebellion and the techniques by which rulers manipulate or suppress those spirited passions. The work opens with a reflection on the tendency of beasts not to rebel against political rule and the tendency of humans to resist their rulers. In Book VIII, Cyrus’ imperial elites construct a near godlike image of themselves in order to intimidate the subjugated peoples. So whether the subjugated are cast as beasts or the imperial powers are cast as godlike, the intention is to create hierarchies which psychologically intimidate

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\(^{19}\) Adopting a term of Bruce Mazlish, *The revolutionary ascetic: evolution of a political type* (New York, 1976), though I do not share his psychoanalytic approach, which, among other flaws, neglects differences in the political languages and cultures of the revolutionaries he examines. That said, the focus on canalizing psychological energy through practices of asceticism has precursors in the far earlier philosophical and psychological tradition studied here.
the lower orders. The moment the lower orders see through the hierarchy—see the common humanity of subjugated and subjugator—is the moment of ‘revolutionary assurance’ (in Fanon’s phrase), and the possibility of political action, including that of resistance, emerges.

The key to unlocking the puzzle of how such revolutionary assurance can be gained—how a subjugated psychological state of, in Greek, athumia can be overcome and reversed—is to be found in rich detail in the Cyropaedia itself in Cyrus’ own leadership practices. But Xenophon gives us a succinct statement of what he has in mind in his Hiero, on tyranny. There, Xenophon’s Simonides describes the three types of persons whom the tyrant must by all means exclude from his polity if he is to remain secure. The first type is the alkimos, the person driven to acts of daring in order to ‘do something for the sake of freedom’ (5.1). Such persons will strike first against a tyranny and, if followed in political action by the wise and then the just, the second and third types, this three-fold sequence can be described as a kind of ‘liberation movement’, a revolutionary process which would establish a just regime where once there had been tyranny. Alkimos is primarily a Homeric term—Xenophon occasionally utilizes archaic words to make his theoretical point—used to describe warriors in battle. A person who is alkimos is driven by alkê, a quality which will enable a person either ‘to vanquish an opponent and achieve glory, or it will cause him to expire in the attempt’; such a person ‘exhibits a pattern of

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20 Vivienne J. Gray, ed. Xenophon on government (Cambridge, 2007), 128, and discussed below, ch. 6, §2.
behavior that values victory or death”. Of the three figures in the *Hiero*’s liberation movement, this study focuses on the first, the type who initiates the movement. Cyrus in the bulk of the *Cyropaedia* is such a type, and the Homeric references (of which *alkimos* is just one) indicate Xenophon’s intention to provide an updated version of the Homeric ethic of spirited passion—one adapted to the age of the *polis*—after the critique it had suffered at the hands of Plato. In the *Apology* (28b-d) and throughout the *Republic*, Plato had offered Socrates as a psychological ‘new Achilles’, one who is not motivated by spirited passions like righteous indignation and who denigrates the spirited desire for political honor. Xenophon’s response is to give us Cyrus, *his* new Achilles: the exemplary political type who can both lead a successful revolution against empire and establish a stable empire of his own.

§1.1.2 Why Plato and Xenophon?

In studying this discourse, I have chosen to focus on Plato and Xenophon for several reasons. Both make theoretical interventions in the Greek discourse of the 21 Derek Collins, *Immortal armor: the concept of Alkê in archaic Greek poetry*, *Greek studies* (Lanham, Md., 1998), 1, 9.
spirited passions and both are highly influential in subsequent political thought. Furthermore, almost uniquely among ancient political thinkers as their works have come down to us, it is possible to discern a genuine, if somewhat hidden, dialogue between the two. I argue that Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* and several other works reacts to Plato’s *Republic*, and it has been convincingly argued that Plato responds to Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* in his *Laws*. Danielle Allen has recently advanced the view that Plato wrote in order to ‘refashion political language’ and that it is possible to discern his influence on his contemporaries and successors in Athens in so doing. I find this argument plausible and fruitful for further research, and it is here argued that the first evidence of that refashioning can be found not in the language of the fourth-century orators studied by Allen but in the concepts and models of the spirited passions deployed by Xenophon. Thus, by studying Xenophon in the manner done here, we provide new evidence for Plato’s impact on Greek political discourse. But I also argue that this dialogue between Plato and Xenophon reveals how conceptual innovations within a discourse can go in unexpected directions from the innovator’s initial formulation.

There are three separate sets of reasons for thinking that Plato and Xenophon were to some degree in dialogue with one another. First, there are prosopographic reasons. Plato and Xenophon were born around the same year, 424 BCE, to relatively elite Athenian

families (Plato’s family being of the higher status) and both closely frequented Socrates and his circle in their youths and young manhood, though Xenophon was not present at Socrates’ death. Clearly, they were in the same room many times as young men.

Xenophon was in exile from Athens for roughly twenty-five or thirty years until 370, but his works indicate that he followed Athenian political affairs and literary developments closely, and his last work, the *Poroi*, written after 355, is a prescriptive treatise on Athenian political economy. It’s quite possible he visited Athens in his later years; in any event he lived those years in Corinth, hardly a backwater. Second, in antiquity, it was held that Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* was a direct response to Plato’s *Republic*. The ancient tradition which understood them to be rival texts forces us to ask: what is the theoretical terrain these two texts are disputing? What are the questions at stake in the rivalry between them to influence Greek thought? This leads to the third set of reasons, namely, those arising from close study of linguistic and conceptual parallels in the works of the two thinkers. I argue that such study reveals concepts of the spirited passions to comprise a significant component of the dialogue between Plato and Xenophon. Though the *Republic* is clearly a work of greater philosophical significance and scope than the *Cyropaedia*, the

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25 A recent summary of the biographical details known for each thinker is Debra Nails, *The people of Plato: a prosopography of Plato and other Socrates* (Indianapolis, 2002), s.v.

26 Aulus Gellius (14.3), Athenaeus (504e-505a), and Diogenes Laertius (3.34) all report that some commentators saw the *Cyropaedia* as Xenophon’s response to Plato’s *Republic*, and that Plato in turn responded with criticism of Xenophon’s *Cyrus* in the *Laws* (694c). For discussion, see James Tatum, *Xenophon’s imperial fiction: on the education of Cyrus* (Princeton, 1989), 38-41. Ernest Barker, *Greek political theory: Plato and his predecessors* (London, 1918), 115, concluded (rather the wrong way round) that ‘the *Republic* may be termed a *Cyropaedia* without the historical setting of Xenophon’.
insight that in respect of the spirited passions and their role in politics the two works are battling over recognizable terrain is an important one: it helps reveal what about Plato’s work occasioned responses from contemporaries.\textsuperscript{27}

Xenophon, on my view, is the theoretic defender of the spirited passions, arguing for their significance and importance to political life. The final verdict may well be that Xenophon was theoretically vastly out-matched by Plato. But, if so, Plato’s was in some measure a pyrrhic victory. His philosophical sophistication did not translate into subsequent influence on political elites in respect of this topic. While Plato’s \textit{Republic} castigated \textit{philotimia} as a motivation in politics, Xenophon’s extensive defense of that value would inaugurate a shift in Greek political ideology which, over the course of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century and then in the Hellenistic period, would come to enshrine \textit{philotimia} as one of the central democratic political virtues.\textsuperscript{28} Even in Rome, Cicero will bemoan the vast influence not of Plato’s \textit{Republic} but of Xenophon’s \textit{Cyropaedia} in the education of the Roman aristocracy of his time (\textit{Brutus} 112). For several centuries, if not several

\textsuperscript{27} The dates of composition of each work are uncertain, but the \textit{Republic} is generally thought to be composed in the mid to late 370s and the \textit{Cyropaedia} in the late 360s; see Malcolm Schofield, ‘Approaching the \textit{Republic},’ in \textit{The Cambridge history of Greek and Roman political thought}, ed. Christopher Rowe, et al. (Cambridge, 2005), 199, and Gera, \textit{Xenophon’s Cyropaedia}, 23-5.

millennia, it is Xenophon whose influence on the thought of political elites was the more widespread. 29

Historians of political thought have long recognized the great influence of certain Greeks, particularly Plato and Aristotle, on subsequent political theories. However, recently arguments have been advanced for the importance of expanding our historical understanding of Greek political thought and its subsequent influence by considering heretofore neglected thinkers and periods. 30 These arguments are an additional inspiration for my own turn to Xenophon. He was clearly a very innovative writer, developing and in some cases virtually inventing several literary forms in which to present his ideas, including history, eulogy, dialogue, constitutional tract, novel, analysis of city-state finances, and technical handbook. He is an interesting figure in his own right, particularly in the Greek discourse of the spirited passions studied here, but he also must

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29 There is ample testimony to the early modern interest in Xenophon’s works, as attested by the wealth of translations, starting, in Italy, with Leonardo Bruni’s translation of Xenophon’s Hiero, On Tyranny, into Latin in 1403. Translations of Xenophon’s works into Latin already numbered in the several dozens by the start of the 16th century, as detailed by David Marsh, ‘Xenophon’, in Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: mediaeval and renaissance Latin translations and commentaries, annotated lists and guides, ed. Ferdinand Edward Cranz, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and Virginia Brown (Washington, D.C., 1992). Very little has been done by scholars to analyze the motivations for these translations or their contemporary impact, but see Tatum, Xenophon’s imperial fiction, ch. 1, for a broad sense of Xenophon’s reception through the 18th century, and Lorna Hutson, The usurer’s daughter: male friendship and fictions of women in sixteenth-century England (London, 1994), ch. 1, for a more detailed discussion of the role Xenophon’s Oeconomicus played in Renaissance thought.

30 The best introduction to recent work which expands the boundaries of the study of Greek political thought is Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield, eds., The Cambridge history of Greek and Roman political thought (Cambridge, 2000).
be considered in any project which attempts to better understand Plato’s impact on contemporaries and posterity.

§1.1.3 Honor, the passions, and the history of political thought

Vigorous debates about the nature of ancient Greek societies and polities in respect of competitive motivations, comparative standing, and political honor are long-standing, but there is a scholarly consensus that the Greeks from the archaic period onward developed a highly sophisticated language in which to articulate such concerns.\footnote{Prominent classicists who have put the competitiveness of Greek culture—archaic and classical—at the center of their analysis include Jacob Burckhardt, \textit{Griechische kulturgeschichte}, 4 vols. (Berlin and Stuttgart, 1898), esp. IV; Werner Jaeger, \textit{Paideia: die Formung des griechischen Menschen}, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1933); E. R. Dodds, \textit{The Greeks and the irrational} (Berkeley, 1951); A. W. H. Adkins, \textit{Merit and responsibility: a study in Greek values} (Oxford, 1960); and Gregory Nagy, \textit{The best of the Achaians: concepts of the hero in Archaic Greek poetry} (Baltimore, 1979). K. J. Dover, \textit{Greek popular morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle} (Oxford, 1974), 226-42, gave a concise overview on Greek concepts related to honor and shame but did little to indicate how they developed over time even within the period he considered.} This feature of Greek culture is often likened to Roman culture; indeed, the importance of the concept of \textit{philotimia}—ambition or the desire for political honor—for understanding Greek political thought and culture is attested by prominent ancient historians who lament there has been no proper scholarly treatment of the concept. As one scholar concluded, ‘No word
understood to its depths goes further to explain the Greco-Roman achievement’.

The pressing need for such a study of philotimia and related concepts is one of the motivations of this work.

Historians of Rome, after a long neglect, have begun to return to these subjects in both the republican and imperial periods. Medieval historians have also taken expanded notice of the influence of ancient political honor ethics, while early modern historians who argue that the Greco-Roman ethics of political honor influenced the period are

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32 Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman social relations: 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven, 1974), 125, who argues philotimia is the most significant motivation of persons pursuing political office in the ancient world. MacMullen’s view is supported by Peter Brown, *The making of late antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 31, who comments on philotimia: ‘On the one hand, it committed members of the upper class to a blatant competitiveness on all levels of social life....On the other hand, the competitiveness of philotimia still assumed and needed, as it had done for centuries, an audience of significant others who were potential competitors. Without these, the exercise of philotimia would have been deprived of a large part of its meaning.’

33 There has been some recent work by classicists on related passions of shame and anger in ancient thought, most notably Douglas L. Cairns, *Aidōs: The psychology and ethics of honour and shame in ancient Greek literature* (Oxford, 1993); Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the hero: courage, manliness, and the impersonal good* (Cambridge, 2000); Harris, *Restraining rage*; and John Fitzgerald, *Passions and moral progress in Greco-Roman thought* (London, 2008); in political theory, there has also been the recent contribution of Christina H. Tarnopolsky, *Prudes, perverts, and tyrants: Plato’s Gorgias and the politics of shame* (Princeton, 2010), which came to hand too late, however, to inform the present work.

34 Donald C. Earl, *The moral and political tradition of Rome* (London, 1967) is a concise overview of previous scholarship which was meant as a prelude to an in-depth study of Roman virtus—a Roman moral and political concept closely related to the concepts studied here—which was never completed by the author. Evidence of a recent revival include J. E. Lendon, *Empire of honour: the art of government in the Roman world* (Oxford, 1997); Carlin A. Barton, *Roman honor: the fire in the bones* (Berkeley, 2001); Myles A. McDonnell, *Roman manliness: ‘virtus’ and the Roman republic* (Cambridge, 2009).

Among scholars concerned with broader histories of political honor ethics, a number have contrasted ancient and modern political cultures in respect of the strength of competitive honor ethics.37

Within philosophy, there has recently been an expanded interest in concepts of honor.38 One path-breaking work coins the Greek-derived term ‘kudonomics’ to describe the study of esteem and its distribution and argues that such studies should be at the heart of the discipline of economics.39 Among political scientists, political reputation and prestige feature in a number of prominent studies from the mid-century onward, particularly regarding executives, as in the influential study of presidential power by Richard Neustadt.40 The focus of these studies in most cases is confined to the external

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36 This tendency surfaces in modern scholarship with Jacob Burckhardt, Geschichte der Renaissance in Italien (Stuttgart, 1868); it persists in Quentin Skinner, The foundations of modern political thought, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978).
40 Richard Neustadt, Presidential power: the politics of leadership (New York, 1960), who devotes chapters to ‘Professional Reputation’, the recognition of political skill accorded a politician by other politicians, and ‘Public Prestige’, which can be partly gauged, he
assessment of a leader's reputation and prestige and how its presence or absence helps or hinders a leader from achieving his policy goals. Little or no study is devoted to the internal motivation of a leader in desiring political reputation or prestige.

There has also been a recent increase in scholarly attention to honor among political theorists, but it has largely been confined to modern political thought. Within political theory, however, debates about the Greeks have long been at the center of the discipline. To this day, some theorists look to Greek thought to inspire reflection on contemporary problems. Other theorists even take the position that Greek political

argues, through modern polling of presidential job approval as conducted by Gallup. The figure and presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt is central to Neustadt's book, as it is to the wide-ranging work of James MacGregor Burns, Leadership (New York, 1978), which develops in part from James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: the lion and the fox (New York, 1956).

41 Gabriella Slomp, Thomas Hobbes and the political philosophy of glory (New York, 2000); Laurie Bagby, Thomas Hobbes: turning point for honor (Lanham, 2009); and Sharon R. Krause, Liberalism with honor (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), the historical component of which focuses on the role of honor in the thought of Montesquieu. These are supplemented by quasi-popular works like James Bowman, Honor: a history (New York, 2006), also modern in focus. One exception is Robert Faulkner, The case for greatness: honorable ambition and its critics (New Haven Conn., 2007).

42 Prominent scholars of political theory in the Anglophone world who devote significant attention to the Greeks, in some cases after pursuing other interests in the field, include Barker, Greek political theory; George H. Sabine, A history of political theory (New York, 1937); Leo Strauss, On tyranny: an interpretation of Xenophon's Hiero (Glencoe, Ill., 1948); Hannah Arendt, The human condition (Chicago, 1958). For an argument that debates about the Greeks serve to unite the discipline of political theory across national and language boundaries see Janet Coleman, 'The voice of the 'Greeks' in the conversation of mankind', in The history of political thought in national context, ed. Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge, 2001).

43 Recent examples include Lebow, A cultural theory of international relations, and Melissa Lane, Eco-Republic: what the ancients can teach us about ethics, virtue, and sustainable
thought is in some respects superior to that of other periods and traditions; this has been a particular feature of the political thought of Leo Strauss, for example.\footnote{Leo Strauss, \textit{Natural right and history} (Chicago, 1953).}

As discussed in the previous section, a number of scholars indebted to Leo Strauss have been particularly interested in \textit{thumos} or the \textit{thumoeides}, which in Plato’s thought is crucial to the desire for honor, but I depart from them in a number of respects (discussed in more detail in the next section on methodology). Such scholars tend to translate the Greek concept of \textit{thumos} as ‘spiritedness’ following the convention established by Allan Bloom in his influential translation of the \textit{Republic}.\footnote{On \textit{thumos}, \textit{thumoeides}, and their translation, see Allan D. Bloom, ‘Interpretive essay’, in \textit{The Republic of Plato} (New York, 1968), 449. Cf. Seth Benardete, \textit{Socrates’ second sailing: on Plato’s Republic} (Chicago, 1989), 94-102, 189-194; Leon H. Craig, \textit{The war lover: a study of Plato’s Republic} (Toronto, 1994), 22-41, 58-111; Waller R. Newell, \textit{Ruling passion: the erotics of statecraft in Platonic political philosophy} (Lanham, Md., 2000), 103-141; and Paul W. Ludwig, \textit{Eros and polis: desire and community in Greek political theory} (Cambridge, 2002), 195 and passim.}

They tend to understand the psychological qualities they believe \textit{thumos} represents in the Greek language to be present in human beings in all times and places. Consequently, they have thought that most major thinkers in the history of political thought discuss the ‘phenomenon’ of ‘human spiritedness’ in some fashion.\footnote{A thought pursued by the various contributors in Catherine H. Zuckert, ed. \textit{Understanding the political spirit: philosophical investigations from Socrates to Nietzsche} (New Haven, 1988).} I adopt a different approach which makes no claims about the trans-cultural ubiquity of such a ‘phenomenon’ but rather focuses on the lexical field of \textit{thumos}, its cognates, and related terms in Greek and how those terms function in the living (Princeton, 2012).
various works of each Greek thinker in which they are deployed. That said, my approach leaves open the possibility that later thinkers influenced by or engaged with the Greeks and their legacy (for example, Kojéve and, via his thought, Fanon) may invoke a similar conceptual field of what I call the spirited passions. Indeed, this approach supports expectations that such influence is to be found and calls upon scholars of later periods to be alert to the perdurance of this discourse.

The present investigation of the spirited passions was in part inspired by early modern studies on civic humanism, in particular J. G. A. Pocock’s gripping but controversial claims regarding the long endurance of an ideal of active citizenship which originated in Greece and was articulated by Aristotle as the *zóon politikon* who ‘being naturally civic, must act immediately and in his own person’. Pocock later claimed this ideal was more Spartan than Athenian, so focused on political action and decision that it shunned lesser ‘luxurious’ or ‘effeminate’ concerns (in its idiomatic terminology), and centered on developing ‘the rigorous self-discipline necessary to autonomy and self-determination in the field of public action’—he concluded that there is something ‘primal’ about this ideal, ‘the initial self-fashioning of the hero immediately after he has become a

citizen’. Pocock’s valedictory comments are merely suggestive, but they put us on the right track: there is a form of citizenship in which the capacity for action, and the cultivation and performance of that capacity, is prominent. We see that form of citizenship with greater precision through the study of the paradigm of the spirited passions presented here.

There is a further intellectual lineage to such investigations into the intersection of ancient political thought and the psychology of citizenship, however. Pocock admitted a debt to Hannah Arendt’s work on the political life, bios politikos or vita activa, and I have drawn inspiration from her work as well. But since the publication of Martin Heidegger’s lectures on Aristotle’s Rhetoric, given in the summer semester 1924 at Marburg and which Arendt attended, it is now possible to see where some of her ideas originated. As one of

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48 J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 2003), 558. At 564, also in the 2003 afterword, he suggests that the origin of this conceptualization of citizenship ‘can be traced back to the hoplite revolution of perhaps the seventh century before Christ; it expresses an ideal of warrior citizenship [which is] pre-Socratic, pre-Christian, and pre-juristic’. It is more precise to say that not a ‘warrior’ but a citizenship in which the spirited passions are affirmed and cultivated is at the root of this discourse, however.

49 Martin Heidegger, *Basic concepts of Aristotelian philosophy*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington, 2009). Also see the summary and stimulating comment of Theodore Kisiel, ‘Rhetorical protopolitics in Heidegger and Arendt’, in *Heidegger and rhetoric*, ed. Daniel M. Gross and Ansgar Kemmann (Albany, 2005), 143: ‘The goal of the individual political life, in contrast to the narrow self-satisfaction of the life of pleasure, is timê, honor, or endoxon, a good reputation, a recognition amplified in and by the doxa of shining in the splendor and glory of public esteem. [...] Dependent as it is on the public opinion of the many, it is just as temporal and temporary as the temporally particular situations (kairos) that our politician-rhetor must address and judge in the crisis of krinein, discriminating judgment. Of the three life-styles that Aristotle examines, only
Heidegger’s few considerations of ancient political thought, the lectures are striking in their focus on the passions relevant to political action. Heidegger there emphasizes that the life devoted to appetitive desires and that devoted to intellective pursuits are similar: both can be exercised in solitude or without concern for the opinion of others. The political life, in contrast, due to its orientation toward public esteem, necessitates that it be pursued among and in the sight of others.\footnote{Paul Rahe, \textit{Republics ancient and modern: classical republicanism and the American Revolution} (Chapel Hill, 1994), 843, thought Arendt’s version of republican ‘participatory politics’ was of a piece with the ‘fanatical obscurantism to which her mentor Martin Heidegger lent his name’ (Rahe seems to refer to Heidegger’s service, under the Nazi regime, as rector of Freiburg from 1933-4) and doubted whether ‘the species of politics that she favored and her disciples still promote is, in the end, separable from the martial obsession and the radical particularity exhibited by the ancient Greek polis and sought by Heidegger’. But I see no reason to think Heidegger’s later political stances somehow taint his analysis of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric}, much less the work of Arendt and Pocock.}

Finally, this study is also born of the present moment because several features of this paradigm of political motivation implicate aspects of Greek thought and society which have received detailed scholarly interest only gradually over the course of the second half of the 20th century. At the center of this paradigm are conceptions of the embodied nature of human experience, including political experience and the affects which inform it. Another aspect of this Greek paradigm illumined by recent research involve the role of conceptions of sexuality and gender. While not a focus of this study, conceptions of homosexuality and masculinity will be touched upon. Certain aspects of this tradition of the political life manifests the full temporality of the unique human situation in its momentous decision that is the ultimate focus of Heidegger’s own protopractical ontology of historical being, of that being ‘which can also be otherwise’.
political motivation would be highly influential in subsequent intellectual history, and
have been studied as part of that history (for example by Pocock), but other aspects—like
Greek thinking on the links between homosexuality, the spirited passions, and politics—
were obscured, sometimes deliberately, or misunderstood.\footnote{This was a process which began with some of the first receptions of Greek thought in the Renaissance, through which controversial elements of Greek texts, particularly regarding Greek homosexuality, were systematically bowdlerized by translators, as discussed by James Hankins, \textit{Plato in the Italian Renaissance, Columbia studies in the classical tradition}, vol. 17, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1990), vol. I, parts I-II. One study which recognized the political implications of Greek homoerotic practices like pederasty is Thorkil Vanggaard, \textit{Phallos: a symbol and its history in the male world} (New York, 1972), which focused on Sparta. The fundamental work in classical studies is still that of Kenneth J. Dover, \textit{Greek homosexuality} (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), but the theoretical impact of Michel Foucault, \textit{History of Sexuality} (Paris, 1976), particularly the second and third volumes which focus on the Greeks, has been immense.} This study brings to light further aspects of these only recently targeted features of classical thought.

In short, this study contributes to and modifies three ongoing developments in political theory and the history of political thought: (1) the incipient emergence of the study of honor and related states, including shame;\footnote{Honor and shame should be analyzed in relation to one another, both as opposed states but also as counterparts within the broader matrix of the spirited passions, those passions concerned with one’s standing or status. For the point that shame has too often been analyzed in isolation from other emotions, including recently by Tarnopolsky, \textit{Prudes, perverts, and tyrants}, see Melvin L. Rogers, ‘The people, rhetoric, and affect: on the political force of Du Bois’s \textit{The Souls of Black Folk}, \textit{American Political Science Review} 106, no. 1 (2012).} (2) the ‘affective’ turn within many of the social and cultural sciences and humanities;\footnote{Sigal G. Barsade, Arthur P. Brief, and Sandra E. Spataro, ‘The affective revolution in organizational behavior: the emergence of a paradigm’, ed. Jerald Greenberg (Mahwah, 2003); Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry, \textit{Bringing the passions back in: the emotions}} (3) the exploration of theories and
languages of resistance and rebellion other than the Marxist, the Judeo-Christian, and the ethno-nationalist.  

in political philosophy (Vancouver, 2008); Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., The affect theory reader (Durham, 2010). The ‘affective turn’ in the humanities has been hindered, however, by the limited theoretical and historical resources on which it has drawn, largely confined to psychoanalytical approaches. The present project contributes by uncovering a central component—discourses of the spirited passions—of the ancient Greek approach to affect, an approach which is both theoretically rich and historically influential. Peter Sloterdijk, Rage and time: a psychopolitical investigation (New York, 2010), 24, argues that the oeuvre of Jacques Lacan ‘expresses the ambition to amalgamate the theory of thumos (as it was reformulated by Kojéve) with psychoanalytic eroticism’, judging that ‘without a doubt, the introduction of a thumotic element into psychoanalytic teaching pointed in the right direction’ (25). Sloterdijk concludes that Lacan was not successful in bringing that enterprise to fruition, however, and his own work argues for further use of thumotic concepts in psychoanalysis as tools for analyzing politics.

54 Cf. Saul Alinsky, Rules for radicals: a practical primer for realistic radicals (New York, 1971), 9, who argued, ‘Today revolution has become synonymous with communism’, and framed his theoretical project as ‘committed to splitting this political atom, separating this exclusive identification of communism with revolution’. Also see Jared Sexton, ‘People-of-color-blindness’, Social Text 28, no. 2 (2010), 42, who points to ‘the peculiar and longstanding cross-racial phenomenon in which the white bourgeois and proletarian revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic can allegorize themselves as revolts against slavery, while the hemispheric black struggle against actually existing slavery and its afterlife cannot authorize itself literally in those same terms’, the latter struggle being forced to code itself with the themes of ‘Judeo-Christian deliverance’, the Marxist terms of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, or the themes of ‘indigenous reclamation and renaissance’ of anticolonial movements. For a recent attempt to reconceptualize revolution utilizing concepts which include the Greek spirited passions denoted by thumos, see Steve Larocco, ‘Ideology beyond Marx: shame, disambiguation, and the social fashioning of reparation’, Annual Review of Critical Psychology 9 (2011).
§1.2 Methodology

Methodologically, this study brings to bear three scholarly discourses which have analyzed Greek thinking in disconnected ways. First, work by classical philosophers on theories of desire and the passions in Greek thought. Second, work by classicists on conventional Greek understandings of recognition, competition, and anger. Third, work by political theorists on matters of political citizenship. This threefold scholarly approach is necessary because each discipline, due to certain blind-spots arising from its methodological focus, has neglected aspects of Greek thought which another discipline has taken under its purview. The result has been a fragmented understanding of Greek thought on political motivation and the spirited passions.

Thus, the following groups will be particularly interested in this study: (1) political theorists interested in the language of psychology and motivation in which Greek political thought is conducted; (2) scholars of ancient philosophy who have focused on ancient philosophical theories and will be interested in the ties between ancient political theory and history and their work; (3) classicists and historians who will be interested in the relating of non-philosophic ancient texts and concepts to philosophical texts, situating the latter in their historical context.

In this study, I take two methodological approaches. The first is an internal reading of texts, but one which combines the work of two scholarly camps. The school of Anglo-American ‘analytic’ philosophers—and here I’m particularly indebted to the work of
John Cooper—has given us excellent accounts of Plato’s tripartite soul but tends to focus less on how the spirited passions function specifically in politics. Scholars of Greek political theory, in contrast, have rightly considered the concept of *thumos* to be highly important for our understanding of Plato’s political thought but tend to be less precise about Platonic philosophic psychology and the Greek psycho-physiological discourses from which it draws, with the result that too many features of political life are unsystematically attributed to *thumos*. My intention is to bring together the focus on *thumos* in Plato’s philosophical psychology with topics in Greek political discourse of interest to political theorists.

The second approach is to contextualize a text like the *Republic*, to ask questions about how the text would have struck its contemporary audience and how innovative Plato's conceptual usage was within Greek discourse. This method will be familiar to

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56 For example, Catherine H. Zuckert, ‘On the Role of Spiritedness in Politics’, in *Understanding the political spirit: philosophical investigations from Socrates to Nietzsche*, ed. Catherine H. Zuckert (New Haven, 1988), 4-5, gives a summary of the wide range of views expressed in the essays of the volume it introduces: *Thumos* is, first, the cause of political ‘conflict and oppression’ as ‘[T]he desire to have more than they need and to be recognized as better...leads human beings to attack the lands and lives of other human beings’. Second, *thumos* is the ‘psychological source of political order’ and operates ‘in reaction to the excessive desires of others’, both external and internal enemies for a polity and the excessive desires of a person’s internal psychology. Third, *thumos* ‘manifests itself most commonly as rage’ and this rage is in ‘reaction to the frustration of desire’. Fourth, *thumos* is similar or equivalent to the modern notion of conscience.
followers of developments in the history of early modern political thought over the last few decades occasioned by the efforts of J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner. This involves drawing from the type of work classicists do: identifying the meaning of concepts in the Greek language in non-philosophical texts, like speeches and laws, epigraphy, or, as is the focus here, in a contemporary writer like Xenophon. In light of work by classicists, we now have a clearer picture of the 5th and 4th century BCE meaning of concepts central to Xenophon’s political thought like philotimia and andreia, courage or manliness. In a series of articles primarily analyzing epigraphical evidence, classicist David Whitehead has shown how the concept of philotimia developed during the period. Focusing primarily on textual evidence, the Penn-Leiden Colloquium on Ancient Values has labored to better reveal the meaning of andreia. Together, the collective work of these classicists now allows for the proper contextualization of Xenophon’s work within the discourse of Greek political practice and literature. The aim of this method is to investigate questions like: In what ways did Plato and Xenophon alter existing concepts and norms?

Ultimately, the approach taken here, while drawing in many respects on the scholarly traditions above, and combining them in new ways, also advances into relatively novel terrain. For example, in chapter 2, I conduct an internal reading focused on concepts of *thumos* in the *Republic* but not with the intention of attempting to explain how *thumos* functions in Plato’s ideal theory (e.g., in the properly functioning soul or in the Kallipolis). I step away from Plato’s political idealism—the primary focus of both the philosophers and political theorists—to analyze his conceptual languages with an eye toward their potential impact, particularly those languages used to describe non-ideal persons and regimes. The emphasis thus shifts from studying Plato’s ideal theory to the conceptual and linguistic tools he introduces to Greek discourse and how subsequent readers of Plato, like Xenophon, will use those tools in unexpected ways.

Thus, this study focuses on those Platonic dialogues in which concepts of the spirited passions (1) figure prominently in the dialogue or (2) are formulated in an unusual way not seen elsewhere in Plato’s work. This account does not claim to be exhaustive. It focuses on significant theoretical occurrences of these concepts for the purpose of ascertaining Plato’s primary approaches to the spirited passions as non-ideal forms of motivation. It should be noted that there has been a scholarly tendency over the

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60 Allen, *Why Plato wrote*, similarly departs from an earlier focus by scholars on Plato’s ideal theory toward a new consideration of the ways Plato altered Greek political language. Zena Hitz, ‘Degenerate regimes in Plato’s *Republic*’, in *Plato’s Republic: a critical guide*, ed. Mark McPherran (Cambridge and New York, 2010), while not taking up the question of influence, finds Plato’s non-ideal political theory to be of intrinsic interest.
last few decades which approaches the works considered here as worthy of dedicated monograph studies. This approach has been particularly marked in scholarship on Plato. Many works of the last several decades consider each dialogue in relative isolation of the others, treating it as a dramatic unity and aiming to interpret each twist and turn of the dialogue. While the subtlety and sophistication of these texts certainly warrant such studies, and excellent work of that sort has been done, there is a danger to such approach: we lose sight of the proverbial woods. I mean this in two senses. First, we lose sight of Platonic or Xenophontic theories when those theories are articulated in several works and altered, profoundly or slightly, across works. Second, we lose sight of the way Plato and Xenophon’s collected works intervened in existing political discourses and, indeed, made interventions in different ways depending on the work—and even the part of the work—in question. That said, a valuable byproduct of the excellent studies of individual dialogues now extant is that we can conduct intertextual studies of the each thinker’s corpus in a more rigorous manner which attends carefully to the overall context of each work even as we may focus on one particular term, concept, or set of terms and concepts, as is here done with those of the spirited passions.

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A final approach which helps unpack what Plato and Xenophon are doing is the phenomenon of prototypicality in concept formation. In their discussion of how the Greeks engage in concept formation—how they define abstract concepts like courage—Ralph
Mark Rosen and Ineke Sluiter argue that the usual method is to identify the ‘best example’ of the concept, which they term a ‘prototype’.\footnote{Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 4-8.} They see this method being deployed by many of Socrates’ interlocutors in Plato’s works, who in response to ‘what is \textit{x}-type’ questions from Socrates advert to the best example of the concept rather than formulating an abstract definition. Hence, when Socrates asks Laches what courage is, Laches responds by pointing to the example of a soldier who ‘is willing to stay at his post, to fend off the enemy, and not flee’ (\textit{Laches} 190c). Drawing on recent theories of concept-formation and categorization in cognitive psychology and linguistics, Rosen and Sluiter conclude that ‘it is possible that Socrates’ interlocutors deserve more credit than they usually get’:

> Experiments have shown that it is not the case that categories have no internal structure; in fact, some members of a category have a special cognitive status, they are judged to be ‘best examples’ of their category, and to be more representative of that category than are other examples. These ‘best examples’ are called ‘prototypes’, and people make judgments about degrees of prototypicality.\footnote{Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 6.}

How does this insight help advance the present project? The argument of the chapters on Xenophon’s \textit{Cyropaedia} is that Cyrus’ spirited character type, and the virtues to which it gives rise both by nature and under the influence of education, should be understood as prototypical of both the potential and the complete political agent. Regarding the former, if one of Xenophon’s contemporaries were asked what kind of nature—the physical and psychological constitution—a potential political leader ought to have, they could advert to
the ‘best example’ of Cyrus as presented in *Cyropaedia* I. The focus of *Cyropaedia* I is the *potential* political leader and Xenophon constructs the young Cyrus as an exemplar or paradigm of a potential leader. Xenophon does this through attributing to Cyrus a distinct set of natural virtues and a distinctive education of those virtues.

In Cyrus’ case, his natural virtues are best described as spirited. Together, this set of natural virtues constitutes a spirited type of human character, which is in turn the prototypical form of human character possessed by potentially effective political leaders. In the *Cyropaedia*, such persons reveal their potential capacity as leaders by being oriented by a particular motivational aim: the desire for *timê*, public recognition or honor. This aim is often expressed in terms of their being by nature *philotimos*, ambitious or desirous of honor—that is, motivated by *philotimia*, ambition or the desire for honor. A potential leader demonstrates his deservingness of *timê* through a special kind of action: initiatory action. This initiatory action often has to occur in the face of obstacles like the presence of fear (in either the leader or his followers) or uncertainty. The potential leader’s capacity to so respond is rooted in his distinct set of spirited natural virtues, which are themselves underpinned by a distinct set of bodily dispositions, in accord with Greek physiological theory in which body and mind are closely intertwined.63 Together, this interlocking set of motivational aims, natural virtues, and bodily dispositions, if present in a single person, indicate the presence of a spirited type of human character, one

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well-suited for political action. If such a character type is possessed of this interlocking set of aims, virtues, and dispositions such that they, together, work with especial endurance and fluid interconnectedness—and here education plays a crucial role—that person can be designated a superlatively spirited type and, thereby, a potentially great political leader. I argue this is the character type we observe in the case of Cyrus, whom Xenophon models as a prototype of the superlative political agent.

§1.3 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the Platonic paradigm of the spirited passions. The conceptual terminology of the spirited passions is divided into three broad categories: (1) denoting distinctive forms of spirited psychological motivation which are primarily contrasted to appetitive desires and motivations, but in philosophical works are also contrasted with theoretic motivations like the desire for knowledge; (2) describing the predominant motivations of a distinctive character type or temperament which pursues a spirited way of life; and (3) delineating the types of desires and motivations arising from a particular spirited part of the human psychological constitution, to thumoeides. The chapter focuses on Plato’s conceptualization of the paradigm of the spirited passions which he effected in the Republic. While the work as a whole subordinates the spirited passions to philosophic motivations like the desire for knowledge, it is a relatively neglected feature
of his theory that spirited desires receive the pride of second-place. There are two primary sites in the Republic in which the spirited passions are theorized: (1) in Book III, where the various spirited passions are introduced in detail; and (2) in Book VIII in the theories of the deviant regimes and character types, particularly the timocratic in which the desire for honor dominates.

Chapter 3 begins with the observation that Plato addresses the spirited passions, and even creates some of the most powerful models and visualizations for those passions, in a number of dialogues other than the Republic, particularly the Alcibiades, Phaedrus, and Symposium. More often than not, the passions are discussed in a terminology which does not utilize thumos or its cognates, so a simple method which identifies only such terms is abandoned for one which attends to the structure of Plato’s theories and visualizations of the spirited passions even when thumos-type terms are not utilized. Building on the argument of chapter 2, it is concluded that Plato advances striking models and visualizations of the spirited passions which, quite apart from the subordination of spirited passions to philosophical motivations in Plato’s ideal theory, had the potential to take on a life of their own in restructuring Greek political language. They would do so in Xenophon’s thought, the subject of the rest of this work.

Chapter 4 turns to Xenophon’s Cyropaedia. Written shortly after Plato’s Republic, it is deeply indebted to Plato’s language for and models of the spirited passions. The chapter focuses on Book I of the Cyropaedia and argues that Xenophon models the young
Cyrus’ nature by utilizing Plato’s theory of natural virtue, from Republic VI, in which one’s predominant natural desire has an ‘hydraulic effect’ on one’s psychic energies, channeling those energies into virtues which aid in pursuing that desire and away from vices which distract from its pursuit. Cyrus’ predominant natural desire, as a philotimos, is for political honors and glory, and he is depicted being naturally drawn to, and excelling at, activities in accord with that desire. It is argued that Xenophon portrays the young Cyrus as the model of the potential political agent because he has, by nature, a spirited character type governed by the desire for honor and possessed of the natural virtues which spring from that desire. Furthermore, as natural virtues are prone to become unstable because they lack evaluative content, a feature of the theory in Republic VI, Xenophon’s Cyrus has the good fortune of an education which develops him into a complete and stable political agent.

Chapter 5 argues that Xenophon’s deployment of Platonic language for and models of the spirited passions is shaped by Xenophon’s innovations and reveals how Plato’s contributions to the paradigm of the spirited passions began to take on a life of their own. Xenophon’s adult Cyrus is depicted as not only predominantly motivated by the desire for honor but also superlatively adept at appealing to that desire in others and manipulating the distribution of political honors, through political action and institutional change, in ways which advance his own political standing. He is also skilled in defusing the tendency toward rebellion which arises among subordinates and subjects on account of their
spirited passions. Cyrus and his actions are depicted using the conceptual terminology seen in Plato’s work but to a markedly different end from anything in Plato’s own thought. Namely, Xenophon depicts in detail the superlative political agent successfully achieving what he, Cyrus, considers the highest human end: extraordinary political glory in life and after death.

Chapter 6 demonstrates how Xenophon’s theory of the spirited passions, particularly the desire for honor, can explain how good leadership works in different political settings: a tyrannical regime and the Greek household estate. In the latter case, the focus of the *Oeconomicus*, we see Xenophon expanding his new ethic of *philotimia* to include women and slaves: both are portrayed as capable of being motivated by a desire for honor and of utilizing that desire to motivate their subordinates. An understanding of *philotimia* enables one to govern subordinates in a productive fashion. In the *Hiero*, we see a different beneficial effect of *philotimia*, properly conceived: it calls into question the ability of a tyrant to gain what he most desires, honor, so long as he possesses a tyranny which rules subjects by force. Furthermore, a broader set of aspirational spirited passions are there seen as motivating rebellion against a tyrant should he not be persuaded to reform his rule.

Chapter 7 shifts to the works by Xenophon focused on the person of Socrates, his *Memorabilia* and *Symposium*, and argues that Xenophon depicts Socrates deploying a distinctive understanding of the spirited passions in his own philosophic activities,
particularly when he interacts with young Athenian aristocrats. In philosophic activity, the characteristic effect of Socratic *elenchus*, according to Xenophon, is to reduce Socrates’ interlocutor to a state of extreme dispirit, *athumia*. This will be a temporary state, however, and a necessary prelude to their submitting as pupils to Socrates, if they have sufficiently spirited natures to revive themselves from this setback. In political activity, Socrates agrees with other figures in Xenophon’s corpus that knowledge of political rule is, above all, knowledge of how to (1) hold out and distribute honors to those motivated by the desire for honor, (2) avoid rebellious responses from subordinates by the leader’s being moderate, and (3) teach subordinates to do the same in respect of those over whom they rule.
CHAPTER 2 – PLATO’S REPUBLIC: CONCEPTUALIZING THE SPIRITED PASSIONS

§2.1 A TYPOLOGY OF THE SPIRITED PASSIONS

In this classical Greek discourse, the political motivation of active citizens—both those ambitious to take leading roles in the polity and those vigilant in detecting and avenging unwarranted prerogatives claimed by leading citizens, an extreme type of which is the tyrant—is defined in reference to the concept of thumos, spirit. In English, spirit is used in myriad ways, and it translation remains one of the challenges of discussing the concept. Even in Greek discourse thumos has a number of senses which need to be distinguished, and the focus of the present and the next chapter is on the manner in which Plato conceptualizes the relations among the various thumotic or spirited passions. 64 Rather than attempting a comprehensive account of Plato’s thought on the spirited passions, however, the linguistic and conceptual features highlighted in these chapters are selected with an eye for those to which Xenophon will respond.

As constituted by Plato this discourse captures the psychological qualities present in political leaders who desire public honor and active citizens who are vigilant in response to slights to the political standing of themselves or those close to them, or to slights to the standing of the community of which they are a part. What has been relatively lacking in existing studies, however, is a determination of the components which constitute the class of the spirited passions. In response, unpacking the details of the introduction of spirited passions in Republic III, I argue there are three categories within the class: aspirational, reactive, and depressive spirited passions.

'Spirit' is commonly used in English as a synonym for the soul (such as the Christian soul) or an immaterial entity (like a ghost). These are alien from classical usage and subsequent classicizing thought, which utilize only a handful of the definitions listed in the OED. When 'spirit' is used to translate Greek pneuma it is rendering the 'breath' of

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65 Cf. John M. Cooper, 'Plato's theory of human motivation', History of Philosophy Quarterly 1, no. 1 (1984), 14: '[I]t does not seem to me unnatural to think that someone in whom competitiveness and the desire for esteem and self-esteem were particularly strong should tend toward the athletic, military, and political pursuits, to which Plato says the thumos-dominated person will especially devote himself; these are obvious, as well as traditional, activities in which a man, at any rate, can hope to make himself stand out from others as esteem and self-esteem require and competitiveness implies.'

66 Even so rich and extensive an overview of Plato's political thought as Malcolm Schofield, Plato: political philosophy (Oxford and New York, 2006), gives only two brief mentions of to thumoeides, at 353 and 355, and those studies to which Schofield's reader is referred, Cooper's article (cited in the previous footnote) and Hobbs, Plato and the hero, virtually start with the story of Leontius in Republic IV as if that were where Plato's discussion of thumos-type motivations begins.
life, but in translating *thumos* it translates the ‘hot breath’ of vigorous (angry) exertion.\(^{67}\)

The former definitions fall under the general sense of *OED* I.1: ‘The animating or vital principle in man (or animals)’ and I.2: ‘the vital power [of something].’ In Greek sources utilized in later political thought, however, *thumos* and related terms translated as ‘spirit’ are closest to the senses of *OED* III.12: ‘The emotional part of man as the seat of hostile or angry feeling’ and *OED* III.13: ‘Mettle; vigour of mind; ardour, courage, disposition or readiness to assert oneself or hold one’s own.’

The issue of translation remains one today, and scholars have disagreed about how to translate several of the central terms of text like the *Republic*, especially *thumos*. In the early modern period, Stephanus translated *thumos* into Latin by *mens* and *animus*.\(^{68}\) Modern classical scholars have been unable to settle on a translation due to disagreement over the meaning of the concept. One scholar of the *Republic* refers to *thumos* as the ‘spiritual source’ of both courage and ‘righteous anger’ in response to perceived wrongs, ‘the spirited part of human character’.\(^{69}\) Many Americans, influenced by translations by the Straussian school, consistently render *thumos* as ‘spiritedness’.\(^{70}\) Aspects of the Greek term can also be captured in English when translated as ‘temper’; for example, the quality

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\(^{68}\) As noted by Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose justice? Which rationality?* (Notre Dame, 1988), 16.

\(^{69}\) W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greek philosophers from Thales to Aristotle* (Methuen, 1950), 112.

\(^{70}\) For discussion see p. 24.
of temper which reacts defensively to a provocation can be seen in the expression ‘temper tantrum’.

Though vagueness is to some extent inherent to translation, the present study seeks to improve our grasp of the semantic field of the spirited passions by distinguishing three forms within this paradigm:

(1) *Forms of psychological motivation and passion.* Spirit passions denotes a class of desires and motivations. The other non-rational class of desires and motivations is bodily appetite (*epithumia*). A recent view holds that spirit ‘motivates us to seek esteem and avoid humiliation’, that it is the source of ‘desires for honor and self-assertion, and of anger at slights and insults.’ Recognition of this as a distinct class of motivation, standing in contrast to other forms of motivation, is a hallmark of Plato and Xenophon’s thought. Some earlier and contemporary Greeks, however, utilize *thumos* in a more narrow sense to express reactive anger in response to slights or belittlements of one’s

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71 Two important clarifications are in order concerning *epithumia*. First, it is sometimes used, for example in the *Republic*, in a more general sense to refer to desire for honor and for learning. Second, while the desires characteristic of it—for food, drink, and sexual relations, in particular—are bodily, desire for wealth is, again in the *Republic*, the overarching concept under which these various bodily desires are subsumed, presumably because wealth can purchase these in a way it cannot purchase honor or wisdom. Cf. Cooper, ‘Plato’s theory of human motivation’, 8-9.

honor. This subset of spirited desire will be called *thumos*-anger to distinguish it from the general class of spirited desires.\(^{73}\)

\(^{(2)}\) **Character type and temperament**, pursuing a distinctive way of life. For these thinkers, and to some degree Greeks more broadly, to be motivated predominantly by one of the three primary kinds of motive they recognize—the pursuit of wisdom, honor, or wealth—leads one to pursue a certain kind of life: that of a philosopher, a political or military leader, or a person of trade and business.\(^{74}\) This three-fold division into ways of life was present before Plato in Pythagorean thought. Forms of *thumos* used descriptively, ‘spirited’ or ‘to have spirit’, are used to express the tendencies of certain persons or classes of persons—both classes within the city and differing ethnic groups within and outside Greece—to be more or less predominantly motivated by spirited desires. So a particular person or class can be markedly spirited, predominantly motivated by ambition, anger in response to slights, or other spirited passions. A person or class of persons can also be categorized as spirited, in this discourse, if he or they are motivated by spirited passion to an especially vehement degree in comparative terms. That these tendencies were to some extent natural is a feature of most descriptions of them, but the possibility was countenanced that education and training could bring such types and temperaments about.

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\(^{73}\) Following the usage of Harris, *Restraining rage*, 63 and passim, who refers frequently to ‘*thumos*-anger’ as a distinctive type within the larger category of ancient anger he studies.

\(^{74}\) Anton Daniël Leeman, *Gloria* (Rotterdam, 1949), 177.
(3) **Seat or source of specific kinds of psychological activity.** In Plato’s *Republic*, the *thumoeides* (literally, having the form of *thumos*) is a part of the soul, and is the seat of spirited desires in the soul.\(^75\) Plato draws from and refines Homer’s work in conceiving *thumos* as a part of the soul, one that can be metaphorically represented with reference to a part of the body, usually the chest, diaphragm, or heart.\(^76\) In short, as explained by John Cooper, for Plato *thumos* is ‘that wherein one feels a) the competitive drive to distinguish oneself from the run-of-the mill person, to do and be something noteworthy within the context provided by one’s society and its scheme of values; b) pride in oneself and one’s accomplishments, to the extent that one succeeds in this effort; c) esteem for noteworthy others and (especially) the desire to be esteemed by others and by oneself’.\(^77\) Senses (1) and (2) above are quite distinct from Plato’s formulation that such kinds of motivation arise from a particular *part* of the soul, however, and frequently occur in this paradigm on their own terms.\(^78\)

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\(^75\) On this point I agree with I. M. Crombie, *Plato on man in society, An examination of Plato’s doctrines*, vol. 1 (London, 1962), 347: ‘Plato’s contribution to the ancient commonplace of the ‘three lives’ or three types of behavior is that there are *three* types *because* there exist three distinct psychic capacities—namely the capacity to think, the capacity to feel, and the capacity to desire appetitively.... From our capacity for feeling such emotions as anger, disgust, and reverence there arises similarly a whole range of ambitious or honor-protecting conduct, desires, and responses.’

\(^76\) David B. Claus, *Toward the soul: an inquiry into the meaning of psyche before Plato* (New Haven, 1981).

\(^77\) Cooper, ‘Plato’s theory of human motivation’, 14.

\(^78\) Cf. Lorenz, *The brute within*, 18-19.
Plato introduces his theory of the tripartite psyche, with the spirited part
(thumoeides) in the center, with the example of Leontius.\footnote{For a seminal discussion of the Leontius example and Platonic psychic tripartition, see Cooper, ‘Plato's theory of human motivation’, 11-15. The point of the Leontius example is to establish that, as Socrates explains, ‘anger (orgên) sometimes makes war against the desires’ (440a) and, further, that ‘when desires force someone contrary to calculation, he reproaches himself and his spirit is roused (thumoumenon) against that in him which is doing the forcing’ (440a-b). Hence, Leontius’ desire to look at corpses is often taken as a straightforward case of erotic desire against which Leontius’ angered spirit reacts. These readings sometimes rely on a fragment from the comic dramatist Theopompus which mentions a man named Leontinus (amended to Leontius due to this Republic passage) who ‘was attracted to boys with the complexion of corpses’, as discussed by Nails, The people of Plato, 186. Cooper, in contrast, argues that it is Leontius’ imagination which underpins his ‘ghoulish’ desire to look at corpses specifically—‘some thrill-inducing contrast between living, animated human beings and these limp and broken figures, say’ (11)—and this puts us on the right track, I believe, if supplemented by the argument advanced below in ch. 4 (esp. p. 144): the kind of imagination which, in Greek discourse, particularly delights in such ‘ghoulish’ thrills is that of a spirited character type like Cyrus. The effect of Socrates’ choosing a man who desires to look at corpses specifically to introduce the concept of thumos as ally of reason against desire is to color the example with Greek preconceptions about the kinds of desires the spirited character type is prone to have: he is prone to markedly angry reactions but his appetitive desire may itself also be influenced, through imagination, by his spirited character type. But see Danielle Allen, The world of Prometheus: the politics of punishing in democratic Athens (Princeton, 2000), 221-5, who argues that Athenian democracy entailed a voluntary acquiescence in civic punishments demonstrated by citizens’ ignoring those bodies which had been expelled from the city. An implication of Allen’s view (it seems to me) is that Leontius may not be motivated by an erotic desire to gaze at corpses but by a rebellious attitude toward democratic Athenian legal and social norms regarding punishment.} The tripartite psyche is just one component of a larger picture of thumos-type motivations, however, within the Republic and more broadly in the Platonic corpus and Greek discourse. The links between thumos and other spirited passions—including the type of anger which responds to slights (oligoria), philotimia, and greatness of soul (megalopsuchia)—are found in a succinct form in Aristotle’s Rhetoric. Aristotle’s description should be taken as an outcome of an ongoing
process of conceptualizing the spirited passions which the Socratics Plato and Xenophon had initiated, but it provides a useful introduction to the conceptual web which we will untangle in the present study. Aristotle is here describing the characteristics of the young:

They are particularly spirited (thumikoi), hot-tempered (oxuthumoi), and carried away by anger (orgēi), and unable to control their spirit (thumou); for owing to their desire for honor (philotimian) they cannot endure to be slighted (oligōroumenoi), and become indignant (aganaktousin) when they think they are being wronged. They are ambitious for honor (philotimoi), but more so for victory (philonikoi); for youth desires superiority (huperochês), and victory is a kind of superiority. [...] And they are more courageous (andreioteroi), for they are full of spirit (thumôdeis) and hope (eulpides), and the former of these prevents them fearing, while the latter inspires them with confidence (tharrein), for no one fears when angry, and hope of some good inspires confidence. [...] They are high-minded (megalopsuchoi), for they have not yet been humbled by life nor have they experienced the force of necessity; further, there is high-mindedness (megalopsuchia) in thinking oneself worthy of great things, a feeling which belongs to one who is full of hope (eulpidos). (II.12.1389a9-34)80

The economy and tone of Aristotle’s expression indicates that he is not here formulating controversial links between these moral-psychological concepts; indeed, it has been convincingly argued that he is providing a ‘descriptive psychology’ which is meant to capture typical psychological types, like that of the ‘ambitious youth’, which would be recognizable to his non-philosophic reader.81 By Aristotle’s day, this had become a

recognizable way of seeing the relation between these concepts. But we should not make the mistake of taking as simply definitional a conceptual linkage which had been consciously formulated. The present study of Plato and Xenophon shows how this conceptual paradigm had been constructed in philosophy and political theory.

With the relatively concise Aristotelian summary of these concepts and their relation in mind, we can now turn to the rather less pristine pre-Platonic landscape.

Plato’s concept of *thumos* is indebted to that of Homer. In Homer *thumos* is generally

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82 John M. Cooper, ‘An Aristotelian theory of the emotions’, in *Reason and emotion: essays on ancient moral psychology and ethical theory* (Princeton, 1999), 421, observes that while Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* uses *orgê* as the term for the kind of anger which belittlement occasions, he elsewhere distinguishes *orgê* from ‘spirited’ desire (*thumos*) and treats the former as a subset of the latter, a case when it is particularly agitated and distressed. Cooper goes on to argue that Aristotle’s more refined picture of anger, given piecemeal elsewhere, can be read into this passage in the *Rhetoric* to arrive at the following summation: ‘[Anger in] Aristotle’s view turns out to be (a) an especially agitated and distressful instance of ‘spirited’ desire, (b) aroused by and directed specifically at what strikes the angry person to have been inappropriate and unjustified belittlement of himself or someone close to him, (c) aiming at inflicting a compensating pain on the belittler—as a means of demonstrating that he is not an inferior and trivial person, but a person whose power to inflict pain in return shows that he must be respected and paid heed to.’


used to refer to the ‘hot breath of life,’ especially that stimulated by (and required by) vigorous assertion in battle.\textsuperscript{85} Those who lack it, either by nature or by the failure of commanders to incite it (especially through rhetoric and appeals to emulation), will be lacking in that readiness to assert oneself or hold one’s own necessary in competitive strife. James Redfield identified a relation between \textit{thumos} and \textit{menos}—the first word in the \textit{Iliad}—in Homer’s work;\textsuperscript{86} \textit{menos}, Redfield argues, is akin to fire or energy in the sense of ‘organic vitality’ or ‘material energy’ and relates to \textit{thumos} as follows: \textit{menos} is the fire in the breast (often put in by the gods) and \textit{thumos} is the hot breath, the interaction of inhaled air and bodily heat.\textsuperscript{87} Ruth Padel, in contrast, has argued that \textit{menos} in Homer has more of a sense of a hot liquid which ‘fills’ organs of the body like the \textit{phrenes}, \textit{cholos}, or \textit{thumos} and ‘boils’.\textsuperscript{88} She argues that in Homer and tragedy more broadly \textit{thumos} has a ‘physiological reference we cannot catch’ with our present categories, and that it, \textit{menos}, and \textit{psuchê} all sometimes ‘stream into or out of the body as breath or liquid’ while \textit{thumos} and \textit{psuchê} also sometimes ‘act as vessels filled by breath or fluid, that beat and knock and can be physically hurt by emotion’.\textsuperscript{89} She strongly cautions against identifying complex Greek concepts which combine physiology and psychology in ways which our references in Plato and Xenophon’, \textit{The Classical Quarterly} 62, no. 1 (2012).
\textsuperscript{86} Sloterdijk, \textit{Rage and time}, 1, in commenting on \textit{menos} at the start of the \textit{Iliad} terms it ‘Europe’s first word’.
\textsuperscript{87} Redfield, \textit{Nature and culture in the Iliad}, 174.
\textsuperscript{89} Padel, \textit{In and out of the mind}, 39.
language does not readily capture with, for example, parts of the body, as thumos is often likened to our notion of ‘chest’.  

Seeking to lay to rest arguments over the influence of Homer on classical Greece—in respect of the heroic ethic psycho-physiological concepts like thumos help express—Henri Marrou reasonably concluded, There are many testimonies to the fact that every cultivated Greek had a copy of Homer’s works at his bedside...when this has been said it remains true that the argument can be reversed, or at least works both ways: it was because the knightly ethic remained at the heart of the Greek ideal that Homer, as the outstanding interpreter of this ethic, remained the basic educational textbook’. Homer appears at the center of Greek education, at least that of the gentlemanly elite, in Xenophon’s time, as testified in his Symposium where Niceratus says that his father made him learn all of Homer by heart as part of his education as a gentleman (anêr agathos, 3.5). Such influence helps explain Plato’s interest in these concepts even as he sets about his own project of reconceptualizing them.  

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90 A fault of which at least two prominent commentators on thumos are guilty, the former one of the first in English and the latter one of the most recent: C. S. Lewis, ‘Men without chests’, in The abolition of man (London, 1943); Sloterdijk, Rage and time, 11.
92 Niceratus’ thorough education in Homer may well be unrepresentative even of aristocratic youth, however, as his father was the conservative general Nicias. That said, the larger point in respect of Plato still stands: Niceratus is present at the start of the Republic, remains (silently) throughout, and his intimate familiarity with Homer no doubt made him particularly sensitive to Socrates’ Homeric allusions and critiques. Niceratus is representative of a certain kind of Greek whose approach to the world was profoundly shaped by Homer’s texts.
§2.2 Plato’s Intervention: Phusis and Paideia

§2.2.1 Approaching the Republic

Plato’s works mark a crucial intervention in the Greek competitive honor ethic which was in part constituted by concepts of the spirited passions. Plato, in the Republic, brings the discourse of the spirited passions to higher level of philosophical and psychological coherence and cogency than any prior Greek figure. However, Plato’s point was in part to critique the ethic which prioritized the spirited passions. Plato’s interest in the spirited passions may well have fueled by the revolutionary developments in Athens of the late 5th century, particularly those involving Alcibiades, who is depicted in numerous contemporary sources as greatly motivated by aspirational spirited passions like phronêma, high pride, and thus also by strong reactive spirited passions.


94 David Gribble, Alcibiades and Athens: a study in literary presentation (Oxford, 1999), ch. 1, on Alcibiades’ phronêma.
Insofar as both Plato and Xenophon’s Socrates spends his time largely with interlocutors who are young male aristocrats, it can be presumed that their cultural world was composed of certain values to which the spirited type corresponds. That is, they would have recognized the spirited type as similar to themselves. As Socrates is trying to establish a new ideal—oriented to the practice of philosophy—it seems plausible that he would try to redefine and redirect this cultural and ethical language towards new ends. For example, it has been recently argued that he redirects the quality of reverence towards love of truth in place of traditional religion.\textsuperscript{95} We see Socrates doing something similar with what Xenophon will term \textit{kaloskagathia}, the code of the aristocrats whose young scions keep his company.

The Neoplatonist Proclus, in his commentary on the \textit{Alcibiades},\textsuperscript{96} was moved to defend Socrates against those who argued that Socrates inflamed the spirited passions of a man like Alcibiades for political renown. Proclus argues that Socrates initially praised such passions and their ends for the purpose of establishing a pedagogical relationship with Alcibiades, a pedagogical relationship which would ultimately be utilized to turn Alcibiades away from an attachment to the spirited passions toward more lofty

\textsuperscript{95} On which see Paul Woodruff, \textit{Reverence: renewing a forgotten virtue} (Oxford, 2001), 143-4: ‘Plato is the first to celebrate reverence for moral perfection in place of reverence for the gods. He enlists religion in the support of moral goodness and indeed he sets moral goodness on the throne which the gods have left. In Plato’s system human beings and gods alike are in awe of moral perfection. Human seekers come to appreciate transcendent justice and beauty with the same sort of awe that they would feel on being initiated into a special relationship with a god.’

\textsuperscript{96} Discussed in §3.2.2.
motivations. A similar accusation and defense could be applied in Plato’s case. The consensus has long been, at least since the Renaissance, that the Greeks were motivated by a competitive honor ethic to a profound degree. The Republic may be read as a sophisticated attack on that honor ethic. The attack proceeds rather as Socrates did with Alcibiades, not by critiquing the honor ethic head-on but by subtly redirecting it to new ends, ends which would recursively critique that honor ethic once they were attained. Just as Socrates’ turning of Alcibiades from spirited motivations failed, so did Plato’s turning of the Greeks from their honor ethic fail. The accusation that Socrates made Alcibiades worse, more impassioned by ambition for political renown, by showing him his innermost nature as megalophrôn (the term used in the Alcibiades) could be advanced against Plato. In texts like the Republic and the Phaedrus, discussed in the next chapter, he gave the Greeks superlative theorizations of the spirited passions.

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In Attic Greek writing both before and after Plato, there is a rich language of what can be called psycho-somatic drives which interact with and seem to underpin psychological motivations and passions and the associated character types. But, depending on the thinker and text, the logic of how these psycho-somatic drives link to the higher-order motivations, passions and character types, is in most cases complicated.

97 See §1.1.3.
98 As attested by the results throughout Padel, In and out of the mind, which focuses on Homeric and tragic texts before Plato.
Plato’s philosophical psychology is no different in these respects, but it does have a compelling logic. What Socrates’ contemporaries seemed to have found particularly unusual, based on his interlocutors’ responses, is the argument that there is one particular part of the psyche from which spirited passions spring.\footnote{See Glaucon’s surprise, at \textit{Rep.} 439e, in response to Socrates’ introduction of the notion of \textit{thumos} as a part of the psyche which serves as seat or source of the spirited passions.} One component of Plato’s innovation can be found in the link he forged in the \textit{Republic} between the certain psychological motivations and a distinctive organ or capacity within the human psychological constitution, the \textit{thumoeides}, what we called above sense (3) the ‘spirited part of the psychological constitution’.\footnote{See ch. 2, §1.1.} But Plato contribution does not end there, as he also modified senses (1) the ‘spirited passions’ and (2) the ‘spirited temperament or character type’. The focus here is on Plato’s contribution to these latter two senses.

If we did not have the \textit{Republic}, Plato’s intervention in the Greek discourse of the spirited passions would be very different and, indeed, less comprehensible. The \textit{Republic} describes how these motivations operate in psychological detail, especially in Books III-IV, in the civic pedagogy of the Guardians in the Kallipolis in the middle books, and in the deviant regimes of Books VIII-IX.\footnote{For a good account of Guardians’ education see Reeve, \textit{Philosopher-kings}.} It is therefore important to the interpretation of the \textit{Republic} to give a coherent account of the role of spirited passions and the language used to conceptualize them. The threefold-typology of the spirited passions as forms of motivation, as constitutive of spirited temperaments, and as seated in a particular part of
the psyche clarifies the various senses in which *thumos* and its cognates are used in the *Republic*. I focus here on the discussions of spirited passion in the *Republic* in Books III and VIII. Analysis of the former illustrates Plato’s contribution to conceptualizing the class of the spirited passions, including his contribution to the notion of a spirited character type or temperament. In Book VIII, the account of a decline from a first-best polity called aristocracy to a second-best polity called timocracy is given which then details the nature of the timocratic city and the psyche to which it corresponds. It is read here as an illustration of the complex interrelation of spirited passions and character types with a particular political regime.

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The first mention of *philotimia* in the *Republic* picks up on the negative connotations of the term at the time depicted in the dialogue (if not the time of the writing of the dialogue). To say that a person is motivated by *philotimia* is to reproach him, and the good (*agathoi*) are not *philotimoi* (347b). Glaucon, Socrates’ young well-born interlocutor at this point in the dialogue, agrees. Glaucon is not akin to Alcibiades,

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102 The dramatic date of the *Republic* remains in dispute; Debra Nails, ‘The dramatic date of Plato’s *Republic*,’ *The Classical Journal* 93, no. 4 (1998). Regardless where it falls in the last two decades of the 5th century, evidence indicates that in that period *philotimia* had a negative valence in Greek discourse; see Whitehead, ‘*Philotimia*’, 57-9, and discussion below in §4.1.1.

103 Both *philotimia* and ‘the love of money’ are held to be ‘reproaches’ Socrates suggests and Glaucon agrees (347b). It should be kept in mind Socrates might be here making a tactical maneuver within the dialogue which will not be sustained, but see below for other critiques of *philotimia* in the *Republic*. 

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eager for political honor of the masses. Honor is one of the prizes which motivate political actors to attempt to ‘seem’ just (361b), and in his famous ‘Ring of Gyges’ example Glaucon elaborates upon the divergence between actually being motivated by justice versus being motivated by concerns like honor which merely demand that one seem just.

In the scheme of deviant regimes honor is again critiqued: the ‘tragic poets’ are identified as prone to ‘make hymns to tyranny’ or to democracy on account of the fact that for those acts they get ‘wages and are honored’. However, ‘the higher they go on the slope of the regimes, the more their honor fails, as though it were unable to proceed for want of breath’ (568b-d). Socrates is himself accused of being motivated by philotimia in what his interlocutors perceive is a desire to win at argument (336c); the suggestion is that he considers it a victory if he confuses his opponents to such a degree that they confess their being in a state of aporia. This accusation reveals that, for at least some of Socrates’ interlocutors, honor is at stake in philosophic elenchus: to admit one’s aporia, and even more to admit that another has lead one to it, negatively impacts one’s honor.

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104 On this point I agree with Ferrari, *City and soul*, 22, who discerns in Glaucon a type of aristocratic quietism. That Glaucon’s temperament is not identical to that of a philotimos is also indicated at 548e-549a, when the timocratic type of person is being described. The timocratic type of person is ‘more stubborn’ than Glaucon, ‘somewhat less apt at music although he loves it’, and ‘a lover of hearing although he’s by no means skilled at rhetoric’. Glaucon is closer to being a potential practitioner of philosophy than is the timocratic type. It should be noted that the faults of the timocratic type are not that he doesn’t value music and the hearing of speeches but that he isn’t able to practice these things. He can appreciate but not participate.

105 This formulation captures how physical aspiration is often related to experience of the spirited passions; cf. Claus, *Toward the soul*.

106 This implication will feature in Xenophon’s portrayal of the psychological effects of
As might be expected from the disavowal of *philotimia* as a motivation for ‘good’ individuals in *Republic* I or first-best persons in the hierarchies of the later books, the work closes with a parting jab at public life and civic esteem. We witness in *Republic* X, in the Myth of Er concerning the afterlife, Odysseus’ soul drawing the last (and thus the worst) lot yet finding ‘the private life’—that least concerned with the public realm in which esteem is dispensed—sitting alone and neglected by the others. Odysseus, seen throughout the Platonic corpus as the wisest of the Homeric heroes, eagerly chooses it. His extensive labors while living had ‘cured’ (*lelôphêkuian*) him of *philotimia* (620c). The *Republic* can thus be seen, if one focused on these passages in particular, as an extended critique of *philotimia* which supplements, on philosophical grounds, the conventional political critique of *philotimia* at the time.

§2.2.2 *Phusis* and *paideia*: the first formulation

In contrast to the earlier denigration of the spirited passion of *philotimia*, however, a positive view of the spirited part of the psyche is articulated by Socrates in *Republic* III. This position had been anticipated in *Republic* II. That discussion had, for the first time in the *Republic*, introduced *thumos*-type terms. In both the Platonic and Xenophon
cic *elenchus*; see particularly §6.2 and §7.2.2.
accounts of Socrates on the spirited passions, dogs and horses are often associated, described as similar in their native spiritedness and used as metaphorical illustrations of this quality as it appears in humans. Thus at Republic II.375a-b, in the context of discussing the qualities needed in potential Guardians, spirited qualities emerge as crucial:

Will horse or dog—or any other animal whatsoever—be willing to be courageous if it’s not spirited (thumoeides)? Haven’t you noticed how irresistible (amachon) and unbeatable (anikéton) thumos is, so that its presence makes every soul fearless (aphobos) and invincible (aêttêtos) in the face of everything?

This is the first appearance of spirited passion in the Republic. It is immediately followed by the conclusion that the guardians must be both ‘gentle (praos) and great-spirited (megalothumos)’. This necessity is initially considered as, on its face, impossible because these two qualities are understood, apparently in common speech, as antithetic (375c).

The balancing of megalothumia and praotês can be understood as shorthand for the much richer account in Republic III of the properly balanced education in gymnastic and music that results in a psyche in which spirited and intellective elements are harmonized.

Turning to Republic III, as the metaphoric reference to ‘sinews of the soul’ (discussed below) implies, the spirited part, when properly functioning, is seen as an important component of the agency of the psyche. Republic III.411a-b describes the dangers of an excessively ‘musical’ education, one which, by being comprised only of certain soft (malakas) harmonies and being unbalanced by gymnastic, ‘charms’ (kêlê) the
spirited part (*to thumoeides*) so that it ‘begins to melt and liquefy’ (*têkei kai leibei*) until it ‘dissolves completely’ (*ektêxêi*). The effect is to ‘cut out (*ektemêi*) the sinews from [the] psyche and make it ‘a feeble warrior’,\(^{107}\) that is, unable to act effectively on the outside world.

In contrast, a properly functioning psyche is one in which the ‘philosophic nature’ and the ‘spirited (*thumoeides*) part of [a person’s] nature’ are ‘harmonized’ (410b-e). This harmonization is effected through a combination of music and gymnastic, both of which were instituted to educate (*paideuein*) the soul. This claim counters the common view of contemporaries that the purpose of gymnastic was to develop the body (410c).\(^{108}\) In the account given here, that is not the purpose of gymnastic, physical education, except incidentally; its purpose is the cultivation of the spirited part (410b-d).\(^{109}\) Music, it should

\(^{107}\) One of the meanings of this verb is ‘to castrate’, which might suggest that the Homeric phrase translated here as ‘feeble warrior’ could be translated better as ‘limp spearman’, a bit of a Platonic joke. On the associations Greeks made between *hubris, megá phronein* and sexual potency (all of which were seen to be ‘cured’ through castration of an animal or human—for example in the case of eunuchs in *Cyropaedia* VIII, discussed in §5.4.1), see Douglas L. Cairns, ‘Hybris, dishonour, and thinking big’, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 (1996), 22-26.

\(^{108}\) Some scholars have argued this passage is a late addition and that Isocrates’ exposition of gymnastic in his *Antidosis* (180-5) is Plato’s target. Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, ad loc., discusses the position and advances reasonable arguments for rejecting it.

\(^{109}\) Crombie, *Plato on man in society*, 98, notes that Socrates’ educational program is concerned with preventing the overdevelopment of the ‘love of culture at the expense of ‘spirit’ or the more martial qualities’, concluding: ‘The supremacy of reason in moral virtue is formal not material. That is to say, it does not consist in giving cultural activities the greater share of one’s attention.’
be said, comprises intellectual education more generally: ‘learning’ (*mathēmatos*), ‘investigation’ (*zētēmatos*), and ‘speech’ (*logôn*) are mentioned later (411d).

Socrates proceeds to give an account of the qualities arising from the pursuit of these two kinds of education in the absence of the balancing or harmonizing effects of the other. A scenario is envisaged in which a person pursues the practice of music over a period of time without gymnastic (akin to ‘soft spearman’ case re-recounted above) and another of a person who does the reverse, practices gymnastic without music. The effects of these practices are described. Two separate accounts of these two educations are given. One is more adumbrated, the second more expansive.

We’ll consider the simple account first, reserving the second for the next section.

The ‘turn of mind’ (*dianoian*) of the person who practices gymnastic only, over the course of a lifetime, will be marked by ‘fierceness’ (*agriotētos*) and ‘hardness’ (*sklērtētos*).\(^{110}\) That of the opposite individual who practices only music will be marked by ‘softness’ (*malakia*), and ‘tameness’ (*hēmerotētos*). At this point, there is no normative weight placed on these terms; they are merely descriptive of states of being. The picture is then complicated and a normative component introduced: the persons who practice ‘unmixed’ (*akratōi*)\(^{111}\)

\[^{110}\] This term will be used at *Rep.* X.607b along with ‘rusticity’ as the terms appropriate to the person who, like Socrates and his interlocutors, expels poetry from the city if that person didn’t have an argument for why poetry should be so expelled (as of course Socrates does).

\[^{111}\] This term is normally used for unmixed *wine*. The similar effects of wine-drinking and gymnastic, both of which are seen as giving rise to ‘high spirit’ can be seen in *Laws* I.
gymnastic will turn out more fierce \((agriòteroi)\) than they ought and the persons practicing music exclusively turn out softer \((malakóteroi)\) than is fine \((kallion,\) noble) for them’ (410d). Neither quality, fierceness or softness, is said to be simply bad—each is bad only in extremes marked by the relative neglect of practices which stimulate the other.

This is an important point, as the argument continues. ‘Fierce’ \((agrion)\) qualities are produced by the spirited part \((thumoeides)\) of a person’s nature \((phuseôs)\). This spirited part, ‘if rightly trained, would be courageous \((andreion);\) but, if raised to a higher pitch than it ought to have, would be likely to become cruel \((sklêron)\) and harsh \((chalepon)\). The \textit{thumoeides} has as its characteristic quality, in this formulation, a certain kind of fierceness; this part, properly cultivated, would result in courage. If it is ‘screwed too tightly’ (the language is that of musical instruments being properly tuned), however, it results in cruelty and harshness (410d).

An account of the ‘philosophic nature’ is then given. Elsewhere Socrates divides the parts of the psyche or nature as \textit{thumoeides} and \textit{logistikon}, spirited and reasoning parts of human nature (440e). The philosophic nature is here productive of ‘gentle, civilized’ \((hêmeron)\) qualities. If ‘relaxed’ this part becomes ‘softer than it ought to be, while if it is finely reared it would be tame \((hêmeron)\) and orderly \((kosmion)\). Thus, the conclusion of this first account is that the Guardians of the polity being envisioned should have both of these natures \((phusei)\). When harmonized, these two natures will result in a
soul that is ‘moderate and courageous’ (sôphrôn...kai andreia). The unharmonized soul is ‘cowardly and crude’ (deilê kai agroikos; 410e-411a).

§2.2.3  *Phusis and paideia: the second formulation*

The second formulation of the spirited passions introduces distinctions among the various states produced by the two types of education—*mousikê* and *gymnastêcê*—when pursued not just in different proportions relative to each other but also relative to a person’s original natural endowments. The differences of proportion were introduced by the first account: one could pursue spirit-strengthening gymnastic exercises to the exclusion of musical-philosophical exercises, or do the reverse, or mix the two in varying proportions. The following account will give more concrete terms to some of the states achieved by these different courses. Another element is added to the account, however, because some individuals are said to have natures from birth which are more or less spirited (and presumably individuals also have natures from birth which are more or less inclined to learning). With a varying baseline of spiritedness, different degrees of education or development of spiritedness can then be pursued. There is a spirited nature and a spirited nurture.
One scenario is envisaged in which music—or at least the wrong, ‘Lydian’, mode of music—is pursued to such an extreme degree that spirit is rendered dissolute. This is supplemented by the introduction of differences in the initial natures on which this musical education is deployed: some persons have, from birth, ‘spiritless’ (athumon) natures, others markedly spirited (thumoeidē) natures. If the former are subjected to the extreme musical education their spirited qualities, such as they have (the implication being that no one is totally without spirited qualities), are very quickly done away with. If the latter—those with the more spirited natures—are subjected to this education, however, their spirits are not eliminated but made ‘weakened and temperamental (oxurropon), quickly inflamed by little things and quickly extinguished’. Such persons become ‘quick-tempered (akracholoi) and irritable (orgiloï) from having been spirited, and they are filled with discontent (duskolias)’ (411b-c). These are negative forms of reactive spirited passion.

Another scenario is that of the individual who pursues gymnastic vigorously over a period of time. This regimen make the person ‘filled with high thought (phronēma) and spirit (thumos), even ‘braver, more manly’ (andreioteros) than he would otherwise be. Noteworthy is the pairing of phronēma with thumos. The latter, as a form of anger which responds to slights, is a positive form of reactive spirited passion. The former, in contrast, is an aspirational spirited passion. Phronēma, which occurs four times in the Republic, is an important concept in Xenophon’s political thought and functions within a complex
which combines nature and education in a way which suggests he is drawing on Plato’s conceptualization here in *Republic* III. *Phronêma* also plays a role, as *megala phronêmata*, in the contribution of Plato’s *Symposium* to this paradigm of the spirited passions: persons possessed of *megala phronêmata* have the kind of pride which aspires to a higher standing or, if one is in a position of subordination, a non-subordinate standing. It thus provides the fundament for a reactive spirited response to forms of subordination, including, as in the *Symposium*, a tyranny.  

At this initial stage of the second formulation, the high-spirited person is not yet presented as problematic. The argument continues, however, by describing how this person would develop if he or she were to continue neglecting music and philosophy. Whatever ‘love of learning’ was present in that person’s soul (by nature) would, by this neglect, be rendered ‘weak, deaf and blind’ and the person (assuming still the high-spirited person possessed of *phronêma* and *thumos*) would become a ‘misologist (*misologos*, one who hates argument or discussion) and unmusical (*amousos*), scorning ‘persuasion by means of speech’ (*peithoi...dia logôn*), acting in everything with ‘force and fierceness (*biai ...kai agriotêti*)’, like a wild beast’ and living ‘ignorantly and awkwardly without rhythm or grace’ (411d-e).

Clearly, the foci of these scenarios are the various outcomes witnessed when differences in natural spiritedness are combined with various pedagogical regimes of

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112 See §3.4.
gymnastic and music, which work on the spirited passions to create a variety of
dispositions of character. Focusing just on Republic III, the spirited passions, and the
natural and educated dispositions from which they rise, emerge as important components
of a complete person. That a robust thumoeides, whether possessed by nature or
developed by the right education, is a prerequisite for political agency would reemerge in
Xenophon’s thought. Xenophon describes Socrates as always seeking out promising
individuals who, if properly educated, would be capable of doing great deeds for the good
of their fellow-citizens and city. What makes them promising, the prerequisite nature
Xenophon’s Socrates is searching for, is illustrated, in the Memorabilia, by a comparison
to ‘high-spirited and vehement’ (thumoeideis...kai sphodrous) colts which, if properly
broken at an early age, become ‘useful and splendid’ horses. ‘High-bred (euphuestatôn)
puppies’ are similar candidates for training into ‘first-rate and useful’ hounds, and ‘it is
the same with human beings’. Youths who are, using similar language, ‘high-bred’
(euphuestatous), ‘formidable of soul’ (errômenenstatous... tais psuchais), and ‘vehement’
sphodrous) are said, if properly educated, to develop into ‘excellent and useful’ men
(IV.1.3-4). As we have seen, Plato’s Socrates first describes the natures of the potential
Guardians, at Republic II.373d-6c, as being similar to those of well-bred dogs. Plato’s

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113 See §§7.2-3.
114 Xenophon’s Socrates compares his own wife, Xanthippe, to a particularly ‘spirited’ and
intractable horse with the point that since he wishes to learn how to deal with all human
beings he decided he might as well start with the most difficult (Sym. 2.10). If he can
tame such a person, he can tame all others, is the implication. Whether he was successful
in the former task may be doubted: see Mem. 2.2.7-9.
likening of spirited qualities to those of well-bred horses, however, occurs briefly in the
*Republic* (II.375a) but in much greater detail in the *Phaedrus*.\(^{115}\)

Xenophon may have learned something additional from this passage of the
*Republic*, namely, that a defense of Socrates—in response to the charge of corrupting the
youth—could be constructed out of the materials Plato here provides. If an excess of
mousikê or philosophic activity can lead to the subject becoming athumos, then Socrates’
characteristic philosophic activity, the practice of *elenchus*, could be cast as having the
effect of making Socrates’ interlocutors athumos. Reduced to that dispirited state,
characterized by self-doubt and intellective shame (recognition of one’s inability to
articulate reasons for one’s actions), Socrates’ interlocutors lose their pride and thus their
confidence to act in the political realm.\(^{116}\) These high-spirited qualities are often
represented in Xenophon’s linguistic usage by *phronêma* and *tharsos*, confidence, as well
as other words virtually synonymous with the former, for example, *mega phronein*.

Thus, in *Republic III* a theory of the spirited passions is given which describes the
role they have in creating a number of distinctive human temperaments. The purpose of
this exercise is to identify the qualities, and the interaction among them, which will result
in one temperament in particular: that appropriate for the Guardians in the first-best
polity. That there can be an array of temperaments which fail to be properly constituted

\(^{115}\) See §3.3.

\(^{116}\) See §§7.2.1-2.
opens up the theoretical possibility of a number of less desirable psychological, and thus political, temperaments. This theoretical possibility is pursued in Book VIII, in which a hierarchy of second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-best psychological constitutions are given, to which we now turn.

§2.3 TIMOCRACY

§2.3.1 Prolegomena: spirited passion in Kallipolis

Despite the condemnation of philotimia in both Book I and Book X of the Republic, honors, both in life and after death, are envisaged early in the work for 'rulers and guardians' in the Kallipolis (414a). Competitions and honors-as-rewards for competitions, in the nearly life-long pedagogical regimen envisaged for potential Guardians, are still described late in the work (537b-540e). Philosophical practices like mathematics will need to be honored in the city if they are to be pursued (528b-c). The functioning of the Kallipolis and, indeed, the very possibility of its coming into being, is related to a proper allocation of honors.

The properly trained person will take account only of those honors which he believes will make him better, so he will have to shun political honors unless he is in the best regime (592a). But all regimes, even bad regimes, use honors as rewards for those
who support the regime, its principles, and principals; it is thus a fault of a person who supports a bad regime that he is concerned to have honors from such people (426b-c).

Similarly, honors and power are envisaged for those who are most adept at predicting the movements of the shadows in the analogy of the cave (516c-d). In Kallipolis, rebellion in the city is envisaged when a class seeks to exchange the ‘tools and honors’ of their class for those of another, craftsmen seeking to do the work of the warriors, or the warriors of the ‘adviser and guardian’, and so forth (434b). Socrates establishes that the philotimoi, like pederasts, take what they can get—e.g. if one doesn’t get a generalship, then a lieutenancy will do (475a-b)—and so the pervasiveness of honor-seeking is to be expected. If a person who is philotimos doesn’t happen to live in a good regime, or lives within a good regime but is not happy with his place within it, then he will pursue honors by alternative means: by doing the deeds which are honored in a degenerate regime or by rebelling against the distribution of honors within a better regime.

As is well-known, philosophers themselves are not honored in existing cities (489a); if a city is likened to a ship at sea, philosophers may well know how to navigate by the stars, but they have little or no knowledge of how to manage the crew (488a-e). They are not motivated to gain such knowledge, for philosophers are not motivated by a desire for the honors which could be granted by such people. Shifting to a different metaphor, those philosophers outside the ‘cave’ will have to be forced to return to share in the ‘labors and honors’ of those within the cave (519d). The philosophical life emerges as the life which
most ‘despises’ the ‘political offices’; on Socrates’ argument, this uniquely suits philosophers to rule because ‘rival lovers will fight’, that is, rival lovers of ruling will fight over the offices, which will create ‘a war—a domestic war, one within the family—[which] destroys these men themselves and the rest of the city as well’. A ‘well-governed city’ is possible only if those who do not desire to rule are given offices and those who do desire to rule are denied the chance to compete for them (520e-521a). This is a firm rejection of the value of a conventional competitive ethic of political honor.

§2.3.2 The first fall: the timocratic psyche and the timocratic city

The rejection of a conventional competitive ethic of political honor in the middle books of the Republic is not free of threat from a revival of that ethic. The potential corruption of a promising young man away from philosophic disdain for public honor and toward public affairs is envisaged—the tool which will be used to effect that turn is flattery. The youth’s ‘kinsmen and fellow citizens’ will 'lie at his feet begging and honoring him' (494c). The terms used here are essentially those of the Alcibiades to describe Alcibiades and those who sought to flatter him into taking a role in political affairs. At the close of the discussion of the best regime, the corruption of promising

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117 See §3.2.
youth is again described in terms of flattery and a misallocation of honors, which leads the promising youth astray.\textsuperscript{118}

*Philotimia* is prominent in *Republic* VIII, in which the second-best regime, the ‘timocracy’, is described.\textsuperscript{119} That such a regime is second-best, less degenerate than the other degenerate regimes and closest to the Kallipolis, is maintained by Proclus (*in Alc.* 138) who, indeed, also thinks that the decline can operate in the other direction, that regimes can be improved and ascend toward the Kallipolis.\textsuperscript{120} In Proclus’ account of regime improvement, the timocracy would thus be the last regime type before the improving regime becomes the Kallipolis. *Philotimia*, accordingly, can be seen as a second-best form of political motivation in Platonic thought—and of course there are worse third-, fourth-, and fifth- best forms of motivation described in the further degeneration of regimes in *Republic* VIII & IX to compare to it. The second-best, timocratic psyche is described ‘in relation to the Laconian regime’, that is, Sparta (545a).\textsuperscript{121} That is, the psyche

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Cf. Crombie, *Plato on man in society*, 134, who makes the related point that the failure to manage the ambition of new generations results in the decline from the first-best regime.
\item \textsuperscript{119} In investigating Plato’s critical description of timocracy as a type of political regime, I consider it (and those of other degenerate regimes of Books VIII & IX) to be a component of Plato’s political theory and not simply an analogy meant to help explicate the psychological type to which it corresponds. For a defense of this approach, against scholars who would discount these regimes as contributions to Plato’s political theory, see Hitz, ‘Degenerate regimes in Plato’s *Republic*’, esp. 105.
\item \textsuperscript{120} See §3.2.2.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Sparta was apparently seen, in the classical Greek period of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century B.C., as a regime in which *philotimia* was the motivation for action in public life. This conceptualization of Sparta is continued and amply demonstrated in Plutarch’s *Life of*
of the timocratic person shares certain important features with the structure of the
Spartan regime. The timocratic person is described as a *philonikos* who loves victory, a
*philotimos* who loves honor (*philonikon...kai philotimon*; 545a). Later, and probably
without intended reference to Sparta, such a person is also described as *philarchos*,
‘desirous of rule’ (*philarchos*; 549a). To classify the regime which corresponds to this
timocratic individual, the regime in which the desire for honor is prominent
(*philotimon...politeian*), Plato has to neologize: such a regime is a timocracy or timarchy
(*timokratian è timarchian*; 545b). Finally, it is the predominance of spirited passion
(*thumoeidous*) in the second-best, timocratic, regime of *Republic* VIII which makes
philotimia and philonikia the prominent motivations within it (548c).

In the account of the decline from the best polity starting in *Republic* VIII, the
timocratic individual is the son of the genuine aristocrat who corresponds to the best
regime. The son is torn between the influence of his father (who spends his time studying
philosophy) and that of his mother and the slaves (who are concerned about wealth and
the standing that attends it) so he settles on the middling part of his soul which desires
victory and is spirited, *philonikôn* and *thumoeidei* and thus becomes a ‘haughty’
(*hupsêlophrôn*—literally ‘high-minded, high-spirited’)

Lycurgus, in which the Spartan way of life Lycurgus instituted virtually eliminates
private commerce, traditional family ties, and other sources of motivation aside from the
esteem of other Spartiates.

122 Another other prominent occurrence of this term in Greek is Euripides’ *Iphigenia in
Aulis* 917, at which Achilles refers to his ‘haughty spirit’ (*hupsêlophrôn...thumos*).
Having established the principle that ‘what happens to be honored is practiced, and what is without honor is neglected’, the transition from the honor-loving to the wealth-loving, third-best, regime is described: the citizens come to ‘praise and admire the wealthy man and bring him to the ruling offices’ (551a). The son of the timocratic man makes a similar decline from being motivated by esteem to being motivated by money because being ‘humbled (tathêinôtheis) by poverty’ he ‘thrusts love of honor and spiritedness (philotimian...kai to thumoeides) headlong out of the throne of his soul’ and turns to money-making (553c). The occasion for this shift was the ‘death, exile, and dishonor’, and the loss of property suffered by his father, the timocratic individual, who had been a prominent general or political official.123

Notably, after the young man’s shift to a state in which he pursues wealth rather than honor, the ‘calculating and spirited’ parts of his soul are still present but are turned to other ends. His spirit, thumoeides, is now only allowed to ‘admire and honor’ (thaumazein kai timan; 553d) nothing but wealth and wealthy individuals. Thus, spirited passions can still be engaged even in an oligarch, as ‘an avaricious man may be so corrupted that he is never moved to anger with himself except when he misses an opportunity of making money’.124 The thumoeides continues to function in its characteristic concern for esteem despite being oriented by new sources of esteem. But the

123 We may be meant to recall the fate of Alcibiades, who suffered these things at the hands of the Athenians and is described, in Plato’s Alcibiades, as definitively a philotimos; see §3.2.1.
124 Crombie, Plato on man in society, 97.
oligarch is not motivated by *philotimia* conventionally conceived, so he is bad at competing in the various contests the city might participate in—athletics and war are suggested—or in gaining reputation in the city for these things (554e-555a). He rejects the conventional concerns of the *philotimos*. But he also rejects the *philonikia* of the people. The implication is that the *philotimos* will naturally be expected to appeal to a people possessed of *philonikia*, that an individual leader motivated by spirited passion finds a natural counterpart in a certain kind of people motivated by spirited passion. The oligarch has to keep under control both motivations, those of the ambitious potential generals and of the populace who desire to celebrate contests and victories. The oligarch on this account stands between an Alcibiades and an imperialistic people like the Athenians.

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In understanding Socrates’ description of degenerate regimes in the *Republic*, it is a mistake to take the descriptions of the individual psychological types to be a contribution to a sociology of the types of persons to be found in each corresponding type of polity. The description of the formation of and decline of the person with a ‘timocratic’ psyche, for example, does not depend upon or assume that the person with a timocratic psyche lives in any polity in particular, including a timocracy. This point can be made

125 As argued by Ferrari, *City and soul*.

126 *Pace* Sean Sayers, *Plato’s Republic: an introduction*. (Edinburgh, 1999), 136, who comments that by describing each type of society first, before the corresponding individual type, Plato adopts a procedure which ‘embodies the idea that individual character is a
in another way by asking whether it is necessary that all timocrats in a polity have come about in the way Plato describes a young man becoming such. Of course not. The question of how various timocratic types would form in a timocracy, or in a regime declining toward timocracy, is a separate one. We must focus on the structural features common to each type—political and personal—while rigorously avoiding the tendency to take the descriptions of individual types to be describing the individuals inside the corresponding political type. This point, which applies to all of the polities except the tyrannical, is best illustrated in the case of democracy: a democracy, that is, a democratic political type, can exist without any of the individuals within it actually being democratic individual types. For example, as suggested at the end of the last section, it is possible for a philotimos, Alcibiades-type figure—a person with a timocratic psyche—to live in a democracy and indeed to lead that democracy in pursuing spirited passions like philonikia.

The timocratic regime is that in which a timocratic psychological type would feel most at home. But it is not necessary that a timocratic regime be full of timocratic psychological types, nor that they be in a majority. There is a structural analogy at work, so it is the overarching end of the timocratic regime—a predominant concern for honor over other concerns—which is similar to the overarching end of the timocratic product of society rather than vice versa’.

127 I elaborate upon this argument in Josh Vandiver, ‘Are there any democrats in Plato's democracy?’ (paper to be presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, August 30 - September 2, 2012).
psychological type. In the case of timocracy, it is the case that many of the persons in ruling offices will in fact be timocratic individuals, but there is a whole host of such types, all of which fall in the general class. In fact, a timocratic regime is envisaged in which the real predominant concern of the ruling classes is wealth. But because they hoard their wealth in secret, while in their public lives upholding the predominant concern of the regime with honor, the regime remains a timocracy. This is a case of a timocracy in which the rulers are oligarchs. It is the public moral standard the regime takes as its guiding concern which determines the regime type. Structurally, its predominant moral standard is honor, just as the predominant moral standard of the timocratic psychological type is honor. The timocratic regime is not timocratic because it is full of, possesses a majority of, or is even ruled by a minority of, timocratic psychological types.

Again, it must be stressed that this last statement is qualified: a timocracy need not have timocratic psychological types in predominance (speaking in terms of their actual psychological constitution and primary motivations), but it must have in predominance persons who publicly profess the shared moral standard of honor. Again, a comparison with the democracy is helpful. Every individual within a democracy may be internally, in their own psychological constitution, firmly committed to a motivational set—a desire for honor, or for wealth, etc. But so long as they publically profess the shared moral standard

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128 One might call this a regime of false consciousness. Certainly, to take up the analogous psychological type, a person who thinks she is motivated by the desire for honor but who in reality is motivated by the desire for wealth would be marked by false consciousness.
of having no common motivational set, the regime will be a democracy. A democracy can be full of non-democratic psychological types (again, in their internal, private psychology). But a democracy must have a predominance of persons who publicly profess and uphold a shared commitment to having no single standard of citizen motivation within the polity.

There does seem to be a point of difference between the timocracy and the democracy. In timocracy, the predominant persons must be duplicitous if they are actually motivated by, say, a desire for wealth. They must publicly profess that they are actually motivated by a desire for honor. But in a democracy, no such duplicity is necessary. Firmly committed timocratic psychological types can publicly profess their personal concern with honor. That profession of the personal motivation of such types must, however, be supplemented by a further profession of support for the common principle of the democracy: that the regime as a whole has a principle of not setting one motivational set over any other. If they fail to make this second profession, they enter a state of rebellion against the democracy. That is, they disavow the fundamental principle of the democracy not in their public lives—they might have already done that—but as the principle which ought to govern the polity itself. They withdraw their public commitment to upholding that principle as the principle which ought to govern the polity. By doing so, they might have in mind the establishment of another governing principle, but they need not have such a principle in mind. They may be anarchists. Either way, from the perspective of the democratic polity, they are rebels against that polity. They wish to see
that polity-type ended. If they put their hand to effecting such a change—as opposed to
simply wishing it—and succeed, they would become revolutionaries.

The timocratic regime in which the predominant class is secretly oligarchic is still a
timocratic regime so long as members of that class publicly profess that they are
personally motivated by, and commit to supporting as the governing motivation of the
polity, the desire for honor. But it is a non-ideal timocratic regime, by the lights of a
partisan of timocracy. It is one which is in decline towards oligarchy. One could imagine
a parallel case in which the predominant class are secretly philosophers. But they would
similarly have to publically profess to be motivated by, and to continue to support, the
governing motivation of the polity. This would also be a non-ideal timocratic polity, again,
by the lights of a partisan of timocracy. By the lights of a partisan of Plato’s ideal polity, it
would probably be seen as a step toward improvement, as a less non-ideal polity than a
substantively pure timocracy. Substantively pure timocracy is that polity in which the
private motivational set of the ruling class is in accord with their public profession of their
private motivational set. Formally pure timocracy is simply that in which the governing
principle of the regime—the publically professed and upheld principle—is the desire for
honor, regardless of the personal motivational set of any or all of its members.

Looking forward to chapters 4 and 5, in certain respects Xenophon found Plato’s
distinction between psychological types and the types of persons within the corresponding
political regimes, an important feature of Republic VIII, to be unnecessary or implausible
within the ambit of his own political thought. His Cyrus is a clear candidate for a person with a timocratic psyche, but he is aided in becoming such by also living in a thoroughly timocratic polity. That said, some of the finer distinctions within Plato’s picture are also found in Xenophon’s thought. One example, discussed above, is how a certain kind of leader who is philotimos finds a congenial partner in a spirited populace also motivated by philotimia: in Cyropaedia II, Cyrus reforms the timocratic Persian regime in a more egalitarian direction so that commoners will be allowed to compete for political honors they had previously been denied.\textsuperscript{129} The purpose of these reforms is to engage the spirited passions of the commoners, especially their philotimia, in a dangerous and daring political and military project which will in the long run culminate in the acquisition of an empire.

§2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced a typology of the spirited passions which emerges from consideration of their role in Plato’s non-ideal theory in Books III and VIII in the Republic. While aspects of this typology were shared by prior Greek writers and in some cases represent linguistic and conceptual usages of Greek discourse in Plato’s time, the discrete components were brought together by Plato for the first time, at least among the texts which have come down to us, in a systematic way. As noted in the introduction, emphasis

\textsuperscript{129} See §5.2.
has been placed on those conceptualizations of the spirited passions with which Plato’s contemporary Xenophon engaged.

The following aspects of the spirited passions emerged as particularly important: there is a distinct class of spirited passions which can be sharply demarcated, both in theory and in the ordering of a person’s way of life, from other forms of desire, whether appetitive or intellective; certain persons or character types have natural predispositions to be motivated by the spirited passions; a person’s natural predisposition can incline him to be motivated by the spirited passions to an exceptional degree or, if the predisposition tends away from the spirited class, to an inferior degree, relative to other persons; specific kinds of education can alter the motivational disposition of a person in respect of the spirited passions; and the effect of such education on a person’s motivational disposition depends on the length of time the person undergoes the education and the person’s prior disposition, whether natural or as the result of prior education, toward the spirited passions. In political life, there are certain types of persons who incline toward or away from the spirited passions as forms of motivation; for example, the person with a ‘timocratic’ psyche is motivated to a particularly strong degree by the spirited passion which seeks honor. Finally, certain political regimes prioritize the aims of certain spirited passions; for example, the Platonic neologism ‘timocracy’ denotes a regime in which the pursuit of public honor is the sole form of motivation professed by its citizens.
The story of the reception of the *Republic* itself by Xenophon, in respect of the spirited passions, is one of appropriation turned to counter-critique. Plato can plausibly be seen as attempting to subordinate the spirited passions within Greek ethical and political thought, but he theorized and depicted those passions with such coherence and cogency that a subsequent interpreter like Xenophon found in them powerful resources for advancing his counter-critique of Plato’s attempt. Xenophon found the description of the spirited part of the soul more compelling than that of the intellective part. He found the descriptions of the ‘timocratic’, honor-loving, psyche and city more compelling than the philosophic education which turns certain persons into philosopher-kings and philosopher-queens in the Kallipolis. In terms of the contribution of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, a subject of the next chapter, Xenophon found Plato’s notion of the psyche as a ‘war chariot’, one motivated by at least one ‘horse’ representing *thumos*, more compelling than the description of the intellect who drove it.
CHAPTER 3 – PLATONIC INTERTEXTS WITH THE REPUBLIC

§3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present chapter is to provide a brief account of how three other Platonic dialogues—the Alcibiades, the Symposium, and the Phaedrus—supplement the picture of the spirited passions to be found in the Republic. These dialogues (with the possible exception of the Alcibiades) are usually thought to be roughly contemporaneous with the Republic as they have fewer stylistic and conceptual divergences from that work in comparison with, for example, the Laws, traditionally considered Plato’s last work.

What then prompts the turn to these other dialogues? In part, this focus helps us see the potential implications of the spirited passions, as formulated in the Republic, for politics and history as they were shaped by, and embodied in, Greek practice. Plato in the Republic, for example, doesn’t provide any examples of historical persons who are explicitly said to be philotimos, whereas in the Alcibiades the young Alcibiades seems clearly intended to evoke such psychological concepts. Similarly, the Symposium and the Phaedrus help show how the spirited passions function in the political and social aspects of Greek pederasty, in resistance to tyranny, and in the desire for posthumous fame which can motivate lawgivers. These Platonic bridges between the philosophical psychology of
the Republic and Greek history and politics also illustrate points of contact with
Xenophon’s more historical and political conceptualizations of the spirited passions.

The turn toward intertextuality is also prompted by puzzles like the following:

while neither thumos and its cognates nor philotimia or philonikia appear in the
Alcibiades, Alcibiades is nevertheless depicted in the dialogue as impassioned by a desire
for political honor. It is a curious feature of Plato’s writing on the spirited passions and
politics that the central terms of his thought are often absent when related concepts are
under investigation. For example, thumos and its cognates are completely absent from
the dialogues in which they would be most likely to appear, based on their function in the
Republic. This includes the Phaedrus, considered below, in which the image of the psyche
as a war chariot pulled by two horses, taken by most interpreters to illustrate the
tripartite psychology of the Republic, does not describe the white philotimos horse using
thumos-family terms.\textsuperscript{130} Thumos-type terms are similarly absent from the Laches, the
Gorgias, and the Statesman, despite the fact that the subjects of those dialogues all
implicate thumos as formulated in the Republic.\textsuperscript{131} The Laches is a dialogue on courage,

\textsuperscript{130} The puzzling absence of thumos in the Phaedrus is also noticed by Eva Buccioni, ‘The

\textsuperscript{131} Thumos also plays a surprisingly slight role in the Timaeus, though it does occur
(andreia is also downplayed, being mentioned only once), as noted by Catherine Zuckert,
Plato’s philosophers: the coherence of the dialogues (Chicago, 2009), 38, 458. As the
Timaeus also focuses on the tripartite psyche, these concepts, which are central to the
middle part of the tripartite psyche in the Republic, could be expected to be prominent.
of courage. The Gorgias begins with the word ‘war’ and is about forms of contention, including in its primary subject of rhetoric. And the Statesman, in light of its eponymous subject, might well be expected to include discussion of the element which plays a important role even in the constitution of the Guardian classes in the Republic. These absences prompt us to ask questions about Plato’s literary method as a philosophical writer. For the project at hand, these absences have suggested the need for an intertextual approach which seeks a broader view of Plato’s thought on the spirited passions than a focus on one dialogue would provide.

§3.2 ALCIBIADES

§3.2.1 The spirited character type in Plato’s Alcibiades

A prominent scholar of Platonic thought has recently stated that ‘the Alcibiades is not a dialogue for beginners’. But the Alcibiades was considered in the early modern period, following ancient tradition, as the best point of entry for young students to the

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132 But see Melissa Lane, ‘Plato’s political philosophy: the Republic, the Statesman, and the Laws’, in A companion to ancient philosophy, ed. Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin (Malden and Oxford, 2006), 181, who argues that in the work ‘the true statesman becomes a cipher, his perspective being reduced to the nature of his knowledge alone’. If this is correct, then it should not be surprising that other qualities needed by the statesman, including those which are psychological, do not appear in the work.

This was in part because the character of Alcibiades in the dialogue—proud of his advantages of nature and lineage, desirous of the political honors he thinks his due—was thought to indicate a character type shared by many young students. Such youths are meant to identify with Alcibiades. They are meant to recognize some of his qualities and desires in themselves. Having identified with Alcibiades, they then share in his humiliation by Socrates. Presumably, they then share in Alcibiades' conversion to being a pupil of a wise man or instructor. In Alcibiades' case the instructor is Socrates, in the later pupils' cases it is their instructors in the Platonic corpus itself.

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134 Harold Tarrant, *Plato's first interpreters* (London, 2000), 118, identifies the position of the *Alcibiades* 'at the head of a number of reading-programmes: that of later Neoplatonism in general, that of Albinus in *Prologus* 5, and that of the anonymous corpus-arranger in al-Farabi', but notes, 'It had not always been so favored, for it was absent from the arrangement of Aristophanes of Byzantium, and heads the fourth tetralogy of Thrasyllus, leading the four tetralogies in which the education of the young and the refutation of sophists are the primary concern.' A provocative reading of the *Alcibiades* which is also sensitive to the history of its interpretation is that of Michel Foucault, *The hermeneutics of the subject: lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982* (New York, 2005). The Neoplatonic interpretation the *Alcibiades* can be seen in the commentaries of Olympiodorus and Proclus, discussed by Foucault. For Olympiodorus, see the edition of L. G. Westerlink, *Olympiodorus: commentary on the first Alcibiades of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1956). For Proclus, see below. Michel Foucault, *The care of the self, The history of sexuality*, vol. 3 (1984; New York, 1986), 45, also discusses Albinus' view that the study of the Platonic corpus should begin with the *Alcibiades*. On Albinus, see John M. Dillon, *The middle Platonists: a study of Platonism, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London, 1977).

The most straightforward message of the *Alcibiades* is that politics ‘begins with the care of the self’, as Alexander Nehamas has summarized Foucault’s position in his late thought, which was in part formulated through an interpretation of this dialogue.\textsuperscript{136} The problem posed by the *Alcibiades*, however, is how the care for the self is to proceed if the self in question is *megalophrôn*, great-minded, and *philotimos*. Such a nature tends towards desires for political prominence, which of necessity force the self back into society. Indeed, such a nature forces the self to the front of society.

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The young Alcibiades in this dialogue thinks himself worthy of the highest political honors within Athens, surpassing even his mentor Pericles, and indeed looks beyond Athens in desiring, as Socrates puts it, ‘to fill with your name and your power all mankind’ (105b). Alcibiades desires these types of political honor because of a quality of his disposition: he is *megalophrôn*. To be *megalophrôn* is to be, literally, ‘great-minded’ in the sense of high pride, thinking oneself worthy of great things and acting on the basis of that estimation of oneself.\textsuperscript{137} Socrates first uses this term to describe Alcibiades at the start of the dialogue (103b) and later appeals to this quality in attempting to change the youth’s mind about the course of action worthy of someone who is *megalophrôn* (119d).

\textsuperscript{136} Alexander Nehamas, ‘Subject and abject’, *The New Republic*, Feb. 15 1993, 36. Nehamas references Foucault’s final two volumes of his *History of Sexuality*, both published in 1984 weeks before Foucault’s death, and his final two lecture courses at the Collège de France, one of which constitutes *The Hermeneutic of the Subject*, in which his interpretation of the *Alcibiades* is advanced.

\textsuperscript{137} Cairns, ‘Hybris, dishonour, and thinking big’, 22 ff.
the former case, Alcibiades does not deny this characterization of himself and, in the second, the appeal to Alcibiades’ belief that he is megalophrôn does the work Socrates wishes it to do. Throughout the dialogue, it is agreed by both Socrates and Alcibiades that Alcibiades is megalophrôn.

Both occurrences of megalophrôn describe the motivations of competitors. In the first case, the megalophrôn potential lovers are in a contest with one another to secure the best, most desirable, beloved. Because they are megalophrôn, they set their sights on Alcibiades. As the younger party in this pederastic competition, Alcibiades is assumed to be in a similar contest to find the best lover. Being megalophrôn, he rejects all the lovers on offer as unworthy of him.

In the second occurrence of the term, another contest is implicated: the contest over who best practices the ‘political things’ (ta politika) or ‘the things of the city’ (ta tês poleôs; 118b). The contest over who is the best political practitioner culminates, in Athenian domestic politics, with the granting of political honors—that is, in certain cases political offices, but more broadly political influence—to those who win the contest. A crucial turning point in the dialogue comes when Alcibiades admits that his competitors within Athens are, save for a few, not ‘educated’ in the political things, are not political ‘athletes’—his competitors are essentially idiotês, amateurs in political matters, men of

138 It is through speeches in the Athenian assembly, for example, that the contest will be waged.
private rather than public affairs. In response to this admission, Socrates appeals to Alcibiades’ being *megalophrốn*. Such a person would not be content with such amateurish competitors and would not wish to even be in a contest with such competitors. Such a contest is unworthy of someone who aspires to perform a ‘deed which is noble and worthy of yourself and the city’ (119e), that is, unworthy of someone who is *megalophrốn*.

Socrates appeals to Alcibiades’ sense of himself as *megalophrốn* to point him to another, greater and thus more worthy, set of competitors: the leaders of the enemies of Athens, the kings of the Spartans and the Persians (120a). In ‘so great a contest’ extreme practice and training will be necessary (120b-c), Socrates argues. With this new set of competitors, and thus comparators, established, Socrates then proceeds to paint a picture of the Persians and Spartans as superlative in all respects. In the face of such daunting competitors, Socrates claims that only he can train Alcibiades to go against, and beat, such opponents. To fail to best them will be to fail in Alcibiades’ most desired aim—which he is said to love (*ērāō*) more than anyone has loved anything—to become ‘renowned among the Greeks and the barbarians’ (124b).

It is a feature of Socrates’ pedagogical approach to interlocutors that he does not initially criticize their primary form of motivation. Instead, Socrates appeals to a more precisely formulated version of that motivation as the starting point for reform. He

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139 This is to be contrasted to Alcibiades’ thought, at 119a, that his nature (*phusis*) alone will allow him to best the amateurs in domestic politics.
argues that he can help the interlocutor better pursue their most deeply felt motivation. Over the course of the discussion, that initially unquestioned form of motivation may be called into question, but that is not how Socrates begins. In the case of Alcibiades in this dialogue, his primary motivation is his aspirational spirited quality of being *megalophrôn*.

The lesson that Alcibiades needs to learn is how to 'know yourself'. This will later be identified as the definition of moderation, providing one of the dialogue's paradoxes. Here, knowledge of himself is supposed to lead Alcibiades to recognition of his true, greater competitors, the Spartans and the Persians. That is, his knowledge of himself as *megalophrôn* will lead him to compete against these opponents and compare himself against them in preparation for that contest. Here, self-knowledge is knowledge of Alcibiades’ own nature as *megalophrôn*, as great-minded and ambitious. This makes for paradox later in the dialogue when knowledge of oneself is defined as moderation.

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140 Proclus draws attention to this feature of Socrates’ approach (*in Alc.* 152). Contemporary social psychology theory has been concerned with the phenomenon of reactive responses by an agent to advice or criticism which are seen by the agent as infringing on his or her autonomy or freedom to choose; see, for example, Juan Manuel Falomir et al., ‘Social influence and control beliefs in identity threatening contexts’, in *Control of human behavior, mental processes, and consciousness*, ed. August Flammer, Walter J. Perrig, and Alexander Grob (Mahwah, 1998), 408, and the literature there reviewed. That is, the advice or criticism may be sound—advantageous to the agent—but the imposition of the advice is seen as a threat to the agent’s freedom and it is observed that such agents often choose their unconstrained freedom of choice over the beneficial advice. Socrates was particularly sensitive to this potential response by his interlocutors.
Moderation is, in common parlance, the virtue of knowing one’s limitations and holding to them, not of becoming aware of one’s overweening ambitions and following them.

By the end of the dialogue, however, Alcibiades will be humbled. He will be turned away from his desire to immediately go before the Athenian assembly and try to persuade the people to grant him political honor and office. He will be on his way to gaining moderation as conventionally conceived.

Socrates goes about humbling Alcibiades with two methods. Both involve Alcibiades’ ambitions for political honor and office. One, which we have just seen, is to appeal to Alcibiades’ motivating quality of being *megalophrôn* and to show that, by the lights of this quality, Alcibiades has gone about satisfying it in the wrong way, choosing unworthy contests, competitors, and comparators. Having chosen poorly how to act in accord with his being *megalophrôn*, Alcibiades has also chosen the wrong educators or teachers to prepare him: up to this point, he has chosen Pericles. Socrates demonstrates Alcibiades’ ignorance of the proper contests and comparators for someone who is *megalophrôn*, who desires great political honors. Alcibiades needs a certain kind of self-knowledge in order to act in accord with this component of his character.

The second way Socrates humbles Alcibiades is again to demonstrate his ignorance. When pressed about the political matters he had thought he would be honored for knowing, these emerge to be knowledge of matters of foreign policy (106c ff.) and
knowledge of domestic friendship and concord (126a ff.). Alcibiades is shown to be ignorant of both of these, because both, on Socrates’ account, depend on knowledge of justice.\footnote{This is to be contrasted to Xenophon’s theory of rule, which is that rule is dependent on \textit{being} a certain kind of person motivated by spirited desires like \textit{philotimia} and \textit{philonikia} and on possessing a particular kind of judgment (\textit{gnômê}) which can recognize similar motivations in others and aid in cultivating those motivations while appealing to them; see chs. 4-5 on the \textit{Cyropaedia}, and, for a succinct formulation regarding \textit{gnômê}, §6.3 end.} When Alcibiades is convinced that he does not understand justice, his claims for being an expert in these matters, and thus worthy of political honor, are wholly undermined. His recognition of his ignorance of the political matters he had most desired to compete in and gain honor by thus leads him into the two \textit{aporias} of the dialogue (116e, 127d). The two arise as he is shown to be ignorant of foreign and domestic affairs, respectively. He is driven to despair in his efforts to act in accord with his being \textit{megalophrôn}.\footnote{Xenophon will highlight the role of Socrates’ technique in rendering his interlocutors dispirited (\textit{athumos}), despairing of achieving their most deeply cherished ambitions (see §7.2).}

By the end of the dialogue, the two virtues Alcibiades is said to need, if he wishes to be a leader of Athens are moderation and justice. They are the two virtues Athens itself needs, and rule has become defined, by the end of the dialogue, as the ability to impart virtue to the citizens. There is an elegant parallel in these two virtues being highlighted. Knowledge of justice is needed to provide Alcibiades with the ability to speak well on foreign and domestic matters, for which, Socrates claims, he will be honored. But knowledge of moderation entails the Janus-faced role moderation plays in the dialogue.
On the one hand, moderation is self-knowledge of Alcibiades’ character as *megalophrôn*, Alcibiades’ knowledge of his own nature and affirmation of his desire for the greatest political honors. On the other, the more conventional meaning of moderation is in play: the knowledge of one’s limits and one’s submission to superiors, in this case Socrates, for guidance. In the first case, Alcibiades’ self-knowledge leads him to embrace his nature as *megalophrôn* and thus raise his ambitions to be in accord with that nature. In the second, his self-knowledge leads him into the two *aporias* and humbles him to submit to Socrates as the only teacher who can help him act in accord with a true understanding of his nature as *megalophrôn*.

§3.2.2 The Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato’s Alcibiades

Spirited passions in Plato’s work are studied with particular care by the Neoplatonist Proclus. His scattered comments can be put together to form an overall interpretation of the spirited passions. That interpretation is marked by a concern with the problems of teaching spirited youths like Alcibiades who aspire to political action. But the interpretation is also distinguished by an argument for the potential of such youths for

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philosophical instruction. Several of my arguments for the role of the spirited passions in Plato and Xenophon are in accord with Proclus’ interpretation, which indicates there was an independent tradition, at least in antiquity, of considering the relation between the spirited passions and politics. I here focus on Proclus’ commentary on Plato’s *Alcibiades* I. I will highlight those elements of Proclus’ interpretation which rely only on his reading of his text and those elements which rely on unique features of Neoplatonism like its emphasis on the Chaldean oracles.

Proclus agrees that youth are particularly given to ‘contention’ and thus must be approached cautiously lest that quality be turned against oneself, the potential tutor (23). He argues that Socrates praises qualities which Alcibiades himself values, like his lineage (24), in order to gain Alcibiades’ favor. Similarly, since Alcibiades is a ‘lover of power’, when Socrates praises spirits he praises their power (84). This is supposed to make Alcibiades positively disposed to such innovations.

Proclus advances arguments for the qualities of potential students of philosophy, potential students of Socrates. The primary quality of a potential student is precisely the ‘high resolve’ (*megalophrones*) and ‘pride’ (*phronêma*) characteristic of Alcibiades’ nature (98). Such high resolve and pride are desirable qualities in potential students for several reasons. First, their presence indicates disdain for wealth in particular (110) which

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144 In the last section this was flagged as akin to the reactive responses studied in modern psychology; see note 140 above.
represents disdain of attachment to bodily goods generally. Second, it shows a disdain for vulgar things (135). Third, since persons with high resolve characteristically desire power and renown this indicates their having been in the heavens and viewed the concern of the gods for power and renown (137). Fourth, to have high resolve reveals one’s being motivated by the spirited part of the psyche which, as in the *Republic*, is nearer to reason (139).

The above four qualities are all positive features of a person possessed of high resolve and pride, according to Proclus. He also identifies several qualities characteristic of such persons, however, which are negative or ambiguous. To focus on one relevant to our investigation, such persons, because they possess a great degree of pride, are difficult to teach. Such pride may be useful for dealing with the mob, but are an obstacle to learning (61). Proclus argues that the problem of how to educate persons with such high resolve, like Alcibiades, can be overcome by awakening ‘astonishment’ in them and ‘wonder (*thauma*) as regards philosophy’ (61). It is necessary to arouse Alcibiades’ wonder and astonishment in order to get around his ‘conceit’, ‘desire for honor’, and ‘contention’ (164), but Proclus had concluded that persons who desire the way of life which pursues ‘rule and honor’ are particularly worthy of such attention (139). For Proclus, the means Socrates deploys to astonish and astound Alcibiades are his references to his ‘guardian spirit’ and the ‘philosophical use of paradox’ (164).
This Neoplatonic picture of the aspirational spirited qualities of a person like Alcibiades, but also the challenge of his education, captures in succinct form several of the themes seen in the present study of Plato and Xenophon, notably the way aspirational spirited passions tend to lead their possessor to political activity and make him resistant to philosophical instruction. In one respect Proclus’ interpretation of the propaedetic techniques of Plato’s Socrates, summarized above, diverges from those of Xenophon’s Socrates as argued here, however. Xenophon, as we shall see, conceptualizes the psychological effects of Socratic *elenchus* as rendering even a high-spirited person like Alcibiades *athumos*, despairingly dispirited.\(^{145}\)

\[\text{§3.3 PHAEDRUS}\]

As Alcibiades’ aspiring suitors provided occasion for reflection on the proper relation between an older and a younger man within the context of pederastic pedagogy, one of the governing analogies of Plato’s *Gorgias* is that the people, the *demos*, is analogous to Gorgias’ boyfriend Demos. Socrates warns against flattery of both beloveds. The cultural ideal of an older man training a younger man in civic virtues is clearly being referenced. Of course, Socrates’ idea of what the older ought to teach the younger is more philosophic than conventionally conceived and may include denigration of conventional

\(^{145}\) See §7.2.
virtues like courage. This theme is continued in the *Phaedrus*, in which the opening speeches which dominate the first half are focused explicitly on the relation between a lover and a beloved and the dangers of flattery.\(^{146}\)

The first speech in the dialogue, which is supposedly a repetition of a speech by Lysias, argues that the beloved should not give in to a lover, because the lover has various flaws due to his erotic passion. The conventional discourse of the *erastès-erômenos* relationship seems to have been framed in terms of honor and emulation, as Lysias’ speech references these concepts, arguing against selecting the ‘best’ among the lovers but the ‘most suitable’. The *philotimia* of the lover is discussed:

> [I]t is likely that lovers, thinking they should be held worthy of emulation by others too, just as they are by themselves, would be excited to speak and in their love of honor would display before all that they have not toiled in vain; but nonlovers, being masters of themselves, choose what is best instead of reputation among human beings. (232a)

The nonlover is favored because he has shunned *philotimia*. Spirited passions are revealed to play a role in the erotics of pederasty. One of the motivations is the desire for honor that will come to a lover if he wins over a certain highly sought-after beloved. The lover is revealed to desire sexual conquest because he will ‘take pride’ (*philotimeisthai*)

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\(^{146}\) For the Greek text I have used the edition and notes of C. J. Rowe, *Phaedrus*, 2 ed. (Warminster, 2000), accompanied by a translation and a fine philosophical commentary. I have consulted the major contemporary translations of Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, *Phaedrus* (Indianapolis, 1995) and Robin Waterfield, *Phaedrus* (Oxford, 2002); unless otherwise noted, quotations are from the translation of James H. Nichols, *Phaedrus* (Ithaca, 1998). I have found G. R. F. Ferrari, *Listening to the cicadas: a study of Plato’s Phaedrus* (Cambridge, 1987), to be illuminating.
before others when he has done it, rather than keeping it secret out of a sense of shame (234a). Thus, it is the nonlover’s freedom of both spirited passion and erotic passion which that makes him desirable, on this account.

Later in the speech, a critique is advanced that the lover actively encourages not only lack of moderation, but also lack of courage and the associated qualities. He desires his beloved to be slavish, lacking in learning, cowardly, incapable of rhetorical speech, and slow of wit (239a). The lover keeps the beloved from associations which would help him become a ‘real man’ (anêr), ironically, since the aim of the erastês-erômenos relation was supposed to be precisely that. He wishes the beloved to lack the physical training which makes for a robust citizen warrior (239c-d). He wishes the beloved to be without friends, family, or independent means (239e-240a). This image would be contrasted sharply with the ideal of civic pederasty articulated by Xenophon, probably in response to Plato’s Phaedrus and Symposium, in his Symposium 8.\textsuperscript{147}

It is these qualities that the conventional theory of the erastês-erômenos assumed the lover trained the beloved. The lover, in the first speech, keeps the beloved from all the activities in which the conventional account argued he would induct the beloved. The lover has no interest in rendering the beloved an anêr, a citizen in all senses of the term, but keeping the beloved in a dependant condition. A further irony of this account is that the lover has continually to resort to flattery, so that the beloved constantly hears

\textsuperscript{147} On which see §7.3.
‘untimely and excessive praises’ and also perfervid reproaches from the lover. Neither are justified. Both are driven by the lovers’ alternating between erotic passion and jealousy. The speech culminates: ‘These things, then, you must meditate on, my boy, and know that the friendship of a lover does not come into being with goodwill, but in the manner of food, for the sake of repletion, as wolves cherish lambs, so do lovers love boys’ (241c-d).

The second speech begins with an imagined observation from someone of ‘noble breeding’ and ‘gentle in character’ who would characterize the lover described in the first speech as one ‘raised mostly among sailors [who] had seen no love worthy of free men’ (243c). We would expect a defense of the conventional erastês-erômenos theory. What we get instead is a highly idiosyncratic account which culminates in the metaphor of the soul as a war chariot. In the metaphor of the war chariot, however, the spirited part of the psyche is associated with the white horse which, distinctively, feels shame. That shame, which expresses in the psychological constitution the conventional social norms governing sexual relations with a youth, helps aid the charioteer, who has different, intellective reasons for avoiding such relations, manage the insurgent eros of the black horse. Thus, in the Phaedrus we see how spirited passion—through the imagery of the psyche as a war chariot—can fulfill a conventional role in aiding the governance of appetitive sexual desire, if it is rightly trained.
§3.4 Symposium

The Symposium can be seen to continue the consideration in the Phaedrus on the role of the relation between the older citizen and the younger citizen in developing the spirited qualities needed of a good citizen—indeed, it is Phaedrus’ speech in the Symposium which focuses on such a relation. Overall, the purpose of the older citizen is to instill an essential set of civic qualities in the budding young citizen. Several of the most important of these qualities are spirited passions: a desire for political honor and an irascibility to political indignities are chief among them. The older citizen himself displays a concern for honor in filling the role appropriately and in selecting a particularly promising younger citizen to train. Spirited passions, including competitive ones, are at work in motivating the older citizen—presumably in addition to the erotic passion he will feel, at some level, toward the younger citizen.


149 For the Greek text I have used the edition and notes of C. J. Rowe, Symposium (Warminster, 1998), accompanied by a translation and a fine philosophical commentary. I have consulted the major contemporary translations of Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, Symposium (Indianapolis, 1989); Reginald E. Allen, Symposium (New Haven, 1991); and Robin Waterfield, Symposium (Oxford, 1994); unless otherwise noted, quotations are from the translation of Seth Benardete, ‘Symposium’, in The dialogues of Plato, ed. Erich Segal (New York, 1986). For a splendid collection of critical essays, see J. H. Lesher, Debra Nails, and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield, eds., Plato’s Symposium: issues in interpretation and reception (Cambridge, Mass., 2006).
In the first speech, by Phaedrus, the relationship between spirited passions and the political pedagogy occurring between the older and younger citizen is similar to Socrates’ second speech in the *Phaedrus*. The political pedagogy instills:

[S]hame in the face of shameful things and honorable ambition (*philotimia*) in the face of beautiful things; for without them neither city nor private person can accomplish great and beautiful deeds (*megala kai kala erga*). (178d)

The appropriate kinds of shame and *philotimia* are instilled in the young citizen through the close observation and imitation of the older citizen. The older citizen is intensely concerned with the success or failure of this pedagogical process because he experiences the spirited passions of shame and *philotimia* in reaction to his young ward’s actions. Emulation, the desire to equal and surpass, is also at work when the pair enters into a competitive relationship with other pairs in pursing civic virtue. Phaedrus envisions a ‘city or army’ motivated by such emulative competition among pairs of older and younger citizens—each pair competing with the other pairs for honor—as capable of defeating nearly all opponents (178e-179a).\(^\text{150}\)

Phaedrus’ ethic of civic emulation has Homeric overtones: he argues that, as (different) gods do in Homer, so *Eros* is capable of ‘breathing might (*menos*)’ into heroes (179b). Phaedrus argues for two types of eros: one which leads men to the love of women

\(^{150}\) Rowe, *Symposium*, ad loc., argues—*pace* accusations of anachronistic reference to the 4th century Theban ‘sacred band’—the reference here is to Sparta and to the army regulations, partly imitative of Sparta, of the Kallipolis at *Republic* 468b-c. On the later Stoic notion of a ‘city of lovers’, see Malcolm Schofield, *The stoic idea of the city* (Cambridge, 1991), 35-46.
and one which leads men to the love of men. Heterosexual relationships are explicitly
denigrated. This is in contrast to Aristophanes’ and Diotima’s more balanced (but not
wholly balanced) view of heterosexual versus homosexual relationships. In the
masculinist theory of exclusively male citizenship being advanced by Phaedrus, males are
said to be ‘naturally’ of greater ‘vigor’ (errômenos) and sense (181c).

The civic virtues which are the reason for and expected outcome of the civic pedagogy occurring between older and younger citizen are, in Phaedrus’ argument, particularly inimical to tyrannies:

In the eyes of barbarians, on account of their tyrannies, pederasty as well as
philosophy and the love of gymnastics (philogumnastia) is shameful; for I suspect that it is not to the advantage of the rulers that great and proud thoughts (phronêmata megalà) be engendered among their subjects, any more than strong friendships and associations (phlias ischuras kai koinônias). [...] And the tyrants here [in Athens] actually learned this by deed; for the love of Aristogeiton and the friendship of Harmodius, once it became firm (bebaios), dissolved the tyrants’ rule. (182b-c)

What is dangerous to a tyranny are phronêmata megalà, ‘great and proud thoughts’. These are created in citizens, Phaedrus argues, through three specific social institutions:

(1) the pederastic pedagogical relationship, (2) philosophical practice, and (3) the pursuit of gymnastics. In contrast with the delineation of appetitive, spirited, and theoretic motivations and ways of life in the Republic, in Phaedrus’ speech they all conduce to creating robust citizens. In light of the potentially rebellious qualities of such citizens,

151 See below in this section.
152 Rendered by Rowe as ‘big ideas’.
Phaedrus argues that a ban forbidding the young citizen to ‘gratify’ the older citizen would only be imposed out of a ‘hankering after more (pleonexia) on the part of the rulers, and the lack of manliness (anandria) on the part of their subjects’ (182d). Only the hubristic overreaching of rulers, or a slavishness on the part of subjects, could explain efforts to suppress the pedagogical relationship which, Phaedrus argues, makes the participants particularly good citizens.

However optimistic is Phaedrus’ vision of the political consequences of the pederastic pedagogy, an even more vigorous presentation of the role of erotic relations in eliciting spirited passions is found in the speech of Aristophanes. Aristophanes argues—using language and imagery which would have a vast influence—that the origin of human erotic longing arises from all humans being one half of a formerly unified person. Humans, in possessing erotic passion, are searching for their other half. Of the original ‘whole’ persons, there were three genders: male, female, and hermaphrodite. When these persons were split, the result was as follows: those who were male, when split, became a pair of males who each desired males (as they were looking for their other, male, half). Similarly, the female original person, when split, created a pair of females who each desired females. The hermaphrodite, when split, formed a male and a female, each of whom was looking for the opposite gender in order to restore their original hermaphroditic wholeness.
Aristophanes explains that the psychological constitution of the original whole persons was marked by *phronêmata megala* which threaten ruling powers:

[T]hey were awesome (*deinos*) in their strength (*ischus*) and robustness (*rhômê*), and they had great and proud thoughts (*phronêmata megala*),\(^{153}\) so they made an attempt on the gods. And what Homer says about Ephialtes and Otus, is said about them—that they attempted to make an ascent into the sky with a view to assaulting the gods. (190b)

As in Phaedrus' argument, *phronêmata megala* give rise to rebellious activity on the part of subjects against their rulers. The cause of *phronêmata megala* in Aristophanes’ argument is the original wholeness of human beings when united with their other half. The arguments differ in that Phaedrus envisages a pederastic pedagogical relationship which maps onto current social practice whereas Aristophanes envisages a mythical unity of two persons into one whole. What is distinctive about Aristophanes’ argument is that the *phronêmata megala* which arise from such wholeness would arise from the pairings not only of males with their male counterparts but also the pairing of females with their original female counterparts and males with their original female counterparts. The implication seems to be that to be reunited with one’s other half is to be made into a whole which can give rise to *phronêmata megala* which will threaten ruling powers. But Aristophanes does not confine this vision of rebellious unions to the pederastic relationship defended by Phaedrus.

\(^{153}\) Translated by Rowe as ‘ambitions…on a large scale’.
It was for the purpose of putting down this rebellious potential that the gods decided to split the originally whole human beings and render them less prone to rebellion because they will then lack *phronêmata megalà*. Humans would not possess this quality, once split, for several reasons, chief among them that they would be preoccupied with finding their other halves—a time- and energy-consuming enterprise—and that that search would be, in most cases, fruitless. They might find close matches, but not exact matches, and thus fail to recreate, in their pairings, the original wholeness which gave rise to the *phronêmata megalà* which threatened the gods’ rule.

Perhaps in a concession to the convention of pederastic civic pedagogy espoused by Phaedrus, Aristophanes continues that those youths who desire, from youth, other males, are ‘naturally the manliest (*andreiotatoi*)’ and act out ‘boldness (*tharsos*), manliness (*andreia*), and masculinity (*arrenôpia*)’. Indeed, the best proof of their naturally manly nature is that, at maturity, ‘only men of this kind go off to political affairs (*ta politika*)’ (192a). Rowe translates ‘such people are the only ones who as adults turn out to be real men in the political sphere’ and takes issue with the translations of Nehamas/Woodruff, Allen, and Waterfield,\(^\text{154}\) which are all similar to Benardete’s in failing to recognize that Aristophanes’ claim is that such youths grow up to be the ‘real men’ (*andres*) in politics, not that all politicians were once such youths.\(^\text{155}\)

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\(^{154}\) Rowe, *Symposium*, 156.

\(^{155}\) Aristophanes (*Knights* 875-80) deploys a version of this jibe.
Later, in Diotima’s speech, related by Socrates, it is posited that eros is ‘engendering and bringing to birth in the beautiful’ (206e). Engendering connotes a sexually productive relationship which had not been envisaged in Phaedrus’ and Aristophanes’ arguments. There, the focus was on the relationship between the paired individuals and the effect of the relationship on the individuals, Phaedrus’ ‘strong friendship and association’. In Diotima’s argument, relationships are for the purpose of engendering. And engendering is a means not of gaining strength and autonomy, as Phaedrus’ and Aristophanes’ relationships were—a strength and autonomy which might challenge tyrannies—but of attaining immortality.

The common feature which unites Aristophanes’ argument for the robust qualities which certain kinds of erotic relationships create and Diotima’s argument for the qualities seen in beings which desire to ‘engender’ themselves is the quality of being deinos, ‘uncanny’ or ‘awesome’. Aristophanes had said that the whole human beings were ‘awesome in their strength and robustness’ and possessed of phronêmata megala. Diotima states that, all beasts, including humans, are ‘uncanny’ or ‘awesome’ (deinos) when they ‘desire to produce offspring’ (207a). Similarly, she argues, humans are put into an ‘uncanny’ disposition in their ‘love of renown’ (philotimia, 208c; discussed below).

Deinos is a particularly strong term, and unusual to attach to erotic desire or to the ‘love of renown’. The state of being deinos is one connoting awe and reverence, according to the meaning of deinon offered by Heidegger, who concludes:
The fear that the *deinon* awakens can also be that fear pertaining to reverence and awe. The *deinon*, as the fearful, is then not that which is frightening, but rather that which commands and calls for reverence: that which is worthy of honor. The fear in such reverences is not avoidance or flight, but rather a turning toward something in heed and respect, the awe pertaining to admiration, a standing firm in honoring that which awakens such fear.\(^{156}\)

Heidegger suggests a threefold meaning for *deinon*, one of which is ‘uncanny’. This might be the inspiration behind Benardete’s translation of *deinos* as ‘uncanny’.\(^{157}\) Diotima is extending the sense of *deinos* from its conventional usage to also describe the state of beings possessed of the desire to engender themselves either through biological offspring or posthumous renown. Biological offspring is the only way lower natures can gain immortality. In the higher natures, renown is the means by which they can gain immortality. In the case of both lower and higher natures, recognition of mortality creates in them an uncanny disposition which leads them to go to extreme acts in the pursuit of their desire for a form of immortality.

The means by which higher natures gain immortality is through renown, but there are several avenues by which such renown can be pursued. Diotima, speaking ‘like the

\(^{156}\) Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s hymn “The Ister”* (Bloomington, 1996), §12, 61-68, quoted text at 63.

\(^{157}\) Benardete seems not to have been aware of Heidegger’s Ister lectures, however, since he claims Heidegger never engaged with the concept of the *polis*, which Heidegger does in the sections (§§13-16) immediately following his discussion of *deinon*. Seth Benardete, *Encounters & reflections: conversations with Seth Benardete*, ed. Robert Berman, Ronna Burger, and Michael Davis (Chicago, 2002), 182. That said, Benardete’s longstanding interest in Heidegger’s work is attested throughout this volume of interviews.
perfect sophists’ (which may be meant to indicate the focus both on speech and fame for speech which the sophists claimed as their expertise):

Know it well, Socrates, inasmuch as in the case of human beings, if you were willing to glance at their love of honor, you would be amazed at their irrationality unless you understand what I have said and reflect how uncanny their disposition is made by their love of renown, ‘and their setting up immortal fame for eternity’; and for the sake of fame even more than for their children, they are ready to run all risks, to exhaust their money, to toil at every sort of toil, and to die. For do you suppose, that Alcestis would have died for Admetus’ sake, or Achilles would have died for Patroclus, or your own Codrus would have died before his sons for the sake of their kingship, if they had not believed that there would be an immortal remembering of their virtue, which we now retain? Far from it, but I believe that all do all things for the sake of immortal virtue and a famous reputation of that sort; and the better they are, so much the more is it thus; for they love the immortal. (208c-d)

There is immortality of body, and there is immortality of soul. The latter is achieved through ‘conceiving’ and ‘bearing’ ‘prudence and the rest of virtue; it is of these things that the poets and all the craftsmen who are said to be inventive are procreators; and by far the greatest and most beautiful part of prudence is the arranging and order of the affairs of cities and households’ (209a).

The criteria by which Diotima assesses the types of ‘engendering’ is immortality and how lasting it is. She argues that the works of the political lawgivers and poets are more envied than the offspring of bodies because they create a more lasting immortality:

[I]f one looks at Homer, Hesiod, and the other good poets, one envies them: what offspring of themselves they have left behind! For as these offspring are in their own right immortal, they supply the poets with immortal fame and memory. And if you want, think of the children that Lycurgus left behind in Sparta, the preservers of Sparta and, to exaggerate a little, of
Greece. Solon too is honored among you through his engendering of the laws; and other men as well in many other regions, among Greeks and among barbarians, by their showing forth of many beautiful deeds, have engendered every kind of virtue. It is to these that many sanctuaries are now dedicated through children of this kind; while through the human sort there are no sanctuaries for anyone yet. (209d-e)

Two types of offspring are envisaged by Diotima. First are the written works of poets like Homer and Hesiod. The written works are themselves immortal and, being immortal, perpetually enhance the fame of their creators. Second are the laws instituted by the political lawgivers. These are different from the texts produced by poets like Homer and Hesiod. Laws form citizens, the inhabitants of the political order constituted by the laws. The actions of those human beings, if they are worthy of glory, feeds the fame of the lawgivers.158

§3.5 Conclusion

As we have seen, Plato’s Alcibiades was utilized by post-classical teachers as a propaedeutic in the study of the Platonic dialogues. As the Neoplatonist Proclus argued, it was an ideal text for that purpose because it depicts Socrates as winning the attention of a politically ambitious and highly sought after young man—a youth who in many ways

158 Rowe, Symposium, 201, argues that Diotima closes her speech by concluding all these types of offspring, biological and the creations of poets and politicians, are merely ‘phantoms’ or ‘shadowing imitations of virtue’ (212a), in line with the Socratic and Platonic condemnation of all who do not pursue philosophy.
would resemble the students later teachers would confront. But that Socrates seems to have only *initially* praised the political ambitions of the young, in order to gain their attention, and then proceeded to critique the life they desired which pursued conventional political leadership and honor, was lost on some ancient readers. Proclus, commenting on Plato’s *Alcibiades*, found it necessary to defend Socrates against accusations that his approach to the youth served to inflame the spirited passion of Alcibiades for political renown. The misunderstanding Proclus found it necessary to challenge is strengthened by the presence of Xenophon’s depiction of Socrates, particularly in the *Memorabilia* and *Symposium*, which not only lacks a radical critique of conventional political life like that advanced by Plato’s Socrates in the *Republic* but seems designed to encourage political action.¹⁵⁹ Xenophon’s premier example of a *philotimos* who naturally pursues political activity and leadership, and who needs to be educated not through philosophy or civic pederasty but through other forms of emulative pedagogy, is his Cyrus in the *Cyropaedia*, to which we now turn.

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¹⁵⁹ See §7.3.
CHAPTER 4 – SPIRITED NATURAL VIRTUE AND CHARACTER TYPE IN
XENOPHON’S CYROPAEDIA I

§4.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the conclusions of this and the following chapter is that Xenophon’s
Cyropaedia ought to be considered one of the classic texts of political theory. It
inaugurated the political biography and is perhaps the most extensive ancient Greek work
on political leadership. It has, however, been neglected or, when studied, misunderstood
as a cautionary tale of political corruption. I argue that Xenophon’s method in the
Cyropaedia is primarily analytical and, in its first book, focused on three problems: how
leaders emerge, what motivates them, and how their character is constituted. Xenophon
responds to these questions with a theory of the natural virtue of the spirited character
type, a person who is uniquely motivated by philotimia, the desire for political honor, and
uniquely suited for development into a political leader. Furthermore, Xenophon is in
theoretic dialogue with Plato over these concepts and a proper understanding of that
dialogue impacts not only interpretations of the Cyropaedia as a whole but also the
relation of the work to Greek political thought more broadly.
How did the ancient Greeks conceive the relation between natural capacities, developed character, and political action? Xenophon’s theory of political motivation is particularly concerned with this relation, and his chosen vehicle for developing it is an idealized biography of the Persian king Cyrus the Great. No concept is more central to Xenophon’s description of Cyrus than philotimia, the desire for honor or status, but despite a recent increase in Anglo-American scholarship on the Cyropaedia, the centrality of philotimia has hardly been noted, much less adequately understood. Even scholars who have recognized the importance of philotimia in Xenophon’s thought, and his importance as an exponent of philotimia as a moral and political value, underestimate the nature of his intervention on behalf of philotimia within Greek political thought. The intention of this chapter is to properly characterize philotimia within the Cyropaedia and, furthermore, to draw conclusions about the nature of Xenophon’s intervention in Greek political discourse, particularly vis-à-vis Plato, in theorizing philotimia as he does in the Cyropaedia.

The chapter begins by considering the failure of present scholarship to properly recognize the importance of philotimia in the Cyropaedia, a failure which fits into a broader (and surprising) neglect of philotimia. It then advances a new methodological approach focusing on the concept of natural virtue—formulated most prominently by Plato in Republic VI—which better explications Xenophon’s theory of philotimia and the spirited passions. The chapter analyzes Cyropaedia I and argues that Xenophon’s young Cyrus is
depicted as a prototype of the potential political agent, a character type naturally in possession of a distinctive set of virtues which uniquely suit such a type for political leadership. Xenophon’s theorization of the spirited character type bears enough similarities to Plato’s theorization of the type to justify the claim that they are in theoretic contention over a common ground, the point of contention being the education appropriate to mold such natural virtue—and the psychology of the character type marked by such natural virtue—into that of a stable and complete political agent.

§4.1.1 The state of scholarship on philotimia and Xenophon

In one of the few studies devoted to philotimia as an abstract moral and political concept, David Whitehead argues that the ‘traditional’ Homeric ethos of aristocratic competition, in which the desire for timê is unproblematic, is found as late as the fifth century tragedians, but that ‘the great problem with philotimia’ is the question of its ‘appropriateness in the polis context’. Pointing to evidence in Herodotus, Euripides, Aristophanes and Thucydides of criticism of philotimia as a moral and political value, Whitehead concludes that in Athens from 411 onwards ‘there developed a clear appreciation of the problems posed by traditional philotimia (or an excess of it) to

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community life and politics’.\textsuperscript{161} I have no disagreement with this overall picture.

However, the analysis of the \textit{Cyropaedia} advanced here indicates that Whitehead’s placement of Xenophon in this picture is very much off the mark. Whitehead makes two points about Xenophon and \textit{philotimia}: (1) that the ‘simple, unproblematical idea of \textit{philotimia}’ is still being advanced ‘throughout the works’ produced by Xenophon in the time of his primary literary output—usually estimated to fall between 370 and his death around 354—that is, decades after the major Athenian figures considered above; and (2) that by so doing Xenophon was ‘evidently burying his head in the sand’, failing to recognize and engage with the critiques of \textit{philotimia} which had been advanced since Herodotus and which had reached particular force in Thucydides.\textsuperscript{162}

I argue against both halves of Whitehead’s characterization of Xenophon on \textit{philotimia}. First, \textit{philotimia} is by no means unproblematic in Xenophon’s \textit{Cyropaedia}—quite the opposite: the moral and political problems to which \textit{philotimia} gives rise are very much in evidence in the work. Second, rather than conceptualizing \textit{philotimia} in archaic terms or ignoring prominent (near) contemporaries on the concept, Xenophon in the \textit{Cyropaedia} reveals an engagement with his contemporaries the other Socratics, as seen particularly in respect of Plato. Furthermore, Xenophon seems to be aware of criticisms of \textit{philotimia} and is concerned with advancing a substantive \textit{defense}, in moral and political

\textsuperscript{161} Whitehead, ‘\textit{Philotimia}’, 58.
\textsuperscript{162} Whitehead, ‘\textit{Philotimia}’, 56-7.
terms, of the value of a form of philotimia. Finally, Xenophon’s defense of philotimia should be seen as a central plank in his political theory and one of his signature contributions to contemporary Greek political discourse.

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While disagreeing with Whitehead’s conclusions about Xenophon and philotimia, my methodological approach to Xenophon is in accord with that of most classical philosophers and historians, including Whitehead, and in contrast with the predominant methodology applied to Xenophon in political science. As recently argued by classicist Vivienne Gray, the study of Xenophon’s political thought within American political science has long been dominated by an interpretation which imputes to Xenophon a ‘darker’ or ‘ironical’ form of writing that when penetrated or unriddled reveals a set of ‘subversive’ political messages which don’t fit the norm of Greek political thought. That Xenophon

163 Put succinctly, the difference between my position and Whitehead’s on this second point (Xenophon’s engagement with contemporary critiques of philotimia) is that I consider Xenophon to be a defender of philotimia, that is, reacting to attacks upon the concept, conscious of the argumentative moves of his opponents and concerned with advancing an innovative theorization of philotimia which could be seen as reasonably countering those opponents.

164 Vivienne J. Gray, Xenophon’s mirror of princes: reading the reflections (Oxford, 2011), 1, 55-69, and passim. Examples of this interpretation adduced by Gray, to take only the most prominent, begin with Leo Strauss, ‘The spirit of Sparta or the taste of Xenophon’, Social Research 6 (1939) and continue through Leo Strauss, Xenophon’s Socratic discourse: an interpretation of the Oeconomicus (Ithaca, 1970) and Leo Strauss, Xenophon’s Socrates (Ithaca, 1972) while being developed by Christopher Bruell, ‘Xenophon’, in History of political philosophy, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago, 1963), W. E. Higgins, Xenophon the Athenian: the problem of the individual and the society of the polis (Albany, 1977), and W. R. Newell, ‘Machiavelli and Xenophon on princely rule: a double-edged encounter’, The Journal of Politics 50 (1988). To these can
has an esoteric teaching is asserted in order to justify his significance and the need for scholarly exegesis; it is even suggested that if he doesn’t have an esoteric teaching then it isn’t worth our time to study him.\textsuperscript{165} But while this ‘revolution’ in interpreting Xenophon was provocative and influential, and in some cases arrived at interesting and reasonable conclusions, it has not succeeded in persuading scholars of classical Greek thought outside political science.\textsuperscript{166} Critiques of its interpretive methodology emerged at once and have since grown.\textsuperscript{167} Certainly some reviewers have not been fair-minded,\textsuperscript{168} but taken as a

be added most of the contributions to the 2009 special issue of Polis, edited by Wayne Ambler and Dustin Gish, devoted to Xenophon’s political thought.

\textsuperscript{165} By, for example, Arthur M. Melzer, ‘Esotericism and the critique of historicism’, American Political Science Review 100, no. 2 (2006), 287, who describes Xenophon as ‘a writer who, since the end of the eighteenth century, had been dismissed as philosophically superficial for the good reason that if one does not see the esoteric depths of his Socratic writings one sees only the sometimes charming, sometimes boring recollections of a retired general’.

\textsuperscript{166} The last significant scholar in political science to approach Xenophon’s thought in a straightforward manner, publishing nearly 50 years ago, was Neal Wood, ‘Xenophon’s theory of leadership’, Classica et mediaevalia 25 (1964). More recent exceptions to the dominant interpretative occur not in political theory but in leadership and management studies. See, for example, Roger B. Myerson, ‘The autocrat’s credibility problem and foundations of the constitutional state’, American Political Science Review 102, no. 1 (2008). Also illustrative is Aldo Bompani, Was Xenophon a Harvard man?: at the very roots of management thought and practice (360 B.C.) (Firenze, 1998). Gray, Xenophon’s mirror of princes, 69, reveals that she began her study of Xenophon in order to conduct ‘a sustained demonstration of how Xenophon’s theory of leadership meets the requirements of modern democratic management theory’, but found her work was ‘ambushed by the more pressing demands of how to read his works in their own right’. This shift, she makes clear, was needed in order to correct recent, widespread misinterpretations of Xenophon, which she finds particularly rife within political science, that have led to a veritable ‘revolution in reading Xenophon’ (57).

\textsuperscript{167} The works listed above (note 164), excepting of course Gray, along with those below (note 169) on the Cyropaedia, prompted a host of reviews by classical philosophers and historians critical of their interpretive methodology and many, but not all, of the
whole these critiques have revealed that the predominant interpretation of Xenophon in political science needs to be reassessed. In short, it is time for a new revolution in the study of Xenophon’s political thought. The present study is a volley in that revolution.

Thankfully, the study of Xenophon’s thought within political science has been kept alive by the plethora of works which have emerged in Strauss’ wake. They are well worth engaging, and this is no less true of those on the *Cyropaedia*, especially since most differ not only from the methodological approaches here pursued but also arrive at very different conclusions, including the conclusion that Xenophon’s Cyrus is a figure he intends to castigate.169 Christopher Nadon, for example, argued the *Cyropaedia* should be understood as a cautionary tale of the corruption of a republic into an empire, the

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description of Cyrus’ corruption of the Persian republic with the intention of establishing an empire under his rule.\textsuperscript{170} Nadon even concluded the \textit{Cyropaedia} is ‘a critique of politics and the political life \textit{tout court}'.\textsuperscript{171} The present work supports conclusions radically opposed to the foregoing: Xenophon depicts Cyrus as prototypical of the young person who has the potential to be an exemplary political agent, as receiving the education needed to fulfill that potential, and as demonstrating exemplary political agency as an adult. Furthermore, far from being a critique of politics, the \textit{Cyropaedia} is Xenophon’s \textit{defense} of the political way of life, a defense which is advanced to counter the subordination of politics in Socratic thought, particularly that of Plato.

That said, I share with many of the scholars cited above the conviction that Xenophon is a subtle writer and that more is going on in his texts than meets the eye. As we shall see in respect of Plato, Xenophon engages in dialogue with previous writers in a theoretically sophisticated way which employs a form of literary understatement, as when he is clearly referencing Plato’s \textit{Republic} but does not name either Plato or the work.

\textsuperscript{170} Christopher Nadon, ‘From republic to empire: political revolution and the common good in Xenophon’s \textit{Education of Cyrus}’, \textit{The American Political Science Review} 90, no. 2 (1996), followed by Christopher Nadon, \textit{Xenophon’s prince: republic and empire in the Cyropaedia} (Berkeley, 2001), the three central chapters of which are ‘Republic’, ‘Transformation’, and ‘Empire’.

\textsuperscript{171} Nadon, ‘Republic to empire’, 373, a claim repeated in Nadon, \textit{Xenophon’s prince}, 178. Equally unlikely is Nadon’s declaration that Xenophon prophetically ‘foresees the passing away of the polis and its distinctive way of life and explores the consequences of the almost inevitable emergence of empire on the Asiatic level’ and intentionally ‘mutes his criticisms of empire so as to increase the likelihood that his works will be preserved in the coming political order, while still providing some antidote against its worst excesses’ (163-4).
Xenophon is not here being ‘esoteric’, however, but rather following conventions seen elsewhere in his own corpus and shared with other contemporary writers like Thucydides. In line with expectations about classical Greek methods of intertextual reference, including Plato’s own apparent reference to the *Cyropaedia* in the *Laws*, Xenophon leaves enough linguistic clues to reveal he has the *Republic* in mind. Xenophon’s subtle points are best found by attending closely to his lexical and conceptual usage in an intertextual fashion which broadens one’s interpretive web beyond an individual passage or text to the broader Xenophontic and Greek corpus. Such an approach enables us to recognize the way that Xenophon is ‘subversive’, for example, of the dominant viewpoint of his time, upheld both within philosophic discourses like Plato’s and by broader Greek discourses within and regarding the *polis*, that *philotimia* was an undesirable or harmful form of citizen motivation.

§4.1.2 *A new approach to the Cyropaedia*

In contrast to the approach predominant in political science, classicists have articulated and pursued a methodological approach to the *Cyropaedia* which investigates intertextual relations with other works in Xenophon’s corpus, and Greek literature more

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172 Danzig, ‘Did Plato read Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*?’, discusses such conventions and argues Plato clearly signals he is referencing Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* at *Laws* III.694a-b.
broadly, with the intention of establishing the ‘horizon of expectations’ for the messages the work conveys.\textsuperscript{173} Beginning with Bodil Due and continuing through Deborah Gera and, most recently, Gray, the conclusion of these authors is that Xenophon created a Cyrus whom he intends as a positive ethical and political model.\textsuperscript{174} The present argument is in accord with this methodological approach, and the conclusion it leads to, but I have focused on intertextual relations which have not yet been substantively pursued, particularly with Plato’s works, and have focused in a new way on Xenophon’s conceptualizations of political motivation and recognition.\textsuperscript{175} The Xenophon which emerges will, therefore, surprise many: he is an author deeply engaged with central concepts of Greek political thought and in dialogue with perhaps the greatest Greek theorist.

As he will elsewhere, Xenophon at the start of the \textit{Cyropaedia} invokes Socratic or Platonic terms. He refers to Cyrus as being ‘most beautiful in form’ (\textit{eidos kallistos}; I.2.1), a term which carries a distinctive Platonic resonance.\textsuperscript{176} Similarly, as wonder initiates

\textsuperscript{173} See Gray, \textit{Xenophon’s mirror of princes}, 6-7, and passim, on ‘horizon of expectations’, a concept drawn from literary theory. Gera, \textit{Xenophon’s Cyropaedia}, 2, in different terms, summarizes the consensus scholarly position that the \textit{Cyropaedia} is a kind of ‘vehicle’ or ‘peg’ for Xenophon to reiterate favored concerns and themes which appear across his corpus.

\textsuperscript{174} A conclusion seen throughout their works: Bodil Due, \textit{The Cyropaedia: Xenophon’s aims and methods} (Aarhus, 1989); Gera, \textit{Xenophon’s Cyropaedia}; Gray, \textit{Xenophon’s mirror of princes}.

\textsuperscript{175} Gera, \textit{Xenophon’s Cyropaedia}, ch. 1, has the most extended discussion of Plato, but it is focused largely on representations of Socrates.

\textsuperscript{176} Xenophon had other words with which to denote the body, as he uses \textit{morphê} shortly
philosophic activity for Socrates in the *Theaetetus* (155d), wonder at the political achievement of Cyrus begins Xenophon’s investigation of political theory (I.1.6). The preface of the *Cyropaedia* emphasizes the unstable nature of political rule among human beings and the tendency, within any given type of political order, of disaffected factions within an order to rebel against it (I.1.1-2). Xenophon responds by observing that there was a political ruler, Cyrus the Great, a king of Persia, who succeeded in establishing a lasting political order over human beings, *anthropoi*, an achievement which makes Cyrus ‘worthy of wonder’ (I.1.3-6). On the basis of this achievement of what had previously seemed impossible—rule over many human beings, including those extremely distant in space and language, for a very long time—Xenophon describes precisely how his investigation will start: by considering Cyrus’ heredity, *genea*, nature, *phusis*, and education, *paideia* (I.1.6). Xenophon’s invocation of wonder is an instance of his utilization of Socratic language but directed to different ends than in Plato. Not the philosophic wonder which motivated Socrates but wonder at a rare and praiseworthy political achievement motivates Xenophon.

Following the lead of Xenophon’s opening comments, my interpretation of the *Cyropaedia* begins by attending to genre: the work is one of the first and most outstanding

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177 For discussion see Arendt, *The human condition*, 302.
178 Due, *The Cyropaedia*, 149, argues that *genea* should be considered ‘the hereditary factor’ of Cyrus’ nature and emphasizes that Cyrus is here presented as heir in an hereditary monarchy. Historically, however, there was no Persian throne at the time of Cyrus’ birth.
examples of a what would become a new genre, the biography. The *Cyropaedia*’s emphasis on Cyrus’ childhood and youth is unusual in Greek thought and a departure from the norm of biographies by Socratics, who tend to focus on the character and actions of an adult subject (e.g. Socrates).\textsuperscript{179} Earlier Greek literature had shown how youthful exploits could be recounted to illustrate features of the subject’s character formation—the young Heracles is one example.\textsuperscript{180} And Plato’s *Republic*, in the central books describing the classes of persons who will populate Kallipolis, emphasized stages of education from infancy. That said, Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* is an innovation in being structured around one human life, described from beginning to end, embodying the primary features of what would become the biographical genre including the subject’s birth, youth, education, adult activities, and death.\textsuperscript{181}

Scholars have long been vexed by how to understand the biography Xenophon has written, however, as it departs in prominent ways from what we know of the historical Cyrus the Great. A solution to this puzzle is advanced in the present work which develops Arnaldo Momigliano’s perceptive observation that the *Cyropaedia* is a form of biography

\textsuperscript{179} Due, *The Cyropaedia*, 147-56, discusses Xenophon’s innovation in focusing on the childhood and youth of his subject.

\textsuperscript{180} Antisthenes in his *Heracles* (fr. 24) describes Heracles’ youthful education under the centaur Chiron, and Xenophon may have drawn from this source in composing his depiction of Cyrus’ education under his father Cambyses (see §4.4.2 below); Gera, *Xenophon’s Cyropaedia*, 9-10.

\textsuperscript{181} It is these features, and the innovation of Xenophon in crafting them into a unified presentation of a whole life, which prompted Arnaldo Momigliano, *The development of Greek biography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), 55, to praise the *Cyropaedia* as ‘the most accomplished biography we have in classical Greek literature’.
which shares a crucial feature with biographies written by contemporary Socratics. Such biographies are ‘directed towards capturing the potentialities rather than the realities of individual lives’.\textsuperscript{182} In the process of observing his youth and adulthood, the character of Xenophon’s Cyrus is revealed to the reader.\textsuperscript{183} Xenophon in the \textit{Cyropaedia} has created an exemplar of a political leader. And in \textit{Cyropaedia} I, focused on Cyrus’ youth, the prototype of a potential political leader.

§4.2 NATURE: THE SPIRITED CHARACTER TYPE

§4.2.1 Natural virtue

Momigliano’s observation about the form of biographies written by Socratics—biographies focused on the potentialities, rather than the facts, of the life in question—is a good starting point for the study of Cyrus in the \textit{Cyropaedia}. However, it can be made

\textsuperscript{182} Momigliano, \textit{The development of Greek biography}, 46.

\textsuperscript{183} Philip A. Stadter, ‘Fictional narrative in the \textit{Cyropaideia}', \textit{The American Journal of Philology} 112, no. 4 (1991), 491, makes a related point, though he does not link it to the nature of Socratic biographies and, I believe, pushes it too far toward utopianism and idealism: ‘[T]he narrative employs a historical setting only to create a utopian vision of ideal human behavior....[T]he Cyrus portrayed by Xenophon is not an actor who assumes different poses, but one who knows what is right on all occasions, and has such perfect control of himself that he can put his knowledge into action. Because he is the ideal, he has no second thoughts, dialogues do not persuade him, he always triumphs....[T]he major part of the book is not developmental but revelatory: the reader is not shown Cyrus working out the difficulties he faces in a dynamic, exploratory way, but Cyrus demonstrating the proper response.’
more precise by focusing on the aspects of Cyrus’ nature, *phusis*, to which Xenophon calls attention. Xenophon himself starts the work with consideration of Cyrus’ *phusis*.

Intertextual relations with Xenophon’s contemporary Plato, and Plato’s descriptions of Socrates, are valuable for deciphering Xenophon’s method in describing Cyrus. Melissa Lane has identified the importance of the virtues of the philosopher which Socrates both describes and claims apply to himself.184 Socrates is portrayed, at various points in the Platonic corpus, as naturally possessing certain virtues of both body and mind which uniquely fit him—and any other persons with similar natural virtues—for the activity and life of a philosopher. He is exemplary, therefore, not necessarily in being the completed type of the *philosophos* (whatever that is in Plato’s thought) but in his natural predisposition to the philosophic life.185

The central component of Lane’s argument for Socrates’ natural (philosophic) virtue is a passage in *Republic* VI on the natures of potential philosophers. This passage describes what Lane calls the ‘hydraulic effect’ of desire by which one’s dominant desire—in Socrates’ case, love of knowledge—channels much or all of a person’s mental energy so that a form of natural moderation occurs.


185 Lane’s argument about Socrates’ natural philosophic virtues is in accord with brief comments made by Leo Strauss in a lecture course on Plato’s *Symposium* at the University of Chicago in 1959; see Leo Strauss, *On Plato’s Symposium*, ed. Seth Benardete (Chicago, 2001), 275.
Now, we surely know that, when someone’s desires (epithumiai) incline strongly for one thing, they are thereby weakened (asthenesterai) for others, just like a stream that has been partly diverted into another channel...then, when someone’s desires flow towards learning and everything of that sort, he’d be concerned, I suppose, with the pleasures of the soul itself by itself, and he’d abandon (ekleipoien) those pleasures that come through the body—that is, if he’s a true philosopher. (Socrates to Glaucon, Republic VI.485d6-8, d10-e1)\(^{186}\)

*Phusis* in this case is a person’s nature prior to education, one’s *predisposition* as constituted by natural capacities.\(^{187}\) Utilizing a more generic version of the hydraulic effect of desire, I believe it can help explain how the psychology of Xenophon’s Cyrus, as demonstrated primarily in his youth, is meant to be prototypical of a political agent.\(^{188}\)

Xenophon’s Cyrus resembles Plato’s Socrates in the exemplarity of his natural virtues and the role those virtues have in structuring his psychological constitution around certain markedly predominant aims. The difference between the two exemplars is that Cyrus’ natural virtues are those which uniquely suit him for the activities and life of a political agent, as opposed to a philosopher. Armed with Plato’s formulation of the

\(^{186}\) Translation following Lane, ‘Virtue as the love of knowledge’, 50.

\(^{187}\) There is another sense of *phusis* as one’s completed nature; on this distinction, see A. Hatzistavrou, ‘Happiness and the nature of the philosopher-kings’, in *New essays on Plato*, ed. F.-G. Herrmann (Swansea, 2006).

\(^{188}\) It should be noted that the generic version of the hydraulic effect of desire can lead to counter-intuitive results. In my usage Cyrus’ predominant natural desire for political honor leads to a form of natural moderation regarding appetitive desires—thus his natural moderation looks like moderation as conventionally conceived. But the generic version could also describe someone (Callicles in Plato’s *Gorgias*, say) who single-mindedly pursues appetitive desires to the exclusion of desires for political honor or philosophic learning as ‘moderate’ with respect to those other desires. At the same time such a person could be exceedingly immoderate according to the conventional definition and exhibit appetitive extremes like gourmandism, nymphomania, or satyriasis.
natural virtues, however, we can better see how Xenophon theorizes the kinds of
natures—that is, set of natural virtues—which are uniquely suited to the political way of
life. Such natural virtues are the particular focus of Cyropaedia I, which describes
Cyrus’ boyhood, youth, and early maturity. In all of these stages of life, his natural
virtues are still in the process of being formed by education.

We have good reason to think that a conception of natural virtue is at work in the
Cyropaedia. Xenophon both describes Cyrus in his own voice as having a particular set of
natural virtues and depicts Cyrus, in the narrative, as possessing them. Considering
Cyrus’ phusis, Xenophon relates that he was reputed to have been ‘most benevolent
(philanthrôpotatos) in soul, most eager to learn (philomathestatos), and most ambitious
(philotimotatos), with the result that he endured every labor (ponon) and faced every risk
(panta kindunon hupomeinai) for the sake of being praised (epaineisthai)’ (I.2.1-2).
Cyrus’ nature is described in terms of his being superlative in three psychological respects,
and his philanthrôpia (generosity, clemency) and philomathia (curiosity) will reappear

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189 In my account of the virtues of Xenophon’s Cyrus, as in the virtues of philosophers like
Socrates in Republic VI, being ‘uniquely suited to’ is a consequence of being ‘uniquely
drawn to’ a particular way of life. So in describing Cyrus as philotimos, Xenophon is not
just saying something about Cyrus’ desire for political honor—i.e. his ambition, as the
term is often translated—but also about his fittingness or capacity for the political way of
life.
190 When the dialogue with Cambyses occurs, Cyrus has already entered the ranks of the
mature men, yet he is still depicted as in need of education.
191 All translations of the Cyropaedia, unless otherwise noted, are here drawn from
Ambler, The education of Cyrus.
later in the work. Neither is as important, however, in this passage or in the work as a whole, as *philotimia*.

The passage introducing Cyrus’ nature places greater weight on his *philotimia* than on his *philanthrôpia* or *philomathia* because other features of Cyrus’ nature are dependent upon his being *philotimotatos*. Cyrus’ ability to endure labor and face up to risk (*kindunon hupomeinai*)—both aspects of traditional Greek virtue, the former denoted by *philoponein*, love of labor,192 and the latter central to *andreia*, courage193—are both defined as means to an end: the gaining of praise. Cyrus’ natural virtues spring from his predominant desire just as Socrates’ natural virtues sprang from his predominant erós (for the practice of philosophy). This provides a key to unlocking Cyrus as he is portrayed in the *Cyropaedia*, for, throughout, *philotimia* is his primary form of motivation.

The links between Cyrus’ being *philotimos* and the specific virtues to which his predominant desire for honor gives rise are best revealed in light of Plato’s description of the spirited part of the soul (the *thumoeides*) and the qualities and character types most closely associated with it. In the *Republic*, *thumos* is conceptualized as the central component of the tripartite division of the soul into reason (*logos*), spirited passion, and appetite (*epithumia*). The spirited part is most relevant, in his parallel between ‘city and

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192 Due, *The Cyropaedia*, 94-97 discusses occurrences of *philoponein* in the *Cyropaedia*, including in this passage, but fails to note that the quality is not presented by Xenophon as a stand-alone component of Cyrus’ character but a consequence of his being a *philotimos* (as such, he is desirous of praise for labor).

soul’, to the Guardian class in his Kallipolis (all Guardians develop their spirited passions in youth) and with the ‘timocratic’ non-ideal city and character type, which are said to be particularly *philotimos* and *philonikos* (desirous of victory; 545a), and *philarchos* (desirous of ruling offices; 549a).194

Cyrus’ natural virtues, and their links to his desire for honor, are revealed not only in Xenophon’s initial description of Cyrus’ nature, but also throughout the narrative of Book I, which depicts Cyrus as a boy and young man. Cyrus’ boyhood is initially spent in Persia. He remains there until he is at least 12 years old. He then departs for Media and the court of his maternal grandfather Astyages, the king of the Medes. Cyrus remains there until he is around 15 or 16, when he then returns to Persia to complete the last year of his training among the ‘boys’ and before he enters the next phase of the polity’s pedagogical regimen among the ranks of the ‘youths’. He’ll remain in Persia for the entirety of this decade-long training of the youths, which Xenophon makes a point of noting comes at the most important phase, according to the Persians, of a young man’s development (I.2.9). Of Cyrus’ boyhood in Persia, at least through age 12 and his departure for Media, Xenophon says that he ‘clearly surpassed all his agemates both in quickly (*tachu*) learning what was necessary (*deoi*) and in doing everything in a noble and courageous way (*kalós kai andreiós*)’ (I.3.1, my adaptation of Ambler). According to the

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194 See §2.3.
argument advanced in the present chapter, the quality of youthfully acting according to standards of the noble and of courage mark him out as spirited.

Cyrus is called to his grandfather Astyages’ court in Media because Astyages has heard that Cyrus is kalon kai agathon, possessing the qualities of an aristocratic gentleman, and wishes to look on Cyrus for himself (I.3.1). Upon meeting his grandfather, Cyrus moves quickly to embrace him ‘as one would have done if he had been raised with him and had been friendly with him for a long time’, a reaction which is attributed to his being philostorgos by nature (I.3.2). This word is extremely rare in classical Greek, and is used elsewhere by Xenophon only in his encomium of Agesilaus (VIII.1). There, however, it is clearly one of Agesilaus’ qualities—along with a readiness ‘to serve his friends’ (therapeutikon tôn philôn)—which are meant to illustrate that Agesilaus was not ‘arrogant’ (megalauchos) despite his ample possession of honor (timê), power (dunamis) and kingship (basileia). It is a form of familial (in Agesilaus’ case, paternal) affection, and should be considered therefore a branch of Cyrus’ earlier-stated natural virtue of philanthrôpia.

Cyrus’ nature as philostorgos should therefore be seen as a balancing counter-weight to his natural virtue of ambition, philotimia, just as Agesilaus’ being philostorgos is meant to counter any accusation that he is arrogant as a result of his political honor and power. So, too, the related quality of philanthrôpia. Such qualities would thereby serve to temper the excesses of Cyrus’ philotimia. He is never described, for example, as
being motivated by a desire for contention. However, in the *Cyropaedia* his solicitousness toward others, which results from his *philostorgos* and *philanthrôpos* nature, is shown to redound to the increase of his honor, to be itself a means of gaining honor.

The links between his solicitude toward others and his *philotimia* are seen first in the *Cyropaedia* in the present passage. Cyrus follows his embrace of Astyages with praise of the king’s physical beauty (*kalos*; I.3.2). Astyages is then said to clothe Cyrus in a beautiful robe and to have ‘honored and adorned’ (*etima kai ekosmei*) him in necklaces and bracelets, in accord with the Median style, and with a horse sporting a golden bridle (I.3.3). Cyrus is ‘pleased’ by the robe and ‘exceedingly delighted’ by the horse for a specific reason: he is *philokalos kai philotimos*, a lover of the noble and of honor (I.3.3).

This passage is particularly important in two respects. First, for the first time in his own voice, Xenophon describes Cyrus as being *philokalos kai philotimos*. The earlier description of Cyrus’ nature as superlative in four respects of body and mind (I.2.1-2) was couched, in effect, in a conditional: the barbarians are said to describe Cyrus in such a way, which allows Xenophon distance from an endorsement of the factual accuracy of that statement.¹⁹⁵ Xenophon now, speaking in his own authorial voice, describes Cyrus as *philokalos kai philotimos*. Second, Cyrus’ nature, as stated by Xenophon, as *philokalos kai philotimos* also demonstrates the point that Cyrus is an exemplar of the spirited

¹⁹⁵ That said, there seems to be no substantive divergence between the qualities Cyrus is reputed to have had and those which Xenophon’s narrative depicts him as having.
character type. A desire for the noble, *kalon*, in addition to *timê* is also a feature of that type in Plato’s theory, though in both Plato and Xenophon it is less frequently advanced than *philotimia*.196

The description of Cyrus as *philotimos* helps explain the two primary activities Cyrus pursues, and excels at, while in Media. First, he revels in building networks of patronage. He is first shown doing so with the servants in his grandfather’s household: he takes a gift of meats given him by the king (and intended by the king for Cyrus’ own consumption) and instead distributes them to the king’s servants for services done to himself and the king and to servants who honor his mother (I.3.7).197 Later he will cultivate more political forms of patronage by serving as an intermediary between the

196 Plato never in the *Republic* describes the *thumoeides* as being *philokalon*, however, and this lack of attribution is found to be ‘very surprising’ by Alexander Nehamas, ‘Beauty of body, nobility of soul: the pursuit of love in Plato’s *Symposium*,’ in *Maieusis: essays in ancient philosophy in honour of Myles Burnyeat* (Oxford, 2007), 130. We do have reason to be at least initially surprised, as being *philokalon* seems clearly associated with spirited motivations, which are generally second only to philosophic motivations in Plato’s thought, as in the *Phaedrus* in which, of the nine character types declining from philosopher to tyrant, the person who is *philokalon* is second (248d3) and, in the analogy of the soul as a war chariot, the white horse, which is usually taken to represent the spirited psychological part, is described as noble (246b). Aristotle captures the standard Greek linkage between being *philotimos* and *philokalos* at *Nic. Eth.* 1125b12. *Pace* Nehamas, it’s not wholly surprising that Plato declines to describe the *thumoeides* as *philokalon* in the *Republic*, however, as he is concerned in that work with revaluing to *kalon* in philosophical terms.

197 Cyrus’ lack of desire for the pleasures of the table, pleasures which had been intended by Astyages to assuage any homesickness Cyrus might have for Persia, reaffirms how his spirited character type considers pleasures of food and drink to be of no consequence. This natural moderation of the spirited character type—by which it refuses pleasures and goods not consistent with its spirited orientation to values like *timê*—will be discussed more fully below.
Median aristocracy and his grandfather Astyages (I.4.1). From the start, he takes his proximity to the king extremely seriously and sets out to diminish his grandfather’s cupbearer because he had the power to admit or deny admittance to the king and chose to deny Cyrus access to the king on occasion (I.3.8-11). These activities reveal him, virtually from the first day he arrives in Media, immediately moving to alter the relations of honor within Astyages’ court. Cyrus demonstrates from an early age—he is here only around 13 years old—a natural tendency to distribute honors to those who serve him and deny them to those who oppose him. Here, we see Cyrus’ nature as a philotimos being revealed in practical domestic and political activities.

Cyrus, it seems as a consequence of his earlier attack on the way the cupbearer could restrict access to the king, is given unrestricted access to Astyages. He uses this access to seek favors for the fathers of his friends among the boys his age; he was eager to obtain such favors because of his ‘benevolence and ambition’ (philanthrôpian kai philotimian, I.4.1). He serves thereby as a conduit between the Median nobles and Astyages.198 Whereas Cyrus had previously been shown as ambitious in respect of those pursuits which he shared with his agemates, like hunting, he is now shown to have a form of political ambition, coming to play a role in the political structure of Media.

198 Gera, Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, 158.
The second set of activities in which Cyrus engages are more obviously those to be expected of a spirited character type: hunting and warfare.\textsuperscript{199} He reveals himself as extremely enthusiastic to distinguish himself hunting and, eventually, in fighting on the battlefield. He can do so by displaying \textit{tharsos}, a kind of courageous confidence (I.4.7). He is also keen on competition. On being offered the choice to remain with his grandfather rather than return to Persia, Cyrus’ explanation to his mother for his wish to stay is important. He articulates his reason for wishing to stay as grounded in a desire to compete against a higher caliber of comparator:

\begin{quote}
At home, mother, among those of my age, I both am and am thought to be the best at throwing spears and shooting the bow, but here I know quite well that I am inferior to those of my age at riding. Be well assured, mother, that this vexes me greatly. But if you leave me here and I learn how to ride a horse, when I am in Persia, I think that I will easily be victorious for you over those who are good on foot; but when I come to Media, I shall try for grandfather to be an ally to him by being the best horseman among these good horsemen. (I.4.15)
\end{quote}

Cyrus is eager to stay in Media and learn new skills, like horse riding, in which he is inferior to his Median age-mates, rather than return to Persia where he is already acknowledged as superior in skills with the spear and the bow (I.4.15). Cyrus loves

\textsuperscript{199} C. Strang, ‘Tripartite souls, ancient and modern: Plato and Sheldon’, \textit{Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science} 16, no. 1 (1982), esp. 5, gives a straightforward account of the psychological motivations common to these activities with useful comparisons to contemporary psychological concepts and research. The Athenian Stranger in Plato’s \textit{Laws} (VII.823b ff) gives detailed recommendations on how hunting practices should be regulated for the production of qualities needed in a good citizen, especially courage (824a), which closely tracks Xenophon’s description (discussed below) of Cyrus’ progression through forms of hunting towards those most similar to warfare against human beings. It’s likely that Plato is here writing with reference to the \textit{Cyropaedia}, as he had at III.694a ff.
competition, a feature he shares with the spirited type in Plato’s Republic (see, for example, 545a).

Indeed, Cyrus refrains from competing in challenges in which he knows himself superior. Instead, he would rather pursue challenges in which he knows himself inferior and, ‘when defeated, he would laugh at himself most vigorously’ (I.4.4). In this passage, Cyrus claims in advance of the action that he will best those whom he knows to be superior, presumably aiming to draw from himself a higher level of performance than he otherwise would had he not so publically aspired. But upon failing, he laughs at himself, perhaps cultivating thereby a reputation for modesty or self-effacement, as laughter in classical Greek culture is closely linked to notions of contempt. But since Cyrus is not generally concerned to appear modest or self-effacing, it is more probable that his laughter is meant by Xenophon to express Cyrus’ genuine love of honor, that is, of due honor. So Cyrus is not angered by defeat itself, particularly a defeat at the hands of an opponent he has already acknowledged to be superior. Thus, Cyrus ‘did not run from being defeated into the refuge of not doing that in which he had been defeated; rather, he immersed

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201 This reaction stands in contrast to that expected from a related but distinct (and on this account, less desirable) spirited character type who is predominantly a philonikos, a lover of victory, and as such would not take defeat so lightly. To make a broader point, recognizing subtleties like Xenophon’s description of Cyrus being defeated, pace Stadter, ‘Fictional narrative in the Cyropaideia’, 491: ‘[Cyrus] always triumphs’, allows us to formulate in a more precise way what kind of ‘ideal’ (Stadter’s term) Cyrus is meant to be: a philotimos specifically.
himself in trying to do better the next time’ (I.4.5). On other occasions, Cyrus will deliberately aim to make the activity more competitive by refusing the preferential treatment which his status as the son of the Median king might grant him.\footnote{For example, in I.4.14 he urges Astyages to allow his agemates to compete in the hunt on equal terms with himself, instead of reserving to Cyrus (as the king had originally intended) the right to hunt to his fill before others could join in. Cyrus gains pleasure \emph{in the competition}, whereas Astyages found pleasure in some feature of the hunt itself.}

Hunting, if competitive, is a source of pleasure to the spirited type, but it is also a means whereby the spirited type develops more complete spirited virtues, like the ability to act and lead with courage. While hunting, Cyrus exults in the approach of wild animals and calls on his hunting companions by name (I.4.15). By affording the latter personal attention, he attaches them to himself more effectively and stimulates them to greater exertion.\footnote{A technique he will follow at least through his conquest of Babylon, cf. V.3.46-50.} Cyrus gains a reputation for a kind of courageous confidence, even in an extreme form of a vice (\textit{thrasutêś}, I.4.7).\footnote{cf. Aristotle \textit{Rhetoric} 1390a31 and \textit{Nic. Eth.} 1108b31, in which \textit{thrasutêś} is, in its extremity, a vice.} The occasion is his killing a boar on a hunt of wild game which he had convinced his grandfather to allow in place of his previous practice of hunting of tamed animals. Cyrus exults in the difficulty of hunting wild animals, in comparison with tame, due to the tendency of boars to ‘come to close quarters’ in the way that ‘they say courageous men do’ (I.4.11). The point of hunting wild animals, then, is to develop one’s courage with an eye toward confrontations with courageous enemies.
It comes as no surprise, then, that there is a progression from hunting wild animals to the hunting of human beings, enemies in warfare, a step which not attributed to Cyrus, however, but to his enemy, the son of the king of the Assyrians. In a passage immediately following the description of Cyrus and his agemates hunting in view of Astyages, the Assyrian prince is said to be on a hunt of his own. He finds himself, by coincidence, in possession of a rather large army and, since he is poised on the borders of Media, it enters into his mind to plunder that territory, for he believed ‘this deed would appear more brilliant (lamproteron) than the hunt’ (I.4.17). Lampros, shining brilliance, is a frequent synonym for glory, and the point here is that winning on the battlefield is an activity even more glorious than success in hunting.

Cyrus in response to the Assyrian’s attack reveals his inclination to initiate action and his ability to motivate others through the allocation of praise and blame. He takes it upon himself to join Astyages’ expeditionary force to deal with the intruders into Media. In the ensuing battle, he immediately distinguishes himself by leading the attack, proceeding in front of all the men including Cyaxares, the son of Astyages. Cyrus is the first to strike down one of the Assyrians. In the battle, as he had done previously in the hunt (I.4.15), he called out to his companions by name. The purpose of this action becomes clear:

Thereby allowing for Cyrus to later (VII.5.77) characterize the battles that the Persians and their allies waged against the Assyrians to be in response to an attack and hence more just. For discussion see p. 224.
[Cyrus] in his battle joy called out to his uncle and continued the pursuit; and pressing on, he made the enemies’ rout complete. And Cyaxares followed, of course, perhaps also being ashamed before his father; and the others followed as well, being in such circumstances more than ordinarily enthusiastic (prothumoterōi) to pursue, even those who may not have been very stout against the opposition. (I.4.22)

Cyaxares is effectively shamed—at least potentially shamed, if he were to fail to follow up the attack as enthusiastically as Cyrus—into action. It will not be the last time he will stand thus in relation to Cyrus. So bold is Cyrus in pursuing the routed Assyrians that Astyages fears for his and Cyaxares’ safety such that he moves his whole army in to support them. The boldness of the advance guard forces the hand both of the king’s son and the king himself.

Cyrus’ natural tendency to competition is also revealed when he, at around age 16, returns and resumes his education in Persia for one year. We are told very little of this period. What we are told, however, is that Cyrus returns to the self-abnegations of the Persian pedagogical regime, in spite of his agemates’ accusations that he had learned in Media to ‘live for pleasure’ (hêdupathein). He pursued those self-abnegations with such vehemence that he showed himself superior to his agemates and they ‘once again submitted to him’ (I.5.1, my translation). During his time among the youths, he distinguished himself for ‘being steadfast (karterôn), in respecting his elders, and in obeying the rulers’ (I.5.1). Cyrus’ competitive striving can even take the form of striving to be outstanding in his self-abnegation.
Though we have focused here on *Cyropaedia* I, Cyrus is motivated by the desire for honor up to and including the height of his political achievement and his final days. After completing his education in Persia and time in Media and arriving at maturity, Cyrus sets out to construct an imperial rule, *archê*, far greater than that of Persia and Media combined, the subject of Books II-VIII. At the end of his life, he frankly defines happiness, *eudaimonia*, as constituted by the possession of *eukleia*, renown or glory (VIII.2.22-3). He will have achieved such *eukleia* through gaining and then ordering the vast empire, centered on Babylon, over which he ruled until his death.

§4.2.2 Natural moderation

In the *Cyropaedia*, spirited passions like the desire for honor are shown to motivate Cyrus above all other forms of desire, including those for wealth or erotic pleasure.\(^{206}\) Cyrus, like Plato’s Socrates, possesses a form of natural moderation because he has a

\(^{206}\) W. Robert Connor, ‘History without heroes: Theopompus’ treatment of Philip of Macedon’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 8, no. 2 (1967), 152, describing what he saw as Theopompus’ innovation in focusing on aspects of personality previous historians had neglected, expressed surprise that ‘even in Xenophon, relatively little is heard of the sexual conduct, the use or abuse of food and wine, the frugality or extravagance of the major figures’. In light of the present argument, however, this absence is not due to neglect on Xenophon’s part when describing Cyrus the Great but is a necessary consequence of Cyrus’ natural virtues and character which, as spirited, are not drawn to such concerns.
dominant desire: but whereas Socrates had a philosophic desire for learning, Cyrus has a spirited desire for honor. Certain kinds of moderation are demanded in order to structure the motivations of a person in such a way that those relevant to spirited and political action are given priority. Such a prioritization of motivations, through moderation, helps constitute the spirited character type. The types of motivations which must be de-prioritized or shunned, in order for the spirited type to be constituted, are chiefly those of an appetitive or erotic kind but can also include those of a more contemplative type (which only enter, briefly, at the close of the work, at VII.5.42). We see this at several points in the Cyropaedia. Indeed, such moderation for the purposes of forming a spirited character is a recurring feature of Xenophon’s corpus overall.

The education which Cyrus receives in Persia and Media is a study in contrasts. We better understand why Xenophon places Cyrus in Media when we consider the genre form of the Cyropaedia: an idealized biography in which Cyrus’ superlative nature and education is highlighted for admiration. He is placed, for a time, in Media in order to reveal aspects of his nature and education. We see in his response, in Media, to non-spirited characters, activities, and ways of life, his own spirited character set in the sharp relief of contrast. We have seen him shun non-spirited activities like sumptuous dining and less desirable spirited activities like hunting without competition. Later in the work, he also denies himself erotic activity.
On one occasion in particular, Xenophon strikingly depicts Cyrus eschewing erotic pleasure. In Book 5, Cyrus pointedly declines to look at the captured wife of the Susan king. He gives his reasons for so doing: he avoids thereby two distinct kinds of compulsion. First, the danger of love is a kind of slavery, ‘to serve the many whims of those [one] loves’, a slavery so complete that those bound by it do not even conceive of resistance. Second, such enslaved persons ‘even stand guard so that those they love do not run off’ (V.1.12). Both forms of compulsion—of one’s self to another’s whims and of one’s self to a kind of obsessive possessiveness of the very object which is dominating—are avoided through moderation. Moderation enables, thereby, a specific kind of freedom: the freedom to structure one’s life in accord with certain motivations without being distracted by or ‘enslaved’ to motivations alien to one’s character type.

There are limits to Cyrus’ moderation, and his single-minded focus on political honor, however. He’s open to what Socrates (both Xenophon’s and Plato’s) considered higher motivations and pursuits. Following his glorious conquest of Babylon in Book VII, after only the first day presiding in judgment over the Babylonian people, he declares such activity to be too cumbersome. He espouses, for the first time in the work, a concern with having ‘leisure’ (scholën) and time ‘to enjoy oneself with friends’ (meta tôn philôn euphranthênai), declaring that if these are not possible after the ‘great success’ (ta megala) he has achieved then, ‘I bid farewell to this happiness’ (VII.5.42). Here we see a different side to Cyrus. This side prioritizes leisure, friendship, and contemplation. Foucault saw
this passage as indicative of the Greek prioritization of leisure for the purposes of self-cultivation over quotidian concerns, but because such aims have not been mentioned previously in the work, this passage comes as a surprise and may seem at first glance as a kind of heavy-handed Socratism. It does fail to fit with the focus of the *Cyropaedia* on Cyrus’ *philotimia* and the active and public activities that motivation spurs him toward, but it doesn’t undermine the claim here advanced, which is that *philotimia* is Cyrus’ *primary*, predominant motivation.

§4.2.3 Natural virtues as vices

Xenophon depicts a Cyrus who possesses a set of natural virtues from youth, virtues which uniquely suit him (and those persons with a similar natural endowment) for a life of political action and leadership. The young Cyrus is prototypical of the potential political actor. However, natural virtues have two flaws: (1) they are *unstable*, and thus cannot be relied upon consistently, and (2) they are *prone to excess*, and thus can become vices. In cases in which other interpreters have taken Xenophon to be castigating

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207 Foucault, *The care of the self*, 43-4, took this passage as evidence of that ‘to care for oneself, *heautou epimeleisthai*, was a ‘widespread imperative’ among of the Greeks: ‘At the end of his conquests, Xenophon’s idealized Cyrus still does not consider his existence to be complete. It remains for him—and this he values above all else—to attend to himself’.

208 Lane, ‘Virtue as the love of knowledge’, 53n16 and 57, discusses the similar tendencies of natural virtues to become corrupted if unsupported by the proper education.
Cyrus, he is instead best understood to be revealing the tendencies endemic to natural virtue.

One of Cyrus’ natural spirited virtues leads him to approach others, even the Median king Astyages, rather than be cowed by hierarchical relations of power and prestige. But Xenophon gives us indications that this natural virtue is unstable and in need of evaluative support. When Cyrus is older, at about age 15, he finds himself unwilling to confront his grandfather in the frank terms he had done when young, ‘on equal terms’ (ek tou isou).209 His tendency to speak with all on equal terms may in part be due to his youth, a time before the full development of a sense of shame, or may be a vestige of his Persian education, a vestige which is lost over time as he has remained in Media.210 At this later time, he feels himself a ‘dolt and a simpleton’ upon approaching Astyages and unable to speak comfortably with him even in small matters.211 But when his agemates challenge him by suggesting they will have to ask someone else to procure the favor they need from the king, he is ‘stung at hearing this, and going away in silence,

209 Following the suggested translation of Ambler, The education of Cyrus, 289n40.
210 Similar language of approaching others ‘on equal terms’ will be utilized by his father Cambyses (I.6.28) while arguing that to fail to approach others on equal terms is a departure from the Persian emphasis on equality Cyrus had been taught as a youth. Approaching another in anything but equal terms is characteristic of the way one approaches an enemy, Cambyses argues.
211 The term ‘dolt’ (blax) describes, in Xenophon’s Memorabilia IV.2.40, those persons who, having been subjected to Socrates’ elenchus, which in Xenophon’s description renders them athumos, fail to return to Socrates for further instruction. In his De re equestri 9.12 it is the opposite of thumoeidei (again, a Platonic form which suggests intertextuality). A certain kind of spirited nature is the prerequisite for Socratic education in Xenophon’s work. For discussion of these points see §§7.2.1-2.
he ordered himself to go in [to speak with Astyages] with boldness (tolma; I.4.12, my translation’). While he has lost his youthful egalitarian manner, his political ambition—and the fear arising therefrom that his agemates among the nobility will seek their favors from others than himself—screws him to the task. He undertakes the same task—approaching the king—but on different grounds: he used to approach the king out of a childish sense of equality, while now he approaches the king out of philotimia and obligations to the patronage network he has constructed in service of that quality. His aspirational spirited passion, by which he esteemed himself the equal of others, is here revealed to be both natural and unstable.

In addition to being unstable, natural virtues can also, in excess, become vices. This can be seen in the description in Republic VI which, in effect, describes a person like Alcibiades.212 Cyrus’ initial forays in the hunt are so vehement as to elicit criticism from his uncle, the king’s son Cyaxares, for displaying thrasutês, over-boldness (I.4.9). In battle against the Assyrians, a victory is won, but in the process Cyrus reveals a form of initiative which further reveals how natural virtues can, in extremis, become vices. Astyages recognizes the victory was due to Cyrus, but ‘did not know what to say about him’ for he also recognizes that Cyrus is ‘mad with daring’ (mainomenon...tolmêi, I.4.24).213

212 Lane, ‘Virtue as the love of knowledge’, 55.
213 Pace Due, The Cyropaedia, 155, Astyages in this passage is concerned at seeing Cyrus ‘mad with daring’ in the battle, but he does not express concern specifically about Cyrus looking eagerly on the corpses (indeed, the passage does not indicate that he even knows of that activity).
That Cyrus’ bloodlust in war may be excessive could be attested by the description of his making rounds after the battle gazing eagerly at the dead (I.4.24). He had earlier declared that dead wild animals are more beautiful than living tame animals, and by the logic of this passage, dead humans are more beautiful than living wild animals.

Interestingly, Socrates’ theorization of the spirited passions as seated in a particular part of the soul, the *thumoeides*, is first introduced through his story of Leontius (*Rep.* IV.439e) and his striving against a desire to look upon corpses. 214

Despite Astyages’ concerns, the effect of Cyrus’ foolhardy victory is an increase in his reputation. Astyages, who had previously granted him honor, *timê*, now admires him even more greatly, being profoundly astonished (*huperexepeplêktein*) by him and his actions (I.4.25). However, Cyrus is recalled by his father Cambyses at age 16 because Cambyses becomes aware of his ‘performing a man’s deeds (*andros erga*)’. This is a negative judgment by Cambyses on Cyrus’ activity in Media: he is still a boy and fighting in battle is an inappropriate activity, according to the Persian system, for someone his age. As depicted by Xenophon, the Persian system and Cambyses have good reasons for such restrictions: spirited character types are so vehement in the pursuit of distinction that they endanger themselves and others.

Cyrus’ encounters, particularly in Media, reveal characteristics of the spirited type in ways which would not have been revealed in the well-constructed Persian regime.

214 See p. 48.
Fighting in battle is denied to young men of his age in Persia, so we would not have seen the bloodlust of the young spirited character type had Cyrus not been in Media. In Media, we witness both the tendencies of the spirited character type but also some of the excesses endemic to the spirited passions, excesses which become vices. Xenophon’s theory here is also similar to Plato’s in his description of spirited passion in Republic III: excesses of spirited passion are possible in environments which allow them to have free rein without some form of tempering.215

§4.3 CIVIC EDUCATION AND THE SPIRITED PASSIONS

In the Cyropaedia, the spirited character type of potential political leaders is marked, from an early age, by a distinct set of natural qualities which tend to express themselves in a handful of ways common to those depicted by Plato. Such types are also prone to characteristic kinds of excess, especially in youth, which can be tempered by a pedagogy attuned to the tendencies of the spirited character type in its transition towards the complete character of a political leader. Cyrus’ natural virtues begin the work, but the tempering and pedagogy which respond to those qualities are the focus of much of the Cyropaedia I.

215 See §§2.2.2-3.
The line immediately following Xenophon’s initial description of Cyrus’ nature, *phusis*, begins, ‘He was, moreover, educated in the laws of the Persians’ (I.2.2). Of course, the work itself is entitled ‘The Education of Cyrus’. However, Cyrus’ nature, particularly his nature as a *philotimos*, is the starting point for understanding the forms of *paideia* described in the work. The forms of *paideia* he undergoes, including the Persian pedagogical regimen for boys and youths, his experiences in Media, and the dialogues he engages in with his father Cambyses, all take as a starting point Cyrus’ nature as *philotimos*. In Media and in dialogue with Cambyses, Cyrus is described as being prone to excesses to which his nature as *philotimos* inclines him. Part of his education is to temper or channel his natural virtues, which can sometimes reveal themselves as vices.

Though Cyrus surpasses all his agemates quite evidently in spirited qualities (I.3.1), he is able to demonstrate that superiority because such qualities were cultivated in and demanded by the Persian pedagogical regimen. The Persian regimen is designed for facilitating the emergence of spirited character types by combining natural virtues with pedagogy. Other types of pleasures—including for excessive food and drink or for erotic pursuits—are explicitly banned or consciously underdeveloped.\footnote{Cambyses reveals (I.6.34), ‘we [Persians] do not converse about sexual matters with those who are too young, lest, when license is added to strong desires, the young might indulge this desire without measure’} Rather than take the paucity of detailed descriptions of Cyrus while in Persia as evidence of his radical...
subordination to the regime, it is more appropriate to say that Cyrus’ nature fits in the Persian pedagogical regimen and that when Cyrus is in Persia there are no instances of disharmony between his spirited character type and the values of the regime. Such divergences between Cyrus’ spirited nature and Median values—in which appetitive desires (for example, for food) are allowed and even encouraged—are, in contrast, to be expected and commented upon, as Xenophon does.

That said, Cyrus’ time in Media, and three year leave from the educational regime in Persia, should not be understood as permanently corrupting Cyrus’ character. In addition to evidence that Cyrus proved himself superior to his agemates in fulfilling what was demanded of the ‘boys’ age-class in the Persian pedagogical regimen both before and after the Median interlude, and that he stayed in Persia for the whole of the decade-long

\[\text{\footnotesize 217 As did Nadon, } \text{Xenophon's prince, 43: '[Persian] laws stress the submission of the citizen to the dictates of the common good and leave little if any room for the development of natural gifts or faculties. Accordingly, the individual 'Cyrus' goes unmentioned in the section of the } \text{Cyropaedia} \text{ devoted to Persian education.' Pace Nadon, it is not true that Cyrus is unmentioned in the Persian sections. Both before (I.3.1) and after (I.5.1) his time in Media he is explicitly described as surpassing his Persian agemates in a number of important ways. He distinguishes himself, while a boy in Persia, for his ability to quickly learn what is appropriate (deon), for being noble and courageous (all at I.3.1), for reveling in the regime's everyday gustatory privations, giving away excess food and drink during feast times, and showing himself superior to his agemates in unspecified 'other respects' (all at I.5.1); and, when a youth, in the qualities expected of youths. Quite the contrary to Nadon's claim, the Persian regime is specially designed to develop precisely the spirited natural virtues with which Cyrus has been uniquely gifted.}

\[\text{\footnotesize 218 Again, pace Nadon, } \text{Xenophon's prince, 42-54. Even less can I agree with Nadon's claim (ibid.) that Cyrus' time in Media is meant to illustrate the dangers of 'multiculturalism', a modern concept which ought not to be imposed on Xenophon's fourth century BC world.}\]
training of the age-class of ‘youths’, the stage of life most in need of educative guidance, had Cyrus’ father Cambyses or the Persians thought such a visit might be corrupting, they need not have let him go to Media. There is no evidence in the text that Astyages can compel obedience from Cambyses or the Persians.

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Xenophon’s Persia is a regime which is uniquely suited to fostering spirited character types and qualities; it roughly represents the Spartan regime as it existed in the late 5th century. Since the primary source we have for Sparta is Xenophon’s own Lakedaemonian Politeia, the two can be read as intertexts. There are differences, however, between the two pedagogical regimens described. In Persia the king’s heir participates in the state education, whereas in Sparta the kings’ heirs were exempt. And there’s no indication of a role for pederasty in Persian education, in contrast to Sparta and some other Greek cities. Rather, Cyrus’ biological father plays a most important educative role.


220 Jean Ducat, Spartan education: youth and society in the classical period, ed. Pamela-Jane Shaw and Anton Powell, trans. Emma Stafford (Swansea, 2006) is the best discussion of how to make sense of the sources we have for the Spartan pedagogical regimen and the significance of Xenophon’s Lak. Pol. on the topic.
The hallmark of the Persian pedagogical regimen is a process of competition among the *phulai*, tribes, which turns the competitive spirited passions for distinction into a social and cooperative form of competition. While some are out on the hunt,

The tribes that remain behind spend their time concerned with shooting their bows and throwing their spears, and with the other things that they learned when they were boys; and they compete continuously against each other in these things. There are also public contests (*dêmosioi...agônes*) in them, and prizes are offered. In whichever tribe there are the most members who are most skillful, most courageous, and most obedient, the citizens (*hoi politai*) praise and honor (*epainousin...kai timôsin*) not only their present ruler but also the one who educated them when they were boys. (I.2.12, adapted to render *andreia* as courage)

The civic, and even egalitarian, nature of these youthful Persian contests is highlighted by Xenophon in describing them as *dêmosioi*, ‘belonging to the people’ and in the lack of hierarchy among tribes save that created by success in the contests. He also emphasizes that the citizenry, *hoi politai*, distribute praise and honor not to the boys themselves but to their present leaders and their former educators. While the spirited passions are encouraged by the Persian pedagogical regimen, they are also carefully managed and socialized.

Xenophon’s description of the single-minded focus of the Persian polity on spirited passions, particularly the desire for honor, and the activities which stimulate them—to the exclusion of other forms of motivation and action—suggests more than a facile comparison with Sparta. A better point of commonality is Plato’s notion of timocracy in
As the primary source we have for Sparta is Xenophon’s own *Lak. Pol.*, it is likely that his Sparta and his Persia are both extensively shaped by Socratic concepts and more specifically, as argued here, Platonic conceptualizations of the spirited passions.

§4.4 Discourses on Political Motivation

§4.4.1 Cyrus’ innovation: political tradition and aspiration

While Cyrus is described in *Cyropaedia* I as a model participant in the Persian pedagogical regimen, at the dawn of his maturity—when he is roughly 27 years old and exiting the ranks of the youths—he is described as having a motivation towards forms of political honor which go beyond those desired by his fellow Persians. The occasion is his preparation to lead a group of handpicked men to aid Media in battle. He prepares them with a speech. In that speech he references their ancestors and the way they had preceded them in ‘practicing the very things that are held to be works of virtue’. But this is no reference to the ancestors as a way of inciting imitation of them as, for example, in Pericles’ Funeral Oration. Rather, he critiques them. The ancestors never put their training properly to use:

> What good they acquired by being such, however, either for the community of the Persians or for themselves, I cannot see. And yet I do not think that human beings practice any virtue in order that those who become good have no more than do the worthless. Rather, those who abstain from the

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221 Discussed in §2.3.2.
pleasures at hand do so not in order that they may never have enjoyment, but through their present continence they prepare themselves to have much more enjoyment in the future. (I.5.8-9)

Cyrus illustrates the criticism with a set of examples. Men do not learn to speak well and continue to practice speaking simply in order to never cease to speak well. They train with an end in mind: persuasion of other human beings. Similarly, those who practice the military arts do so not simply to never cease fighting but to gain some end: ‘much honor both for themselves and for their city’. Likewise would a man be faulted who planted seed and tended it only to neglect it at harvest time, letting it fall to the earth and rot, as would an athlete be faulted who trained rigorously but never competed. All who train in matters like speech or the military arts but enter old age, when powers of action fail, without putting them to use, are faulted (I.5.10).

The lesson for Cyrus’ listeners is that their arduous education ought to be for some end. The end he has in view turns out to be conflict with the enemy: ‘[S]ince we ourselves are conscious of having practiced the good and noble deeds (kalôn kagathôn ergôn) since our childhood, let us go against the enemy’ (I.5.11).222 They may be confident in doing well against the enemy because the enemy has not shared their education; next to them they are ‘amateurs (idiôtai) in the face of hard work (ponous)’, ‘amateurs in the face of sleeplessness’, and are ignorant of ‘how to make use of allies and enemies’, all skills the

222 Cf. Xenophon’s judgment, concluding his discussion of how the Spartan regime demanded that virtue be exercised in public, that Sparta ‘differs from all cities in terms of virtue (aretê), because she is the only one to make the pursuit of good conduct (kalokagathia) a public issue’ (Lac. Pol. 10.4, trans. Lipka).
Persians have learned. What is more, the Persians possess the most important quality of all:

[Y]ou have gathered into your souls the most noble and warlike (kalliston kai polemikōtaton) possession (ktēma—‘property’) of all, for you rejoice (chairete) in being praised (epainoumenoi) more than in other things, and lovers of praise (epainou erastas) must of necessity take on with pleasure every labor and every risk. (1.5.12)

It is revealing to compare this speech with the earlier passage in which Cyrus’ nature as philotimos is said to lead him to take on every labor and risk (I.2.1) and, as discussed in the next section, with Cyrus’ father Cambyses’ claim that honor (timē) makes labors merely ‘a bit lighter’ (I.6.25). There are two claims advanced in the Cyropaedia about honor as a motivation, and the more expansive is that espoused by Xenophon in his description of Cyrus at I.2.1 and by Cyrus himself in his speech at I.5.12. For Xenophon and his Cyrus, the desire for honor motivates one to take on labors and to face risk. For Cambyses, the labors are for the purpose of gaining the trust of subordinates and honor only makes those labors ‘a bit lighter’. It is Cambyses’ argument, and his contribution to Cyrus’ education, to which we now turn.
§4.4.2 Cyrus’ correction: the dialogue with Cambyses

In sharp contrast to Cyrus’ speech to his men, Cyrus’ father Cambyses argues that Cyrus overemphasizes the efficacy of exhortations to subordinates and peers to pursue honor. This is revealed in a long dialogue between the two men. Undertaken enroute to battle, on the road from Persia to the borders of Media, the dialogue repeatedly highlights Cyrus’ appeals to honor as a motivation to conduct and Cambyses’ measured and, in part, deflationary responses.

In the dialogue, five of the major interchanges hinge on the role of competition and honor in the theories about ruling being advanced. In the first three, Cyrus attempts to modify Cambyses’ lesson by articulating a theory of how the distribution of honor can achieve better results than the approach Cambyses recommends. In the fourth, Cambyses admits that honor can serve as an additional form of motivation for the ruler himself. Finally, in the fifth, Cambyses reveals how one’s honor can be manipulated in order to confound one’s enemies and enable success over them, a lesson which Cyrus greets with surprise since nothing in his previous education (he is now nearly 30) had mentioned or prepared him for this approach to honor. The core of Cambyses’ position in the dialogue is an emphasis on being over seeming. He teaches that self-improvement should take priority over an empty piety which seeks undeserved benefits from the gods (I.6.5-6). He argues that virtue should be prioritized over reputation, a direct contrast to Cyrus’ earlier
speech. Finally, subordinates should be motivated through substantive goods over mere
exhortation.

Cambyses begins the dialogue by defining what is ‘a sufficient (hikanon) and noble
(kalon) work for a man (andri)’. He defines such a man as being able to ‘take care’
(epimelèthênaï) of himself such that he becomes ‘truly noble and good’ (kalos kagathos
dokimós) while also providing so that those in his household, oikos, have provisions
sufficient to their needs (I.6.7). That which is sufficient, hikanon, twice appears in
Cambyses’ formulation of the good person and good ruler, contrasting sharply with Cyrus’
comparatively extreme aspirations.

Cambyses then holds out the prospect of a form of rule which is superior to his first
definition in two respects: (1) it succeeds in securing for one’s subordinates not just
sufficient goods but abundance, ekpleos; and (2) it aims that subordinates ‘will all be as
they must’. Such a ruler is worthy of wonder (thaumaston; I.6.7). The invocation of
wonder as the response to the better sort of ruler serves to link this teaching by
Cambyses, about a better form of rule, to the description of the adult Cyrus (I.1.6), who is
similarly described as worthy of wonder. Both usages indicate a superlative achievement
or, in Cyrus’ case, person is being observed and eliciting the extreme reaction of wonder.

In response, Cyrus displays a kind of philonikia which inhibits the dialectical
quality of the exchange: rather than responding fully to Cambyses’ instruction, he adopts
a truncated version of it, magnifies the importance of that version, and then sets it against
dramatically imagined argumentative enemies. Cyrus agrees that it is a ‘very great work’
(hupermegethes... ergon) ‘to rule nobly’ (kalós archein), notably dropping Cambyses’
reference to sufficiency, and rushes to mention how others hold mistaken views about
ruling. He thinks those who hold mistaken views about ruling are ‘antagonists’
(antagónistai) and that it would be ‘very shameful to be intimidated (hupoptêxai, crouch or
bow down) before such and not to be willing to go in contention (antagónioumenous)
against them’.223 Their error, according to Cyrus, is their belief that a ruler differentiates
himself from the ruled by living a more comfortable life than the ruled,224 whereas Cyrus
thinks the ruler should differ from the ruled, and thus gain legitimacy as a ruler, through
‘taking forethought (pronoein) and by being enthusiastic in his love of labor (philoponein,
I.6.8).’225

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223 This verb, which conveys a submissive crouching or bowing before another, occurs at
three points in the Cyropaedia: here; at I.3.8, when Cyrus inquires rashly—in the manner
of a person not yet accustomed to such submission—of his grandfather why he honors the
cupbearer the way he does; and at I.5.1, when Cyrus’ agemates in Persia are described
being intimidated before Cyrus’ ability to surpass them in the self-abnegations of the
Persian pedagogical regimen.

224 The luxury of the Medes, including Cyrus’ grandfather Astyages, is the primary
example of the mistaken view of the relationship between rulers and ruled critiqued by
Cyrus. Due, The Cyropaedia, 99, 103, 155, 292, discusses the frequent contrasts in the
Cyropaedia between Persia and Media in respect of luxury.

225 Cyrus has learned something. Years earlier, on the hunt in Media, it was ‘without
forethought’ that he acted like a ‘well-bred but inexperienced dog’. For the metaphoric
language of dogs (and horses) as representing naturally-occurring spirited passions,
shared by Plato and Xenophon, see §2.2.3.
In response, Cambyses seeks to check Cyrus’ hastiness and combativeness:

But, son, there are some respects in which one must contend (*agônisteon*) not against human beings but against matters themselves (*auta ta pragmata*), and it is not very easy to overcome them readily; for instance, you certainly know that if the army does not have the provisions it needs, your rule will dissolve at once. (I.6.9)

Cyrus, leading men on campaign, is not to wait until he is in need of provision in order to go seeking for it. His soldiers will serve better if their needs are provided for. Words of exhortation are of marginal use if this is not done, Cambyses warns (I.6.10). Sufficient provision is the necessary prerequisite to the rhetorical appeals favored by Cyrus, Cambyses argues, curbing Cyrus’ excess.

As we saw Cyrus initially agree to Cambyses’ discussion of good governance, but hastily change it into a different, more ambitious form and place that into competition with other theories of rule, Cyrus next agrees with his father’s teaching a second time but attempts to enhance it by relating it back to his spirited concern with honor. Cyrus responds to Cambyses’ discussion of *ta pragmata*, including basic provisions, by arguing that the troops will consider anything above what they have expected to receive as an honor (I.6.11). Honor is always comparative. Manipulating the comparator—in this case the provisions or benefits the soldiers expect to receive—is a part of constituting the honor itself. In effect, Cyrus turns provisions into honors rather than let them remain the prerequisite to an appeal to honor as Cambyses had argued. Cyrus goes on to argue that
motivating men to practice themselves in the labors necessary for war is a matter to be pursued through announcing ‘contests’ (agônas) and ‘prizes’ (athla, I.6.18).

Cyrus believes the dispensation of honors to be the key to inciting persons to obey as well:

When we were among the youths, the ruler took rigorous care of this very thing. And the majority of the laws also seem to me to teach especially these two things, to rule and to be ruled (archein te kai archesthai). And reflecting about these things, I think I see in them that that which especially incites to obedience (peitheisthai) is the praising (epainein) and honoring (timan) of the one who obeys and the dishonoring (atimazein) and punishment (kolazein) of the one who disobeys. (I.6.20)

Cyrus reveals yet again that he is particularly motivated by his nature as a philotimos. Everything appears to be a matter of honor in his eyes. This passage reveals what the Persian laws and pedagogical regimen sought to inculcate, namely, a certain kind of ruling and being ruled, but also ushers in a third divergence between Cambyses and Cyrus.

Cyrus’ belief that citizens are ruled in the Persian educational regimen through the distribution of honors and marks of dishonor prompts a corrective response from Cambyses, who argues that dispensing honor and dishonor is ‘the road to their obeying by compulsion (anankêi)’. This is a surprising formulation, as the dispensation of honor is not readily seen as a form of compelling those to whom honor is distributed. Cambyses argues there is ‘another road that is shorter’ to achieving something ‘far superior’ to obedience by compulsion, namely, the ability to make others ‘willing to obey’ (ekontas
peithesthai). This can be gained because, ‘human beings obey with great pleasure whomever they think is more prudent (phronimôteron) about their own advantage (sumpherontos) than they are themselves’, as the sick follow doctors or as sailors follow their pilots or as any traveler follows someone who knows the roads (1.6.21). He describes the technique of motivating others through dispensing honor as their being ‘seduced by gifts (dôrois)’. He continues that no one will be so seduced to obey if they know they will suffer some harm by obeying (I.6.21). The upshot of Cambyses’ argument is that the prospect of praise and honor is of little or no use in motivating subordinates if they do not think the enterprise they are being exhorted to undertake will be to their advantage, that is, unless they trust the leader to be able to bring the enterprise to success. As Cambyses had said shortly before: ‘One must, as much as possible, preserve trust (pistei) in one’s own encouragement (parakeleusin) in the face of the greatest risks (megistous kindunous; I.6.19)’. This capacity to elicit trust from subordinates is contrasted by Cambyses to Cyrus’ technique of inciting ‘enthusiasm’ (prothumia) in subordinates through filling them with ‘hopes’ (elpidas, I.6.19). Cambyses argues for the cultivation of trust, pistis, over the incitation of hope, elpis.

For the third time, Cyrus attempts to transform Cambyses’ teaching through an emphasis on honor, but this time he turns to Cambyses for help: he asks how one should gain a ‘reputation’, doxa, for such prudence, phronimos. Cambyses responds that there is no shorter way than to gain such prudence than to become prudent. Cambyses’ argument
hinges on the following: efforts to cultivate a reputation for something in which one is not actually prudent will quickly come to nothing ‘when put to the test (peiran)’. In this case, one will be both ‘openly refuted and exposed as a boaster (alazôn) as well’ (I.6.22). The qualities of a leader which Cambyses critiques, the ability to instill hope, elpis, and the possibility of being a boaster, alazôn, evoke Alcibiades. Xenophon’s Cambyses is attempting to prevent his son from becoming an ‘Alcibiades’ about century before the historical Alcibiades would be born. This is yet another indication that Xenophon’s audience for the Cyropaedia are his own contemporaries and the problems to which it offers response are those of the polis of the late 5th and early 4th centuries.

The difficulty of actually being better than one’s followers prompts a crisis for Cyrus, however. Cambyses and Cyrus had agreed that leaders motivate others to face ‘the greatest risks’ (I.6.19). Thus, following the principle which prioritizes being over seeming, they conclude that the leader must have ‘more endurance (karterôteron, strength, steadfastness) against everything than do his subjects’ (I.6.25), endurance being a virtue in response to conditions of risk. Such superhuman demands are possible for the leader to bear, however, for one reason, and it is only now that Cambyses himself discusses the concept of honor. Not the dispensing of honors to the subjects, as has been repeatedly

\[226\] This term was often used of Sophists; LSJ, s.v. It appears a number of times in Plato’s work.

\[227\] Gribble, Alcibiades and Athens.
done by Cyrus in deed and in speech, but the accumulation of honor by the ruler is what he chooses to highlight.

Cyrus argues that the great endurance which ruling demands is compensated for by honor, and begins his argument by noting that his son has grown disheartened by the preceding:

Take heart (tharrei), however, on this point, son: Be assured that the same labors (ponoi) do not affect similar bodies the same way, when one of them belongs to a man (andros) who is ruling (archontos), the other to a common [man] (idiótou). To the contrary, honor (timê) makes labors a bit lighter for the ruler, as does the very knowing that his acts do not go unnoticed (ou lanthanei). (I.6.25)

Cambyses introduces this role for honor by exhorting his son to ‘take heart’, tharrei.

Based on other texts in Xenophon’s corpus, and evidence within the Cyropaedia, this exhortation comes in response to the interlocutor being faced with a challenge or aporia and becoming, in some cases, extremely dispirited, athumos, in response. The same construction is present in this passage, where we see that Cyrus has evidently grown dispirited by Cambyses’ earlier critiques of his views on honor or that the problem under discussion appears insurmountable: there is no way for a leader to be so thoroughly better in all respects than his followers, or Cyrus doubts his own ability to be more prudent or possess more endurance than his followers. Thankfully for Cyrus, Cambyses here shifts to a new argumentative position and rather than trying to curb Cyrus’ appeals to honor

See §5.2, for cases of Cyrus’ followers needing to ‘take heart’ or have confidence in the face of challenges or dangers, and §§6.2-3, for cases of the tyrant Hiero and the gentleman Ischomachus’ wife becoming disheartened and their interlocutors’ encouragement.
makes such an appeal himself: the means of lessening the difficulty presented by leadership—that a leader needs to exercise a whole host of qualities in a superior way vis-à-vis followers—is the honor and attention gained by the leader, which ‘makes labors a bit lighter for the ruler’.

Finally, and fifth among the dialogic exchanges which hinge on honor, Cambyses’ instruction of Cyrus concludes with teachings regarding the use of wiles and deceits against enemies—something which had been kept from the youths for fear of their using such knowledge against fellow citizens—and the necessity of innovation in war. These forms of deceit include convincing the enemy to have a low estimation of oneself in order to make him ‘overbold’ (tharrêsai) so one can catch them ‘unguarded’ (aphulaktous, I.6.37).

The art of leadership is not just about pursuing honor or esteem for oneself. The art of leadership also consists in manipulating one’s reputation in the eyes of others, artfully manipulating it to various ends. The broader point Cambyses is making is that while one should not, in general, manipulate one’s honor in an attempt to inflate it beyond one’s deserts, it is acceptable to do so in order to confound one’s enemies.

Thus, Cambyses introduces five modifications to Cyrus’ understanding of the relation of honor and political leadership: (1) a ruler need not aim for a status worthy of ‘wonder’ in which he provides excess for, or dramatic improvement of, his followers, but can aim for a more modest type of leadership which pursues that which is sufficient, hikanon; (2) ruling is not just a matter of competing theories of rule about whether the
ruler appears more luxurious or, on Cyrus’ view, more enthusiastic to pursue labors, but involves managing *ta pragmata*, pragmatic concerns like the provisioning of followers; (3) ruling is not just a matter of distributing praise and blame but also of cultivating ‘willing obedience’ from followers by demonstrating prudence regarding their well-being and gaining thereby their trust; (4) taking the above three points as demonstrated, under the principle that a ruler does need to be better, in fact and not just in appearance or reputation, than his followers in matters like prudence and endurance, Cambyses argues the honor and attention gained by a ruler plays a role in lightening such burdens of leadership; (5) he introduces to Cyrus the notion that honor *can* be manipulated in the eyes of enemies, in contrast to fellow citizens, for the purposes of gaining advantage over them.

§4.5 Conclusion

Cyrus’ spirited nature and possession of a set of natural virtues arising from his spirited love of honor—as depicted in *Cyropaedia* I—have implications for understanding the rest of the work. The work as a whole reveals how his character, both natural and developed, is revealed in action. While my methodological approach is in accord with most classicists, my attention to intertextual relations with Plato—in particular, their accord over natural virtue and its need for education—does a better job of explaining Xenophon’s
manner of describing Cyrus in the *Cyropaedia*. The theory of natural virtue also advances
the study of Xenophon beyond heretofore intractable debates about whether Xenophon
intends to praise or blame Cyrus.\(^{229}\) Xenophon does intend to praise Cyrus, but precisely
those elements of Cyrus’ nature which are worthy of praise are themselves lacking in
some respects—being in need of education—and that lack occasions a limited form of
blame from Xenophon.

Xenophon’s dialogue with Plato is over the terrain of psychology, and the
psychology of motivation and recognition has been the focus of this chapter. Indeed, many
of Xenophon’s contributions to Greek thought are in the realm of psychology.\(^{230}\) Xenophon
may well be a ‘latter-day champion of the old virtues’,\(^{231}\) but he is not a simple-minded or
unsophisticated champion, nor one unaware of his opponents.

_Cyropaedia_ I reveals the natural virtues of the exemplary potential political agent.
Cyrus, as portrayed by Xenophon, can thus be understood as a _constructed_ prototype of the
potential political agent.\(^{232}\) Greeks who had read the _Cyropaedia_, on being asked what

\(^{229}\) Thereby also moving the *Cyropaedia* outside a category of epideictic literature which is
solely concerned to allocate praise or blame.

\(^{230}\) W. R. Connor, ‘Historical writing in the fourth century B.C. and in the Hellenistic
period’, ed. P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox (Cambridge, 1985), 459, observes that
some of the positive features of the *Hellenica* are its ‘flashes of psychological perception’
and describes the _Hiero_ as a consideration of ‘the moral and psychological implications of
tyranny’ (460).

\(^{231}\) Whitehead, ‘ _Philotimia_’, 57.

\(^{232}\) On the role of the prototype in concept formation and definition, see §1.2 end.
constituted a promising potential political agent, could advert to the prototypical Cyrus. A potentially great ruler will have something like this psychological constitution.

The theories of natural virtue developed by Xenophon and Plato, while central to the thought of each, are embedded within their larger theories of education. For both Xenophon and Plato, understanding a person’s natural virtues reveals what kind of education he needs in order to turn those virtues into stable, reliable forms and in which the endemic excesses of natural virtues are tempered or balanced. Cyrus’ dialogue with Cambyses is central to illustrating this concept, as Cyrus’ spirited excesses—particularly regarding the efficacy of utilizing the desire for honor to motivate subordinates—are tempered through Cambyses’ pedagogical influence. Similarly, in Plato, the discussion of natural virtue of potential philosophers is embedded, in the central books of the Republic, within an extended discussion of the education such a nature needs. A certain character type, or set of natural virtues, is the necessary prerequisite for the pedagogical regimen being advanced, but that character type in itself is not sufficient to create a complete philosopher, any more than the character type Cyrus evinces in Cyropaedia I is sufficient to create a complete statesman. For that last, education is needed. Cyrus receives such an education in the Persian regime, in dialogue with his father Cambyses, and, as discussed in the next chapter, through practical political experience.
CHAPTER 5 – POLITICAL MOTIVATION AND REBELLION IN XENOPHON’S  
CYROPAEDIA BOOKS II-VIII

§ 5.1 INTRODUCTION

§ 5.1.1 The spirited passions in action

As in Cyropaedia I, Xenophon deploys Platonic concepts of the spirited passions in order to theorize his central preoccupations with political leadership, constitutionalism, and citizen motivation. Both leaders and constitutional structures can motivate citizens to act by creating frameworks in which superlative action can be recognized and honor dispensed in recognition of the action. If such frameworks are in place, and viewed as stable, citizens will be motivated to act by the prospective enjoyment of honor. While such frameworks are the condition for philotimia functioning to motivate citizens, in Xenophon’s theory not all citizens are motivated by the desire for honor in the same way or to the same degree: some will be particularly motivated by philotimia, and others hardly or not at all. Philotimia functions as a form of citizen motivation through the interaction of political structures and natural endowments.

In contrast to Plato’s Socrates and others like him who possess the natural virtue which leads them a life of philosophic activity, Xenophon’s Cyrus possesses a kind of
natural virtue which inclines him to the life of political activity. Natural virtue arises from such a person’s desire for certain goods—learning, in the case of Socrates, or political honor, in the case of Cyrus—which structures the person’s psychic constitution so he becomes a practitioner of the way of life which pursues that good. However, due to the instability of natural virtue, certain kinds of evaluative content are needed to supplement natural virtue in the philosophic or political actor, respectively. In Cyrus’ case, what he learns from living in and participating in the Persian political and educational regime, and what he learns personally from his father the Persian king Cambyses, renders his natural virtue stable.233

Whereas Cyropaedia Book I presents a model of the potential political agent, the rest of the Cyropaedia presents a model of a political agent who has been shaped by a combination of natural virtue and the education which renders it stable. The model potential political agent is possessed of the natural virtues which uniquely suit him, and others with similar natures, for political agency, provided the deficiencies endemic to natural virtue are rectified through the proper education. Xenophon’s Cyrus in Books II-VIII has overcome, through a proper education, the excesses and instabilities of his natural political virtue and now becomes a model political agent.

233 The upshot of my argument is that Cyrus has received precisely the education he needs to become a model political agent, a conclusion sharply opposed to Nadon, Xenophon’s prince, 179, who thinks Cyrus’s education is ‘essentially defective’.
The readers of the *Cyropaedia* witness Xenophon’s model political agent in diachronic action.\textsuperscript{234} Cyrus and his way of life are clearly intended to be models for admiration and emulation. After a successful skirmish against the Assyrians, Gadatas comes to him and says, ‘I, by the gods, was coming in order to contemplate you again, how you appear in sight, you who have such a soul’ (V.4.11). Cyrus both initiates activity which reshapes his political environment and responds to the contingencies of political action in time. Cyrus’ initiatory activities occur in both arenas in which his leadership is at work: the military realm and the political. In the political realm, he initiates a reform in the constitutional system of the Persians he commands, moving from an oligarchic model in which political honor is distributed only to a few elite members to a more egalitarian model that opens up the competition for such honors to a wider membership.\textsuperscript{235} Cyrus’ initiatives include new ways to motivate the citizens he leads through

\textsuperscript{234} On innovative narrative features seen in the *Cyropaedia*, which include the centrality of Cyrus and his depiction at crucial moments in time, see N. J. Lowe, *The classical plot and the invention of Western narrative* (Cambridge, 2000), who declares the *Cyropaedia* to be a ‘novelistic mutant’ of ‘major influence in the ages, ancient and modern, when prose fiction was being invented’ (222).

\textsuperscript{235} In Plato’s *Laws* (693d), the Athenian Stranger stipulates there are two ‘mother-forms of constitution (*politeia*)’, monarchy and democracy, from which others are derived and says the Persian polity is a ‘consummate case (*genos akron*)’ of the former. I agree with Danzig, ‘Did Plato read Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*?’, that a component (694a-b) of the Athenian’s subsequent discussion of Persia closely tracks the political practices of Cyrus’ Persian band in the *Cyropaedia*, but just as the Athenian’s description of Persia then diverges (694c ff) from Xenophon’s, so does this prior reference to Persia as a consummate monarchy have an ambiguous reference. As the Persia of Cyrus’ youth is more like a version of Sparta, and even the ‘timocracy’ of Plato’s typology in *Republic* VIII, than a pure form of monarchy, if Plato is here meaning to refer to the Persia of the *Cyropaedia* then it is to the Persian empire Cyrus gains in the course of the work.
restructuring how honor is dispensed, altering the political environment of the citizens and eliciting from them new types of psychological response, specifically new forms of spirited passion.

Among the most significant contingencies faced by Cyrus are the reactive responses of other political actors who resist his agency. It is to be expected that those actors whose political, economic and military power is threatened by his agency will respond in some way, as indeed do the numerous foreign leaders Cyrus confronts as the army he leads expands and is successful. Some actors have a reactive response prospectively, before an initiative has been put into effect, out of an unsubstantiated belief that they will be threatened by, or will not benefit from, Cyrus’ initiative. In the example above—of the young prince initiating a constitutional change from a narrowly aristocratic to a more egalitarian model of distributing political honor—Cyrus anticipates that members both of the elites and the lower orders may react negatively. The announcement of and debate about the initiative is structured to show how those reactive tendencies are overcome. Others have a reactive tendency after Cyrus’ initiative has had an effect, even a supposedly positive one. For example, Cyrus’ uncle Cyaxares, the beneficiary of Cyrus’ military successes, responds reactively to Cyrus’ agency. His reaction is explained by the diminution of his political honor those very successes, because they are due to Cyrus, bring about. Cyrus’ successes, through nominally done for Cyaxares’ benefit, reduce Cyaxares’ legitimacy.
While Cyrus’ education occurs almost entirely in *Cyropaedia* I, with Books II-VIII presenting a model political leader whose education is wholly complete, at one crucial point in Cyrus’ political activity his education is supplemented. One of the primary features of Xenophon’s model political agent is seen in Cyrus’ ability to enable the agency of other actors by stimulating their aspirational spirited passions (§5.2 below). Conversely, in the course of his political activity in Books II-VIII, the Armenian Tigranes teaches Cyrus how to *depress* the spirited passions of those whom Cyrus governs precisely in order to prevent any rebellious response from them to his governance (§5.3). The techniques of depressing rebellious spirited passions among subordinates are much in evidence in the closing two books of the *Cyropaedia*, in which Cyrus institutes a new political regime over his conquered territories, centered in Babylon (§5.4). The focus of this chapter is on Xenophon’s conceptualization of both the aspirational and depressive aspects, in terms of the spirited passions, of Cyrus’ political activity.

§5.1.2 *Rebellion as orienting problem of Xenophon’s political thought*

It is startling that of the major scholarly treatments of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, few recognize the orienting problematic which begins the work: rebellion and revolution.\(^{236}\)

\(^{236}\) Gray, *Xenophon’s mirror of princes*, completely ignores the first half of I.1.1 (given in the next block quotation). Those scholars who do comment on it are nearly uniformly
While rebellion in the Greek world primarily meant a change in enfranchisement and thereby the composition of the citizen body, 237 Xenophon’s focus is on resistance to governance rather than a desire to be enfranchised. From the first lines of the work, the *Cyropaedia* is framed as a response to the problem that political governance occasions rebellion by the governed, regardless of the constitutional type—democracy, oligarchy, or tyranny—in place:

This question once occurred to us: How many democracies have been brought down (*kateluthēsan*) by those who wished the governing (*politeuesthai*) to be done in some way other than under a democracy; how many monarchies and how many oligarchies have been overthrown (*anêirêntai*) by the people; and how many who have tried to establish tyrannies have, some of them, been at once brought down (*kateluthēsan*) completely, while others, if they have continued ruling for any time at all, are admired (*thaumazontai*) as wise and fortunate men (*andres*). (I.1.1)

Changes in the forms of government are brought about through resistance to political governance from the governed themselves. For Xenophon, political instability is primarily vague: Nadon, *Xenophon’s prince*, 26, observes ‘Xenophon begins the *Cyropaedia* with a general reflection on political instability and its causes’; Gera, *Xenophon’s Cyropaedia*, 1, notes that the work begins with ‘a discussion of the instability of political regimes’; Due, *The Cyropaedia*, 236, concludes its ‘subject matter is ruling and the problem the difficult of it’. Tatum, *Xenophon’s imperial fiction*, 45, comes closest to my view, stating that in observing and participating in human affairs ‘Xenophon discovered that men will oppose no one so quickly as the person they think has designs on ruling them’ and concluding ‘reflection on this enduring truth of political life is the point of departure for the narrator of the *Cyropaedia*’. Later, Tatum says the ‘problem of resistance to authority’ and ‘the intractability of human nature’ are central to the work’s prologue (60), but puzzlingly then adverts to less precise formulations about it being a ‘complaint about the instability of human nature’ (63) or ‘unstable human beings’ (64).

237 For a recent reiteration of this point, also useful for its overview of the relevant literature, see Moshe Berent, ‘*Stasis*, or the Greek invention of politics’, *History of Political Thought* 19, no. 3 (1998).
the result of domestic disturbance, rebellion. This is a departure from prior Greek constitutional thought which typically understood regimes to collapse due to problems internal to the ruling elites, for example, internecine division or lawlessness. Xenophon adopts a different perspective: that of the ruled.

Xenophon is concerned with analyzing political rebellion and theorizing potential responses to rebellion. Xenophon's approach to the problem of rebellion is distinctive, and others could be envisaged: worth noting is his choice not to distinguish among constitutional forms in respect of their tendency to elicit rebellious responses. In light of the ‘beneficent tyranny’ argued for by the character Simonides in Xenophon’s Hiero, and in light of the final book of the Cyropaedia, in which Cyrus establishes a kind of imperial rule in Babylon which lasts for the duration of his life (if no longer), it is clear that Xenophon does not consider tyrannies and empires hopelessly prone to rebellion. The latter does demand particular theoretic attention when the problem of how to prevent rebellion is considered, however. While Xenophon begins with the premise that rebellion occurs in all three constitutional types, the Cyropaedia is focused on the prevention of

238 In Herodotus (III.80-2), Persian nobles debate on the three constitutional forms of democracy, oligarchy and monarchy and each are envisioned to collapse under elite excesses. So, too, in Plato's Republic, the degeneration of regimes in Book VIII is described in terms of changes internal to each regime's ruling elite.

239 Tatum, Xenophon's imperial fiction, 59, rightly argues that the 'absence of any preference for one kind of government over another is a striking contrast to discussions of constitutions in Plato and Aristotle' but fails to observe that Xenophon chooses to devote far more theoretic attention, in both the Cyropaedia and his corpus overall, to the problem of rebellion to tyrannical and oligarchic forms of rule.
rebellion to the imperial governance wielded by Cyrus over those whom he conquers in the course of the *Cyropaedia* and ultimately rules from Babylon.

As the fact that rebellion occurs in all regimes indicates, rebellion is not caused by a lack of the power to dominate: even within the governance relations of the household, in which those who govern possess the power of masters (*despotas*), rebellion still occurs (I.1.1). Xenophon sets out to answer the question of how such rebellions can be avoided and considers the traditional Greek image of one who governs as being a kind of shepherd over a herd.\(^{240}\) He argues, however, that in contrast to animals groups of human beings unite precisely against those who govern them rather than against foreign enemies. Xenophon here at the start of the *Cyropaedia* unveils a methodological precept which is a hallmark of his political thought: he moves from considering the problem of political rule to the problem of household rule. This is an approach which he also takes in his *Oeconomicus*.\(^{241}\) He argues there are features common to both types of rule.

Thus, in the *Cyropaedia*, one common feature of ruling polities and ruling households is that both involve ruling human beings. This type of rule—rule of human beings, whether political or domestic—is contrasted to rule over non-human animals.

In addition to this we reflected also that cattlemen and horsemen are the rulers of cattle and horses, and that all those called keepers (*nomeis*) of *nomoi*.

\(^{240}\) The image of the shepherd/sheep is invoked and critically scrutinized in Plato’s *Statesman* (261d ff); see M. S. Lane, *Method and politics in Plato’s Statesman* (Cambridge, 1998), 40-6, 86.

\(^{241}\) See §6.3.
animals could plausibly be believed to be the rulers (*archousi*) of the animals in their charge. We thought we saw all these herds more willing to obey (*peithesthai*) their keepers than are human beings their rulers; for the herds go wherever their keepers direct them, they feed on whatever land their keepers drive them to, and they abstain from whatever land their keepers turn them from. And as for such profits (*karpois*) as arise from them, these they allow their keepers to use in whatever way they themselves wish. Nor have we perceived a herd uniting (*sustasan*) against its keeper, either so as not to obey or so as not to allow him to use the profits, but herds are more harsh toward all others (*allophulois*—of another tribe, foreign) than they are toward those who both rule over and benefit (*ôpheloumenois*) from them; on the other hand, human beings unite (*sunistantai*) against none more than against those whom they perceive (*aisthôntai*) attempting to rule them. (I.1.2)

The problem of rule over human beings is revealed through a comparison with the unproblematic rule over beasts. The primary point of difference is that beasts do not rebel against their ‘keeper’ nor quibble with how he uses the fruits of their labor. Beasts are characterized by obedience to their human rulers. Humans are characterized by their tendency to rebel against other human beings who govern them.242

242 The image of the ruler as a shepherd, here articulated, is critiqued by Plato in the *Laws* III.694e, an example of the two-way theoretical conversation between Plato and Xenophon. Noting the rarity in the Platonic corpus of disagreements with contemporary authors, G. J. D. Aalders, ‘Date and intention of Xenophon’s *Hiero*,’ *Mnemosyne* 6 (1953), 210, concluded that ‘Xenophon’s conception of Cyrus as the ideal of the shepherd-king must have been topical and popular’ when Plato composed the third book of the *Laws*. In the modern period, subjugated peoples, particularly in the colonial context will be described in bestial terms, but with more negative connotations; see Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, 34: the ‘terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms’, for example, the colonialist ‘speaks of the yellow man’s reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations’.
§5.2 INITIATIVE, RECOGNITION, AND CITIZEN MOTIVATION

§5.2.1 Constitutional reform and egalitarianism

In *Cyropaedia* II, Xenophon advances a critique of democratic notions of leadership which he thinks inhibit rather than elicit action by citizens. He describes them as having a depressive effect, *athumia*, on the spirited passions of citizens. While on campaign, Cyrus effects a major change to the Persian social and political constitution by allowing the Persian commoners to be enfranchised to a higher social status in return for their service on the battlefield. This can be seen as Xenophon’s solution to the oligarchic *aporia* of how to respond to an ascendant democratic ideology. There is a better, aristocratic or meritocratic way to inspire and unite the people: by appealing to the ambition of the most energetic and capable of the commoners, and allowing them to be enfranchised into a meritocratic and competitive system of political action, remarkable collective actions could be achieved. This proposal threatens to radically change the hierarchy of Cyrus’ Persian followers, so it is put to debate. Both sides, the commoners and the aristocratic *homotimois*, believe they have reasons to oppose the new merit-based system. The commoners worry that their lack of training, in comparison with the life-long regimen undertaken by of the *homotimois*, will put them at a disadvantage in the competition. The *homotimois* have the characteristic concerns of their class about giving the commoners the

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244 Gray, *Xenophon’s mirror of princes*, passim, emphasizes the consultative qualities of Xenophon’s political leadership.
opportunity to rise. Both groups have to be persuaded by representatives of their class that the merit-based system will in fact be advantageous to them.

A merit-based system is Xenophon’s unique response, among oligarchic political theorists, to the centerpiece of Athenian democratic ideology: the distribution of political offices by lot. He gained from Plato the tools with which more precisely to conceptualize the flaws of the lot-based system in terms of the spirited passions. According to Xenophon, the lot-based system is either dispiriting to those who would act or insufficiently motivating those who need incitement to action. The importance, for Cyrus, of shifting to the merit-based system leading to enfranchisement is that it serves to ‘sharpen’ (thegein) the spirit, phronêma, of his followers (II.1.13). The spirited passions of Cyrus’ followers are stimulated by constructing systems of recognition and promotion for good actions, that is, those beneficial to the community (to koinon, II.2.20). Indeed, one of the Persian homotimoi argues that the failure to institute a merit-based system will result in the good and capable persons becoming dispirited, athumos (II.3.6).

The merit-based system is ultimately assented to by both the aristocratic homotimoi and the commoner démota. Both classes, if they agree to such a merit-recognizing system of contests, are designated genuine men, andres, and are said to be engaged in a popular or civic struggle (démotikêi agôniai, II.3.15). As elsewhere in Xenophon’s work, the masculinist designation of a person as an andres is justified by that
person’s participation in a particular kind of egalitarian, civic, merit-recognizing system of competition in which honor is sought.245

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The Persian nobility, the peers, homotimoi—literally those ‘equal in honor’—are a vital component of the Persian constitution. They undertake the extensive system of education (I.2.2-14) in the ‘free square’ (eleuthera agora), a space absolutely distinct from the marketplace. The marketplace is marred by the cacophony of the sellers, a confusion and disorder (turbē) which might mingle with and mar the eukosmia, the well-ordered life, of the cultured (I.2.3).246 In light of their extensive education in activities which stimulate spirited passions, and in light of the care with which they are preserved from base commercial activity, Cyrus’ egalitarian constitutional reforms are a sharp break with Persian practice.

The constitutional reforms which allow for a more egalitarian competition for political honors are needed in order to motivate the common Persian citizens. Cyrus is concerned because most of the Persian troops of the lower orders are equipped to fight at a distance, whereas the homotimoi are trained to fight at close quarters. The homotimoi will lead the lower orders, and Cyrus articulates in what respect the lower orders need to

245 As is seen in the Oeconomicus, the class of persons motivated by the desire for honor includes some women and servants, so the masculinist sense of andres has to be understood in that light; for discussion see §§6.3-4.

246 The only other occurrence of eukosmia is at VIII.1.33, in reference to Cyrus’ troops outside his court in Babylon.
be improved. Neither their physical capacity nor their armament is lacking, however, their psychological state needs to be changed: it is the work of the *homotimoi* to ‘whet the souls’ (*psuchas thêgein*, II.1.11) of the lower orders. This phrase proves to mean that the common citizens will be motivated to zealously pursue the difficult and dangerous enterprises ahead through a competitive desire for the political honors which will come in recognition of such actions. It is further posited by Cyrus that one of the essential tasks of a ruler (*archôn*) is to make not only himself good in that respect—to whet his own soul for competitive striving in difficult and dangerous enterprises—but to ‘take care’ (*epimeleisthai*, II.1.11) that the psychological constitutions of those he leads are similarly motivated.

An unnamed peer advises Cyrus that the common citizens can be motivated to act by the prospect that political honors will be dispensed to them for their actions, and further argues that the honor of elevating citizens to the level of peer will be even greater—and hence a stronger motivation—if the ennoblement comes from Cyrus personally. Indeed, he argues that a leader in the exalted position of Cyrus can give benefits of less value, in comparison with those given by leaders in a less lofty position, which the beneficiary will consider to be an honor that is both greater and, in the case of an elevation to the status of the *homotimoi*, more securely permanent.\(^\text{247}\) This strategy serves the purpose, expressed in slightly different terms than Cyrus had, of serving to

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\(^{247}\) The idea that honors conferred by a leader are more precious is an old one, seen already in Pindar’s First Pythian. It is used again by Xenophon in his *Hiero*, see p. 247.
'whet the men’s spirit (thēgein...to phronēma, II.1.13). A different translator of this and the passage above (II.1.11) renders both actions as serving to ‘steel the spirit’ of the common citizens, which correctly captures that the two expressions express the same meaning: it is not the souls generally which are being whetted or steeled but the spirited passions in particular. Indeed, the verb thegein wouldn’t make sense if applied to other forms of motivation, either appetitive or intellective, which lack the martial valences the verb connotes (i.e. the focal usage of the verb is the sharpening of a blade).

Through a process of ennoblement, Cyrus cements the loyalty of his troops, men who had been excluded from the education of the homotimoi because their families could not afford to send them to the common schools. During the time remaining before the Medians attacked, ‘Cyrus tried to exercise and bring strength to the bodies of his troops, to teach tactics, and to whet their souls for warlike [deeds]’ (II.1.20). In arranging his army he utilizes this form of selective enfranchisement, a necessary prerequisite to get the men to fight at close quarters, ‘for those who know that they are maintained for nothing other than to fight on behalf of those who maintain them, this is difficult to agree too’ (II.1.21).

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248 This language of ‘whetting’ or sharpening the spirit or soul—and the responsibility of a leader or executive for so doing—will long be deployed in Western political thought, appearing even in contemporary works like Neustadt, *Presidential power: the politics of leadership*, 2, who argues successful presidential leadership involves ‘the sharpening of spirit and of values and of purposes’.


250 Here we find a critique of mercenaries and an argument for the role of civic enfranchisement in constituting effective military forces, a theme which will have a long history in the civic humanist tradition and which will be forcefully revived by Machiavelli.
The shift toward competition and an unequal distribution of rewards for common action has to be secured through attaching shame and implications of unmanliness to those who refuse to advocate the shift. Cyrus suggests they put to discussion by the army what will be done with spoils in the event of a victory, whether to divide them equally among the army or differentially, after ‘examining the deeds of each person, to assign honors to each in light of them’ (II.2.18). Chrysantas, who had exposed himself as a meritocrat shortly before—‘[I] believe that there is nothing more unequal among human beings than thinking the bad and the good to deserve equal things’ (II.2.18)—questions whether Cyrus really believes the people would vote for the unequal distribution. Cyrus argues they will do so because it will be a matter of shame to deny that those who particularly benefit the community (to koinon) deserve a greater share (II.2.20). Cyrus is said to wish to have rewards distributed in such a manner because it will also encourage the homotimoi. And all agree that they will speak in favor of that form of distribution and that ‘whoever thought he was a man (anêr) ought to advocate it’ (II.2.21).

Good leadership and constitutional structures affect the spirited components of a person’s psychological constitutions, rendering them contrastingly good-spirited or a-spirited. When the kakoi are dishonored (atimasthentas), the agathoi will cleave to virtue and Rousseau. Pocock, *Machiavellian moment*; R. Claire Snyder, *Citizen-soldiers and manly warriors: military service and gender in the civic republican tradition* (Lanham, Md., 1999), ch. 2 on Machiavelli, ch. 3 on Rousseau. Cf. Sarah V. Percy, *Mercenaries: the history of a norm in international relations* (Oxford, 2007), 77-8 on Machiavelli, 128-9 on Rousseau.
with ‘much greater heart’ (polu euthumoteron, II.2.27). When the army meets, Cyrus argues that ‘virtue will be more practiced among us if he who is willing both to labor and risk the most will also obtain the most honor’ (II.3.4). His argument receives a boost from Chrysantas, a peer—but pointedly described as not distinguished in height or strength—who also advances an argument for shares distributed on merit. Though he personally will likely be ranked 1,000th or even 10,000th, merit must still prevail. Chrysantas argues that he, and by implications others like him who will not be honored in the new system, will nevertheless benefit ‘if those who are powerful take hold of affairs with vigor’, warning against the dangers which come when ‘the good and powerful’ become ‘dispirited’ (athumôs; II.3.6). The implication of Chyrsantas’ argument is that a failure to recognize superlative action with special rewards or benefits will make the good dispirited and harm thereby the common good. This is the first occurrence of athumos and its cognates in the work.251

Pheraulas, a Persian commoner (dêmotês)252 but one who ‘was not without natural gifts in body, and in soul was not like a man lowborn (agennei)’ (II.3.7) speaks up and supports the principle as well. He establishes that they compete on a level playing field, ‘an equal footing (ek tou isou) in the contest of virtue (agônizesthai peri aretês)” (II.3.8).253

251 It will reappear at III.1.24; IV.2.3; V.5.41.
252 Gera, Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, 176, states démotai are Persians who cannot afford to undertake the lifelong state educational curriculum and work for a living instead.
253 See the use of this phrase at p. 142, in which Cyrus, before being corrupted by the Median manner of submitting fearfully to the king Astyages, approaches him boldly as ‘on
At II.3.11, he makes two more claims. First, he claims that the type of battle they will be engaged in favors those who have ‘enthusiasm’ (*prothumias*) more than those with ‘art’ (*technês*). *Prothumia* in turn is stimulated by the prospect of honors, so they should not fear failure in the competition because their desire for honor is as great as that of the peers. Furthermore, he contrasts what they are risking:

> We enter upon the risk without staking equal things, for they [are staking] a life with honor (*entimon*), which is alone the most pleasant (*monos hêdistos*), while we [are staking] a laborious life and one without honor (*atimon*), which I think is most difficult. (II.3.11)254

Pheraulas is a member of the commoners (*dêmotai*) and his claim illustrates the greater desire for honor felt by those who do not presently possess it.255

> Pheraulas is confident that Cyrus will judge fairly in accordance with the virtue of those whom he judges (II.3.12). Furthermore, he argues that for all the confidence of the *homotimoi* in their rigorous education, the life of the lower classes has been far more rigorous indeed and made them stronger. He concludes by addressing Cyrus and declares his intention to enter the contest for honor, believing he deserves ‘to be honored in accord with my worth, no matter how I may be’ and recommends to his fellow commoners that

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254 This is the first appearance of the term *entimos*. It will be prominent in Book VIII, at VIII.1.6, 8; VIII.2.4; VIII.3.23; VIII.5.23. The final occurrences of *homophiloi* under his rule are at VII.5.71, 85. The final occurrence in the work is at VIII.5.21, when he visits Persia.

255 This is a feature of the desire for honor highlighted by Brennan and Pettit, *Economy of esteem*, 156.
they do the same. He concludes by stating that the ‘educated’ (i.e. the homotimoî) are now caught in a ‘popular struggle’ (dêmotikêi agôniai; II.3.15).

In the debate over shifting to a more egalitarian honors system, Xenophon illustrates how reactive responses to political initiatives can be overcome. He structures the debate symmetrically to show the concerns of each side can be assuaged. A less than remarkable peer argues that a merit-based system is better because, while he personally won’t be likely to be distinguished, nevertheless the incitement will lead those better than him to excel, which will benefit the whole which includes him. The commoner, in contrast, is marked as gifted, just the sort of potential ‘new man’ who might personally benefit from such a system. By having the first argument come from the mouth of a peer, the common belief that a merit system would benefit homotimoî is weakened. By having the second argument come from the mouth of a fellow commoner, the commoners have their own appetites for distinction whetted. In the end, it is decided to distribute the spoils according to merit.

§5.2.2 Aspirational spirited passions and leadership

While Xenophon chooses to employ the periphrastic ‘whetting the soul (psuchê)’ to express a heightening or strengthening of the spirited passions, his usage at II.1.13 of
The first occurrence of *phronêma* (the first in the *Cyropaedia*) indicates Xenophon’s dialogue with Plato and the redeployment of his concepts of the spirited passions. The other occurrences are as follows. At V.2.33, the *phronêma* of the men is said to be irresistible (*anupostaton*). As we have seen, Plato uses *phronêma* and *thumoeides* interchangeably and, at *Republic* II.375a-b, his Socrates says that *thumos* is ‘irresistible (*amachon*) and unbeatable (*anikêton*)’ and ‘its presence makes every soul fearless (*aphobos*) and invincible (*aêttêtos*) in the face of everything’. Xenophon, with his focus on citizen motivation, here has Cyrus express, however, that the prerequisite of an invincible *phronêma* in one’s followers is their being confident (*tharrôsin*), a quality not easily regained if lost. Confidence depends on beliefs about the probable success of the dangerous or difficult enterprise at hand, a belief which partly rests on their trust of the person leading them. As we have seen, it was Cyrus’ father Cambyses who emphasized the role of trust in leadership.²⁵⁶

The second occurrence of *phronêma* in this passage, at V.2.34, confirms the sense of *phronêma* as a kind of pride or self-respect which can motivate one to certain dangerous or difficult actions. Cyrus is arguing that once the confidence of the soldiers is lost, it is very difficult to regain through the actions of a leader. Three actions are possible: to give ‘a speech to quell the panic’, to order ‘a charge against the enemy to inspire [the soldiers] with courage (*menos*)’, or to order ‘a retreat to rally their spirits (*phronêma*)’.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ See §4.4.2.
²⁵⁷ Why should a retreat rally spirit? It would seem a retreat would further depress the soldier’s spirits, indicating that the enemy was too dangerous to confront and continuing
That *phronêma* denotes a similar theoretical terrain in Xenophon’s work as *thumos* and *thumoeides*, and indeed *phronêma* itself, denote in Plato’s, is further indicated by its usage at VIII.1.46. There, the term expresses not an invincible resolve in the face of the dangerous and difficult enterprises of the battlefield (as above) but a lofty aspiration to positions of political power. Cyrus perceives the ambitions of his subordinates and reacts in response. In Plato, as we have seen, the *thumoeides* motivates one to value three things in particular: *timê*, *nikê*, and *archê* (honor, victory, and ruling office).

Cyrus constructs a careful system of merit-based promotion in which the honor of a higher rank is conferred on those officers who perform best (II.1.23). Furthermore, he instituted prizes for whole companies and platoons (II.1.24). He orders the men to tent together as companies for the following reason: ‘It seems that shame also occurs more in all people when they know one another, and they who are not known seem somehow more inclined to easy living, just as if they were in the dark’ (II.1.25). He would also host meals with those who performed well, seating himself when with them as if they were equals.

A certain kind of knowledge is needed to cultivate spirit, namely, self-knowledge. The knowledge of self is of one’s having done the preparatory work needed for the

the cascading effects of the panic being caused by the retreat of the dispirited figures the soldiers are already observing. The puzzle may be explained if we focus on the sense of *phronêma* as a kind of high pride. The command of a retreat may be meant to elicit the reactive response of the soldiers that *they* are not so debased as to retreat before an enemy. The paradox of pride is that a command to retreat is a tool which a leader can use to elicit the opposite action from his followers: they hold their ground or even advance in order to prove, if only to themselves, that their pride is well-merited.
enterprise at hand, that is, of one’s deservedness of success in the enterprise. Cyrus is
careful to exercise his army rigorously together, for this creates greater unanimity among
them and makes them more confident in the face of enemies. ‘Certainly with regard to
facing the enemy, those who are conscious of themselves (suneidós in heautois) as having
exercised well become more high-minded (megalophronesteroi; II.1.29).’ Self-knowledge
can lead to greatness of spirit if one’s self-assessment indicates that the right qualities are
in place for success.258 As we have seen, the relation between self-knowledge and being
megalophrôn is at the heart of Plato’s Alcibiades. In that dialogue, to be megalophrôn is
presented as Alcibiades’ predominant quality, which leads him to aspire to political
leadership within Athens. After Socrates’ elenchus, which pushes Alcibiades toward a
self-knowledge revealing his beliefs—about his suitability for the offices to which he
aspires—to be groundless, Alcibiades becomes dispirited.259

Cyrus honors a captain and his company with dinner after seeing them compete in
a game of clods and sticks which proves that combat at close quarters, as the Persians do,
is superior. ‘Cyrus admired both the captain’s plan and the troops’ obedience, for they at
one time got exercise and were inspirted (éuthumounto), and victory went to those whose
arms were like those of the Persians’ (II.3.19). The next day many of the troops imitated
this game. He honored other inventive captains, who were in turn imitated (II.3.21-24).

258 The exhortation to ‘know yourself’ (gnôthi sauton) was etched over the entrance to the
sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi and is discussed in Pl. Prot. 343a-b, Charm. 164d. Gera,
Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, 274, considers it to mean ‘knowing one’s capabilities’.
259 See §3.2.1.
His process of honoring so extensively leads to a crisis of finances however, because every
time that he admires (*thaumazeis*) the activity of one of the men, he honors (*timon*) him
(II.4.9); such honors often consist, in the work, of tangible goods like special meals. Only
in a separate work, Xenophon’s *Hiero*, will a solution to this problem of honor distribution
be advanced: the poet Simonides will argue that, properly conceived, prizes can be the
most inexpensive means of motivating others to extreme exertion, as they will toil
unceasingly for but a small prize (9.11).²⁶⁰ The value of a prize, Simonides recognizes, is as
a mark of honor—it can in other respects be virtually worthless, as indeed is a laurel or
olive wreath.

Cyrus is so keen to create opportunities for subordinates to compete for, obtain,
and distribute honors because he believes this technique makes others into ‘co-workers’
(*sunergous*) in any matter. Furthermore, distributing honors motivates such persons to
act ‘without excuses’ (*aprophasistous*; II.4.10). The quality of being *aprophasistos*,
unhesitating or offering no excuse, was praised by Pheraulas as a quality Cyrus will honor
in the *homotimoι* and *dēmotai* alike (II.3.8). Cyrus is later shown expanding the hierarchy
of honors distribution he had begun constructing earlier in the work. He distributes
money to each of his captains,

in order that they too could bestow honors if they admired any of those
beneath themselves, for he believed that if each could make his own part
worthy of praise, the whole would be in fine condition for him. And he
himself used to acquire whatever he saw that was beautiful for an army and

²⁶⁰ For discussion, see p. 249.
use it for gifts to the most deserving, for he believed that he was himself adorned by whatever noble and good things the army had. (III.3.5)

Not only monetary honors but also other forms of praise, epainos, motivate followers. The desire for praise elicits the highest qualities from his followers, who are willing to undergo any labor or risk for its sake (III.3.51). This desire for praise is heightened through mutual exhortation among the subordinates and from superiors to subordinates. Indeed, spirited qualities like tharsos, confident boldness, are particularly likely to be elicited from subordinates if superiors model those qualities (III.3.39). Cyrus calls his officers together and showed them how the army, including the new allies, was ordered well, having made them ‘desirous’ (eròtikós; III.3.12) of acting immediately,261 he instructs them to go back to their troops and replicate what he had taught them, working to motivate the troops for beginning the campaign in order to have opportunities for winning praise. The combination of showing the troops the good order of the army, so as to provoke confidence, and holding out the prospect of gaining praise and honor, will motivate the men so they ‘set out in highest-spirits (euthumotata; III.3.12).

Furthermore, Cyrus and his officers can instill other qualities in their followers by moving immediately to attack, thereby impressing upon the soldiers that there is nothing to fear. Cyrus urges immediate attack for ‘we will avail ourselves of much better and more robust souls (beltiosi kai errômenesterais tais psuchais) in our soldiers if we move

261 This is an instance of erōs-family terms being used to express a more general sense of desire which encompasses not just appetitive aims but also, as here, spirited and, as in Plato, philosophical aims.
against our foes and do not seem unwilling to look upon our enemy.’ (III.3.18) Again, emphasis is placed on the small platoons in which mutual oversight and inspiration is encouraged, thus he commissions his officers.

Why I am not speaking to them, but am ordering you to do so, is so that they may try to gratify you, for you are near to them, each in his own part. Understand well that if you display yourselves to them as being confident (*tharrountas*), you will not by word but by deed teach them and many others to be confident (*tharrein*) as well. (III.3.39)

Confidence in a leader or leaders, mutual inspection and praise, and the modeling good behavior so followers will emulate that behavior are all vital to the theory of leadership Cyrus here advances.262

Confidence, *tharsos*, is a quality of spirit, *phronêma*. The opposite quality of fear, *phobos*, is a quality of being dispirited, *dusthumos* (V.2.34). The leader of a group of human being is responsible for the confidence or fear, and thus the state of the *phronêma* and *thumos*, of his followers, and Cyrus discusses the techniques by which the seat of spirited passions is stimulated or depressed. One of the factors in stimulating confidence and fear is simply the prospect of success or failure in an enterprise, like battle, which involves both labor and risk. If it appears the enterprise will be a success, the confidence and spirit of those in the organization rise. If failure seems likely, their confidence and spirit fall into fear and despondency.

262 In respect of confidence in particular the influence of Cyrus’ father Cambyses can been seen in this theory; see §4.4.2.
Before a battle, Cyrus bolsters his troops, so that they ‘enter the contest with better spirits \((euthumoteroi)\)’ by reminding them that they are practiced in going into battle at close quarters (VI.4.16). He had previously reminded them that their earlier triumphs put in their souls the victory they gained before’. (VI.2.15) And, as he had done earlier at the end of Book V, he commissions his captains. (VI.4.20) Before a battle, even as the enemy troops come in sight, resplendent in mirrored armor of a type unique to him, Cyrus goes to the troops and encourages the men, calling them men \((andres)\) and claiming they pursue a particular set of goods:

You know, men, I think, that the prizes \((athla)\) now set before the victorious are to pursue, to strike, to kill, to have good things \((agatha echein)\), to hear noble things \((kala akouein)\), to be free \((eleutherois einai)\), to rule \((archein)\). But to the bad, clearly the opposite of these. So whoever loves himself \((auton philei)\), let him fight along with me, for I will never voluntarily bring myself to do anything evil or shameful. (VII.1.13)

Cyrus also has Abradatas, a commander, go among his troops as well, charging him to ‘implant in them the love of victory’ in order that ‘you may appear the best of those on chariots; and be assured, if this turns out well, all will say in the future that nothing is more profitable than virtue.’ (VII.1.18) Abradatas will die in the conflict against the Egyptians and Cyrus will console Abradatas’ wife Panthea that Abradatas will ‘not be without honor \((atimos)\)’, that ‘many will also heap up a memorial mound worthy of us, and as much as is appropriate for a good man will be slaughtered in sacrifice for him’ (VII.4.11). Such memorials are themselves a form of the prizes for honorable action which Cyrus had offered.
The disposition to desire praise and to endure labor and risks in competition with others for praise does not come about as a matter of course, however, Cyrus argues. It is not present in all persons or to the same extent. Furthermore, it cannot be inculcated through merely a single dramatic speech on the battlefield, a point illustrated by an episode in which the Assyrian king makes a speech which appeals to the spirited desire for honor in his men. Cyrus’ men are aware of this speech and Chrysantas urges him to make one similar. Cyrus’ response is that such a speech is ineffective, that the desire for honor cannot be instilled solely in that way but must be developed among a body of citizens over an extended process of education. Such a disposition must come from a lifetime of conditioning to possess ‘respect’ (aidous) so the citizens will avoid what is shameful (aischrôn; III.3.51). Similar conditioning is needed to inculcate the desire for honor. Cyrus does not here use the term philotimia to denote the spirited aspiration which parallels the spirited aversion of possessing shame, but philotimia is clearly the parallel concept. The expression he uses for the desire for praise is the same as that used in Book I to convey the motivation of the philotimos: the soldiers are to be conditioned ‘to the view that they must embrace every labor (ponon) and every risk (kindunon) for the sake of praise (epainou)’ (III.3.51). The difficult and dangerous activity at hand, to which the soldiers must be motivated, is here engaging an enemy on the battlefield: the soldiers must come to themselves ‘choose to die in battle rather than to be safe in flight’ and the value of their possessing aidos and philotimia is that these two motivations can overcome their fear of death.
The problem Xenophon’s Cyrus highlights, using the Assyrian speech as a negative example, is that the motivation to desire honor (and avoid shame) must be rendered stable (bebaios), a process which cannot be achieved with one speech. Bebaios is the term Plato uses in the Republic to describe the necessary supplement to natural virtue to render it stable, and in the Theaetetus (180a) in reference to the unwillingness of Heracleitean philosophers to let anything become ‘definite’ in argument or their minds (logoi...psychai). Here in the Cyropaedia, the soldiers will only be truly motivated by the desire for honor and aversion to the shameful if the motivations are brought ‘securely into their judgment’ (en tais gnômai bebaiós; III.3.51). Such thoughts (dianoiai) need to be ‘inscribed in human beings and remain abiding’ (eggraphêsethai anthrôpois kai emmonoi esethai; III.3.52). In order to do this, not a single speech but a system of laws (nomous) are needed, a system under which the citizens live for extended periods and by which their motivations are rendered stable. The possession of aidos and philotimia are made stable through the existence of political and cultural norms which give an ‘honored and free life’, an entimos kai eleutherios ho bios, to persons who act in accord with those motivations. And the opposite, ‘lifetime wretched, grievous, and not worth living’, is to be imposed upon those not so motivated.

Furthermore, such nomoi are to be supplemented by the role of teachers (didaskalous) and rulers (archontas) who ‘will correctly show, teach, and habituate them

263 As discussed in §4.2.3.
to do these things’ (III.3.53). This formulation captures the severalfold ways in which leaders—who are both teachers and rulers—shape their followers. The extended process of living under such nomoi and being shaped by such leaders is meant to create a kind of second nature in the citizens: it becomes ‘inbred’ (eggenêtaí) into the citizens ‘to really believe that the good and famous (agathous kai eukleis) are most happy (eudaimonestatous), and to told that the bad and infamous (kakous kai duskleis) are most wretched (athliôtatous) of all’ (III.3.53). To motivate persons to act well, they must believe that happiness itself, eudaimonia, can only be achieved by those who are both good, agathos, and famous, eukleos. Eukleos, good report or fame, is identified as one of the two qualities which lead to eudaimôn person, one who is happy or fortunate.264

The quality which the citizens have as a result of this extended (re)-formation is andragathia (III.3.55), a new civic quality in the 4th century which Xenophon was perhaps the first to articulate.265 It is a more egalitarian civic value and contrasted to aristocratic kaloskagathia. This quality is composed of a number of more detailed features, as we have seen. Cyrus’ troops become robust (errômenôs) by their being ‘competitive (philonikôs) with each other’ (III.3.57). We are presented with an army in which mutual inspection and exhortation operated throughout the ranks:

264 The only other occurrence of eukleos, good report or fame, is VIII.5.23. This is the only occurrence of duskleos, bad repute or infamy, in the work.
265 This is also the quality of the leading persons in Cyrus’ empire (VII.5.82). On andragathia, see David Whitehead, ‘Andragathia and aretê’, in Greek history and epigraphy: essays in honour of P.J. Rhodes, ed. Lynette Mitchell and Lene Rubinstein (Swansea, 2009).
The homotimoi marched along radiantly, educated, looking at each other, calling by name those who were beside and behind them. [...] Thus, Cyrus' army was full of zeal (prothumias), ambition (philotimias), strength (rhômês), confidence (tharrous), mutual exhortation (parakeleusmou), moderation (sôphrosunês), obedience (peithous); this, I think, is most terrible (deinotaton) for the opposition. (III.3.59)

Xenophon’s account has treated each of these qualities in turn, demonstrating how they might be inculcated in the army.

When a day of battle arrives, Cyrus orders his army and gives the troops at the very rear of the army a distinctive set of orders, to punish those who fail to exhibit sufficient spirited passion:

You who rule over those who are behind all the others, keep your men last and direct each to oversee those in front of them. Direct them to encourage further those who are doing what is needful and to threaten severely those who are soft (malakunomenois), and if anyone turns around, willing to desert, to punish them with death. It is the work of those who are first to encourage (tharrunein) by both word and deed those who follow. But you who are put in order behind all others need to provide more fear to the bad than does the enemy. (VI.3.27)

Other individuals will also be excluded from the army if they do not prove to have the appropriate spirited qualities. Cyrus concludes that individuals in the army who are ‘bad partners in labors’ but who are ‘vehement and shameless in getting more, are also leaders to what is vile, for they are often able to show that vileness does get more. Consequently, we must completely expunge such persons [from the army]’ because their fault is ‘slackness’ (blakeia) and like a ‘drone’ (kêphên) who depend on others for their livelihood (II.2.25). Both of these are highly revealing terms. Blakeia is opposed, in Xenophon’s linguistic usage, to the quality of being high-spirited, huperthumos (De re equestri, III.12;
cf. *Oec.* 17). The concept of the drone, *kêphên*, is of course central to the description in Plato’s *Republic* of the democratic character type (552c ff).

Whereas persons who lack the sufficient degree of spirited motivation—represented by the images of slack, low-spirited horses or drones—are to be expunged from Cyrus’ army, despite their prior citizenship, other persons who are foreign to the Persian *patris* will be granted entry if they are of sufficient quality. Cyrus urges that the gaps in the army created by such expulsions should not be filled exclusively from the pool of fellow-countrymen (*patriótai*). Rather, as one would go wherever good horses are to be found, so should they look past their fellow-countrymen to find others who will enhance the army’s ‘strength and good order’ (II.2.26). As the image of good horses is invoked, in addition to the desired qualities of strength and good order, it is clear that the quality which makes for a desirable potential member of the army good is spirited motivation.

§5.3 TURNTNG FACTION AND REBELLION TO ADVANTAGE

As revealed in the last section, the spirited passions are essential to Cyrus’ political activities and leadership insofar as those activities consist in inspiriting his subordinates to undertake difficult and dangerous enterprises in the pursuit of honor. However, a focus on spirited passion is also necessary to understand several other features of Cyrus’ political activity: his ability to manage competitive faction among his followers, assuage
envy from his superior the Median king Cyaxares, and capitalize on the resentment and rebellion of his subordinates, his enemies, and his enemies’ subordinates.

Whereas much of Cyrus’ activity analyzed in §5.2 was directed to stimulating spirited passions among his subordinates, a practice which lies behind much of his political success in the Cyropaedia, this section focuses on how spirited passions motivate challenges to Cyrus’ political activities and how he responds to those challenges. The section begins by considering the one instance in Books II-VIII in which Cyrus learns something which his extensive education in Book I had apparently failed to teach. Whereas both Cyrus’ natural virtue and his education in Book I revealed how to stimulate spirited passions in both himself and those he wishes to lead, Cyrus’ supplementary education in Book III teaches him how to depress the spirited passion of those he wishes to govern. Furthermore, and of significance not only for the history of political thought but also of philosophy more broadly, Cyrus learns this lesson from a person who has trained under a teacher clearly modeled on Socrates. As we will see in §§7.2.1-2, one of the central features of Xenophon’s Socrates—a feature previous commentators have failed to notice—is Socrates’ uncanny ability to render his interlocutors dispirited, athumos.
§5.3.1 *Tigranes and ‘Socrates’: suppressing spirited passion*

The first instance of rebellion in the *Cyropaedia* (III.1) provides the occasion for the completion of Cyrus’ education in the spirited passions and political governance. As we will see, Xenophon here depicts Cyrus in dialogue with the Armenian prince Tigranes and his being persuaded so that he follows Tigranes’ advice. This interpretation thus calls for a modification of positions which hold that Xenophon’s Cyrus ‘knows what is right on all occasions’ and ‘because he is the ideal, he has no second thoughts, dialogues do not persuade him’.\textsuperscript{266} It is correct that Cyrus is a kind of ideal, but my argument that he is meant to be a *prototype* makes this point in a more precise way which can also capture subtleties of Xenophon’s presentation of Cyrus like those which emerge in the dialogue with Tigranes. The young Cyrus is the prototype of the *potential* exemplary political agent, but precisely because his prototypical natural virtues are *natural*, and thus unstable and prone to excess, he needs the right education of those virtues in order to become an exemplary political agent.

In *Cyropaedia* III, Cyrus leads an elite cavalry team against the Armenians, a subordinate political body within the Median empire, who are neglecting to pay their taxes and thus causing the Median king Cyaxares to be at a fiscal shortfall. Cyrus succeeds in defeating the Armenian army and capturing the Armenian king. He then holds a public trial, in front of both his own notable followers and the Armenian kings’,

\textsuperscript{266} Stadter, ‘Fictional narrative in the *Cyropaideia*’, 491.
including the king’s own family. He then leads the Armenian king, through a kind of Socratic _elenchus_, to sentence himself to death (III.1.9-13). Cyrus walks the king through a process of argument in which the king articulates the principle that rebellious subordinates who have deceived their rulers ought to be put to death. All that is needed then is to point out that the king has rebelled from and deceived his ruler, the Median emperor. At the close of the _elenchus_, the Armenian king ‘fell silent’ and was ‘at a loss’, for he was unwilling to state openly that he should be executed, though he had been led by argument to that conclusion.

The Armenian king has reached a classic Socratic _aporia_: he has been led through the _elenchus_ to articulate a general principal which his own practice contravenes. That the king’s _aporia_ will result in his execution heightens the significance of this trial-cum-dialogue. The king’s son casts off his tiara and rips apart his robes, and the women of his family wail and scratch their cheeks, as if he is already dead. At this point, however, the king’s other son, Tigranes, steps in to the aid of his father in this dialogue. Tigranes had been introduced as a former friend and hunting partner of Cyrus (III.1.7), and Cyrus allows Tigranes to speak, and bids him do so with confidence, because Cyrus remembers Tigranes had been closely accompanied by a certain ‘wise man’ (_sophistês_) who Tigranes had ‘wondered at’ (_thaumazomenon_; III.1.14). We again learn after the dialogue is concluded that Tigranes had regarded this _sophistês_ with ‘wonder’ and when Cyrus asks Tigranes about the _sophistês_ he learns he had been put to death by Tigranes’ father. The
terms in which the man is described, and his death recounted, clearly indicate he is modeled on Socrates and intended to invoke him. The influence of such a man on Tigranes, and the two-fold reminder that his presence had made an impression on Cyrus, further confirms the thoroughly Socratic connotations of this trial-cum-dialogue—which is also indicated by the structural features of elenchus and aporia.

In light of the impact Tigranes’ Socrates-like teacher had on him, it is surprising that Tigranes’ lesson for Cyrus is in how to thoroughly dispirit, to subjugate psychologically as well as physically, a rebellious subordinate like the Armenian king. Tigranes teaches Cyrus how to use fear to make subordinates moderate (sôphrones), a quality which will prove, upon close inspection, to effectively mean obedient and unrebellious. This lesson is conveyed as follows. First, Tigranes establishes that moderation, sôphrosunês, is the prerequisite virtue a subordinate needs to possess in order for the subordinate’s other virtues (aretês) to be beneficial to a ruler, asking ‘for what use

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267 The modern tradition that the Armenian sophist is a kind of Socrates surfaces in a 1568 commentary on the Cyropaedia by Brodaeus and has been followed by several modern commentators; Gera, Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, 91. Also following this tradition is Leo Strauss, ‘On classical political philosophy’, in What is political philosophy? and other studies (Glencoe, Ill., 1959), 88. Cyrus asks Tigranes how that man whom the latter had regarded with wonder (thaumazein) had died. Tigranes responds that he had been killed by Tigranes’ father for ‘corrupting’ (diaphtheirein) the young Tigranes. The sophistês, on his deathbed, had exhorted Tigranes not to be harsh to his father for killing him, for his father did so out of ‘ignorance’ (agnoia) and the sophistês concludes, ‘I believe that the wrongs human beings commit out of ignorance are all involuntary (akousia)’. Tigranes concludes that his father envied (epthonoun) the sophistês because he made Tigranes admire (thaumazein) the sophistês more than his father. Socrates is readily discernible in such a description.

268 On those features, see §7.2.2.
could anyone make of a strong or courageous person if he is not moderate, or of a knight, a
wealthy person, or a master of a city [without his also being moderate]’ and concluding
‘with moderation, every friend becomes useful and every servant good’ (III.1.16).
Furthermore, he attempts to convince Cyrus that moderation can be gained almost
instantly, within the span of a single day, because it is a pathēma not a mathēma,
something the a person experiences not learns. Learning, the passage clearly suggests,
takes time, but a pathēma (pain is given as an example) can come upon one immediately.

Having posited that moderation is a pathēma, Tigranes next argues that persons
are made moderate when they suffer a defeat and then arrive at a certain kind of self-
awareness of their inferiority. He invokes the example of a person (his father is clearly
the implied referent) who gained a self-awareness that he had desired freedom (sunoiden
heautōi eleutherias... epithumēsas) but in attempting to secure that freedom ‘became a
slave as never before’ because he failed to have strategic abilities (not simply military
strength) superior to those forces dominating him (in this case, the Median emperor and
his agent Cyrus). Such a self-aware person is contrasted, by Tigranes, to a person who
suffers a defeat on the battlefield that was not strategic but simply a matter of strength—
such a person will continue resisting, and will have reason to, after he has gained more
strength. His father, Tigranes argues, as a result now possesses the moderation which
comes from such self-awareness: he knows he can never outwit Cyrus. Cyrus expresses
doubts, however, that merely ‘knowing others to be better than themselves is a sufficient
defeat to make people moderate’ (III.1.20). Tigranes agrees, arguing that one need also be
‘punished by one’s betters, as my father now is’ (III.1.22) and giving advice on how such
persons can be put in a state of being dispirited or despondent, athumos (III.1.24). A
potentially rebellious person can be managed with fear (phobos) which ‘strikes down’ or
‘subjugates’ (kataplêttei) the soul, psuchê, of such a person (III.1.25). Here, Tigranes
returns to and sharpens his early contrast between a person who is defeated on the
battlefield in a contest of strength and one who is defeated in the more complete manner
of becoming self-aware of a deeper set of insufficiencies. Now, a contrast is drawn between
persons who are physically beaten—even with iron, ‘which is believed to be the most
severe tool of punishment’—but who are still willing to rebel again, and another set of
persons who have been utterly ‘enslaved’ (katadoulousthai) by ‘intense fear’ (ischurotatôi)
and are as a result ‘not even able to look at those of whom they are thoroughly afraid’
(III.1.23). That is, the latter type of person has been broken in spirit and cannot take even
the first step (of looking at the person who is dominating) of resuming confrontation and
resistance.270

269 Miller translates ‘[nothing] breaks a man’s spirit sooner than abject fear’ which
captures the sense of Tigranes’ statement which is being argued for here; Ambler more
literally renders the Greek as ‘[nothing] enslaves human beings more than intense fear’.
None of the Greek terms used for spirit—thumos, thumoeides, phronêma—is used here.
But see below, in which athumos is.
270 Evidently, some modern colonial powers failed to effect such a subjugation of spirit over
the colonized; Fanon, The wretched of the earth, 42: ‘Confronted with a world ruled by the
settler, the native is always presumed guilty. But the native’s guilt is never a guilt which
he accepts...for, in his innermost spirit, the native admits no accusation. He is
overpowered but not tamed; he is treated as an inferior but he is not convinced of his
Cyrus ultimately takes Tigranes’ point: ‘[F]ear punishes human beings more than
does being harmed in deed’, and Tigranes elaborates:

And you know that what I say is true, for you know that those who are
afraid that they will be exiled from their fatherland, and those on the verge
of battle who fear that they will be defeated, pass their time in despondency
(athumós)—as do sailors in fear of a shipwreck, and those who fear slavery
or prison. Now these are not able to partake of either food or sleep because
of their fear, but those who are already exiled, already defeated, or already
enslaved are sometimes even more able to eat and sleep than are those who
are happy. It is still more evident what a burden fear is from the following,
for some, fearing that they will be killed if caught, kill themselves in
advance because of their fear—hurling themselves down, hanging
themselves, or cutting their own throats. Thus, of all terrible things, fear
especially subjugates (kataplèttei) souls. As for my father, how do you think
his soul is now disposed, since he fears slavery not only for himself but also
for me, his wife, and all his children? (III.1.24-25)

The further lesson is that one can better cement the loyalty of a subordinate who has done
one wrong but is then forgiven. For from that point forward, all benefits given him will be
thought by him to be dispensed out of grace despite his demerits, whereas someone who
had committed no fault would see such benefits as his due. Furthermore, one can be more
suspicious of a subordinate who has rebelled—as Tigranes puts it, ‘our wrongs offer
excuses for you to distrust us’ (III.1.27)—and undertake more extensive surveillance of
and a more interventionist posture toward their doings. If this were done toward subjects
who had done no wrong, they would think the ruler distrusted them; but to those who
have done wrong, this seems no less than they deserve. Tigranes’ point is that the
gratitude of a formerly rebellious subject who has very nearly lost everything, including

inferiority. He is patiently waiting until the settler is off his guard to fly at him.’
his life and those of his family, will be almost boundless in comparison with one who has done no wrong and thinks himself worthy of good treatment by the ruler.

Similar language of using fear to utterly break the spirit of potential rebels to Cyrus' governance is used at the start of the work, at I.1.5, to summarize Cyrus' exemplary political achievement (which the work as a whole will go on to describe): 'he was able to extend fear of himself to so much of the world that he intimidated (kataplêxai) all, and no one attempted anything against him', that is, no one attempted to rebel against him. We are seeing in Cyrus' dialogue with Tigranes where he learned the methods which will prove so important to his success that Xenophon highlights those methods in the introduction to the *Cyropaedia*. The qualities which are opposed to sôphrosunê in this passage, and which must be eliminated from the Armenian king by the methods Cyrus learns from Tigranes and subsequently adopts, are termed *hubris* and *megaphronein* (III.1.26). The former term is clearly pejorative in Greek usage, a meaning we would expect a ruler to deploy in reference to a rebellious subject, but the latter has less pejorative connotations and can be seen in this context, if we take the perspective of the ruled, as an aspirational spirited motivation to self-rule and freedom after a period of subjugation.271 From the perspective of a ruler like Cyrus, Tigranes' methods will render

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271 J. E. Lendon, 'Xenophon and the alternative to realist foreign policy: *Cyropaedia* 3.1.14-31', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 126 (2006), 85, in a section entitled 'Imposing sôphrosynê' makes a related point: 'Tigranes' argument depends on shifting between two meanings of the broad Greek term sôphrosunê, between sôphrosynê as a moral quality possessed by the virtuous man, and sôphrosunê as something imposed on a defeated
his subjects moderate, but put another way, as Tigranes also does, they are rendered
despondent and dispirited, *athumos*.

In key respects, the teachings of Cyrus’ father and those of Tigranes (by implication
shaped by the unnamed *sophistês*) complement each other. Cambyses instructs Cyrus
regarding the arts of rulership particularly as they pertain to acquisition of honor and to
the treatment of enemies versus fellow citizens. While wiles and deceits, and innovative
tactics, are envisaged for enemies, there is a sharp demarcation between these practices
and those to be pursued within the polity. Tigranes’ teaching breaks down that
distinction between foreign enemies and domestic fellow citizens by speaking of the art of
manipulating and cementing the loyalty of subordinates, which includes taking advantage
of their very rebelliousness. Their act of having made the ruler an enemy, their act of
rebellion, provides the occasion for the strengthening of the ruler’s hold on them. A
relationship formerly marked by mutual trust—a relationship Cyrus claims to prefer even
as he is being instructed by Tigranes (III.1.28)—becomes one of suspicion on the part of
the ruler and a willing acquiescence on the part of the subject in the invasive practices to
which that suspicion gives rise. One could conclude that Cambyses teaches the arts of
leadership whereas Tigranes teaches the art of rulership. In that sense, the education
Cyrus gained from his father was inadequate. A Socrates-like figure, speaking by way of

enemy, the sense it had in brawls between men and wars between states, where a state
might hope to ‘wise up’ (*sôphronizein*) an opponent by defeat, or after a victory boast of
having ‘stopped’ or ‘quenched their *hubris*.’
his pupil Tigranes, must rectify that pedagogical shortcoming. The difference between the
two hinges on the following: in the first case, imitation and emulation stimulates
aspirational spirited passions like enthusiasm and zeal in an difficult or dangerous
enterprise, whereas in the second case, fear is used to depress the spirited passions of
potentially rebellious subordinates.

§5.3.2  Managing faction and rebellion

In addition to motivating his followers, Cyrus argues that his wide distribution of
honors prevents the emergence of envy (phthonos), which is dangerous to a common
enterprise.272 Philotimia has a negative aspect in that the competitions it calls for can
lead to envy, phthonos, among those who compete. Xenophon suggests that in a corporate
body like an army, the emergence of phthonos as a result of the philotimia of its members
can be deadly to its unity and, indeed, continued existence. Cyrus reviews his army, sees
their bodies are in a good condition, ‘how good their souls were at holding the enemy in
disdain (kataphronein)’, and how they were trained each in the use of their weaponry, and
decides to move against a new enemy. On the one hand, he knows

\[^{272}\text{Phthonos is seen, beginning with Herodotus, as endemic to autocratic types of rule; see James McGlew, }\text{Tyranny and political culture in ancient Greece (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993), 33.}\]
that rulers’ noble preparations are often made otherwise by their hesitation, but the necessity of this movement also arises from within the army itself. Now that the troops have been made ‘ambitious’ (*philotimôs*) in the matters they are competing (*antêgônizonto*) over, they are also becoming envious (*epiphthonôs*) of one another. (III.3.10)

Cyrus for that reason determined that he must lead them to enemy territory and into possibility of battle, so as to prevent that envy from damaging the army. *Philotimia* thus forces the leaders of such an organization to turn it ‘toward the enemy territory’ (*tên polemian*) so the men will see each other a ‘co-worker’ (*sunergos*) in the ‘common good’ (*koinos agathos*, III.3.10). *Philotimia* as a motivation, and the competition it spurs, leads either to positive or negative outcomes, depending on how it is directed. It can lead to the cannibalization of an organization through competitive faction, or it can lead to mutual emulation in pursuit of a common cause.

Sometimes the desire for honor can lead to negative results not from envy but from the competitive striving itself. There was in the army a C dusian who, because he was guarding the rear of the attacking force, was not able to pursue the enemy. ‘Wishing to do something splendid himself’, he takes the initiative to plunder part of Babylon without informing Cyrus. The retreating Assyrians take advantage of this and decimate his forces. Cyrus takes this as an opportunity to teach a lesson about the necessity for maintaining order and communication when small forces are sent out (V.4.15-20). He then takes care that the C dusians, with their new leader, lead the way, ‘in order, that we may restore the confidence (*anatharrunômen*) of the men, if we are able’ (V.4.23).
Later, Cyrus proposes that his troops follow the Assyrians in their retreat immediately, rather than celebrating the victory, that is giving in to appetitive rather than spirited desires. After a later victory, he will take extreme measures against those who might attempt to depart at night with some of the spoils. Those who tried to do so were ordered killed (IV.5.5-6). After the first victory over the Assyrians, Cyaxares grows ‘envious’ (hupophthoneô—‘secretly envious’) of Cyrus and it is suggested that he thinks it’s better to enjoy the fruits of their victory, a course he indeed had argued for (IV.1.13) and later follows (V.5.42). He gives Cyrus leave to take whomever wishes to join him, however, and pursue the fleeing army. He selects one from among Cyaxares’ company, a man who had previously expressed affection for him. That man swears never to leave Cyrus, and Cyrus responds, ‘Then will you be enthusiastic (prothumôs) in leading out [leading away] others as well?’ The man agrees, thinking it will help gain him Cyrus’ affection, and reported with ‘enthusiasm’ (prothumôs) to the Medes what had occurred and furthermore said he ‘would not leave the noblest and best man, and most important, one descended from gods’ (IV.1.24). Cyrus in effect takes advantage of Cyaxares’ turn toward enjoying the fruit of victory to shift the allegiances of Cyaxares’ men—at least those motivated to keep pursuing the enemy, that is, those with spirited motivations—to himself.

Meanwhile, the Hyrcanians, a small subject nation of the Assyrians, hearing of the defeat, began to consider rebellion. They found that the Assyrians’ allies had grown
‘despondent’ (athumôs) in the wake of the defeat and the Hyrcanians accordingly ‘took these things to heart (enthumoumenois), that it was now a noble thing to revolt.’ They approached Cyrus, because ‘his name had been greatly elevated because of the battle’ (IV.2.3). Cyrus promised them equality in promotion in his own army, swearing to give no favoritism to the Persians or Medes.

The effect of harms suffered from others in stimulating a spirited passion like the desire for revenge is a clue to why Cyrus chooses to arm former slaves of the Assyrians and allies of the Assyrians who had themselves been conquered. By freeing such persons, he gains their loyalty. But because they have also been harmed by others, and possess a desire for revenge upon them, Cyrus is also able to tap into those reservoirs of reactive spirited passion for enterprises of his own against those who had harmed his new subordinates. Cyrus now articulates principles for his new conquests. Conquered land is not to be despoiled, for land empty of human beings is unprofitable. Only those who resist are to be killed. The rest are to be released and returned to their homes. They are allowed by Cyrus to live in peace as before, but under him rather than their old master. The only requirement is that they disarm (IV.4). These men will not fight with Cyrus’ army nor with any other. Whereas previous additions to Cyrus’ army, like Tigranes’ Armenians or the Hyrcanians, were brought into that army on equal terms, these conquered people are utterly disarmed. Perhaps the difference lies in the fact that the
Hyrcanians had shown spirit in rebelling against the Assyrians, and the Armenians had rebelled against the Medes. These subjects had shown no such spirit.

Cyrus does arm those slaves among the Assyrians and their allies who had been taken by force from other peoples. Of those who present themselves, ‘he chose those who looked best and said that they were free but would need to carry whatever weapons they gave them’. He appoints as commanders of these men captains from his homotimoi (IV.6.56-58). He also takes into his service Gobryas, an Assyrian noble who has cause to hate the new Assyrian king—the old king had been killed in the battle—who out of envy had killed Gobryas’ son on a hunting expedition. Each of these actions follow from Cyrus’ earlier-expressed willingness to look beyond the bounds of the Persian people in his search for leaders and followers who are properly motivated.

There are reactive spirited passions which motivate action on independent grounds aside from the prospect of success or failure. One of these is hate and the attendant desire for revenge, echthros, which motivates both Gobryas and Gadatas. The desire for revenge can overcome desires for safety, as Gadatas explains.

Because of suffering insolence (hubristhai) and being angry (orgizesthai), Cyrus, my soul did not lead by considering what was safest but was always pregnant (kuousa) with this [thought]: Will it ever be possible to take vengeance on him who is hateful to both gods and human beings, who passes his time in hatred not when someone does him an injustice but if he suspects (hupopteusei) that someone else is better (beltiona) than he is? (V.4.35)
Such desires for revenge are in response to the *hubris* of others. One’s spirited passions react to the spirited passions of others and seek to check them when they become overweening. Xenophon may here be referencing the language of pregnancy and engendering used by Plato in the *Symposium* to describe the human desire for immortality—one way of fulfilling that desire being the generation of biological offspring, which Gadatas as a eunuch is denied—in order to highlight how a spirited reaction to his castration can have similar intensity.273

Cyrus, in the wake of the swift retreat of the enemy, argues that his Persians need to constitute a cavalry of their own men—despite this being a departure from Persian military technique—so that they will not be dependent on the Median cavalry (IV.3.3-14). Chrysantas responds by waxing poetic: ‘If I become a knight, I will be a winged human being (*anthrôpos ptênos*; IV.3.15)’. This is an unusual phrase. ‘Winged’ occurs twice elsewhere in the *Cyropaedia*, describing deer in the wild, who seem to leap to heaven as if they had wings (I.4.11) and birds who are caught in snares (I.6.39). In the latter case, an argument is being made by Cyrus’ father that he can apply toward enemies the same methods he had practiced on animals, including training some birds to ensnare others. Here in Book IV, a class of human beings is made ‘winged’. The passage concludes that, after this innovation, none of the ‘noble and good’ (*kalôn kagathôn*) Persians will be seen not on horseback, that is, the nobility take to horseback. Cyrus had ordered it such, so

273 See §3.4.
that ‘human beings may think that we really are centaurs’ (IV.3.22-23). And of course this new cavalry, winged men, will be used against the enemy. There are thus two images at work here, that of winged human beings and of centaurs. The first is in contrast to Plato’s usage in the *Phaedrus*, in which the ‘winged horses’ of the soul lead the soul toward the heavens. Here, these winged persons become an elite class which exercises dominance over lesser classes and potential enemies.²⁷⁴

§5.3.3  *Rendering kings dispirited*

At one point, Cyaxares awakes and realizes he is virtually without an army, providing the comic scene that those whom he thought were his reveling troops were in fact drunken servants taking license in the absence of their masters. He immediately sends an envoy to recall the entire Median force. When Cyrus learns of this he knows it must not be allowed to occur, for the Median cavalry is essential to his strategy and he has not yet trained his own Persians in the arts of cavalry. He is careful in managing Cyaxares and attempting to restore his trust. Cyrus’ efforts in leading the combined force

²⁷⁴ The centaur image seems intended to connote the Persians of the 5th century and the Persian Wars. Many argue the conflict led to imagery like that of the Parthenon frieze in which human Lapiths, representing Greeks, are in battle against bestial centaurs representing the Persians. See David M. Johnson, ‘Persians as Centaurs in Xenophon’s *Cyropædia*, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 135 (2005).
of the Medes and the Persians, ostensibly on behalf of the defense of Media, ultimately leads to a crisis for the Median king Cyaxares. He comes to Cyrus in extreme grief, for Cyaxares has perceived that while his kingdom has expanded with their victories, because the victories have been due to Cyrus, they come as a dishonor, *atimia*, to Cyaxares (V.5.6, 25-26). Indeed, these victories serve to undercut his reputation, *axios*, which was the foundation of his rule (V.5.33-34). Cyaxares says he would rather have anything taken from him than his reputation and honor. As he puts it, ‘What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonored (*atimazesthai*)?’ (V.5.34) His expression of extreme emotion in response to this dishonor and loss of reputation is expressed in terms of the spirited passions: Cyaxares’s ‘spirit is provoked’ (*thumousthai*, V.5.11).

Cyaxares catches up with Cyrus' force and when he sees the great army Cyrus now leads, he is stricken with grief at the comparative dishonor he suffers: ‘When Cyaxares saw many noble and good troops following Cyrus, yet with himself a retinue both small and of little worth, it seemed to him to be something dishonorable (*atimon*), and he was seized by grief (*achos*) (V.5.6). He would not kiss Cyrus but visibly wept and proclaims, ‘it would be more pleasant to sink into the earth ten times than to be seen so humiliated and to see my own troops neglecting me and laughing at me’. (V.5.9) Cyrus perceives

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275 *Achos* is frequently used in Homer, but is rare in the classical corpus. In addition to appearing here, it is used by Plutarch, *Cor.* 20. This is an example of Xenophon’s occasional linguistic Homericism.

276 See the discussion of laughter on p. 134.
that Cyaxares’ ‘spirit is roused’ (*thumousthai*) and attempts to calm him (V.5.10 ff). He argues that he has achieved many good things on Cyaxares’ behalf. Cyaxares responds:

> But Cyrus, I do not know how one could say that the things you have done are bad. Be well assured, however, that they are good in such a way that the more numerous they appear, the more they oppress (*barunei*) me, for I would wish to make your country greater by my power rather than to see mine so enlarged by you, for your deeds are noble (*kala*) to you who do them, but somehow the same deeds bring dishonor (*atimian*) to me. (V.5.25-26)

Cyaxares affirms that he has taken these things ‘to heart’ (*enthumeisthai*). (V.5.28) He explains that it is a matter of Cyrus turning the army’s loyalty from Cyaxares to himself, as if he had trained a dog or a military attendant or a wife away from him.

> Though Cyrus has used Cyaxares’ troops to expand his domain, Cyaxares has nevertheless suffered a specific kind of harm:

> Since I am in no way responsible for these blessings, I seem to offer myself up to be treated well, like a woman, and both to other human beings and to these my subordinates you appear a man (*anêr phainê*) and I unworthy of rule (*ouk axios archês*). Do these seem to you to be good deeds, Cyrus? Be assured that if you cared for me at all, you would guard against depriving me of nothing so much as my dignity and honor (*axiômatos kai timês*).
> What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonored (*atimazesthai*)? For I was not ruler of the Medes because I was stronger (*kreittôn*) than all of them but rather because they esteemed (*axioun*) us to be better than they in everything. (V.5.33-34)

After having calmed him, and received a kiss in front of the troops which indicates their comity, Cyaxares sets up a tent and invites Cyrus to join him for dinner; Cyrus refuses on grounds that he must watch over the troops.
Later in the work, the Lydian king Croesus and his army is utterly defeated by Cyrus and his forces. Upon being captured, Croesus reveals that he had failed to possess self-knowledge of his true capabilities due to the false praise of flatterers. This false praise made him vain-glorious and led to his downfall. As a result of this failure, he willingly submits to being, in the gendered language here deployed, effeminized by being consigned to a life of idleness, being forbidden political and military engagement.

Cyrus’ troops are eventually victorious in battle and he captures the Lydian king Croesus. Croesus reveals how he was led astray and fallen into this defeat. After having lost his children, he asked the god, through an oracle, how he could live out the rest of his life ‘in the happiest way’. The oracle replied, ‘Knowing yourself, Croesus, you will pass through it happily.’ To this Croesus was pleased, he said, for he thought this was ‘the easiest thing’ for, ‘regarding other people, I believed it was possible to know some but not others, but I believed that every human being knows himself, who he is’ (VII.2.20-21).

It is not easy to know oneself, however, when one is surrounded by flatterers. He avoided harm previously because he knew himself not to be equal to Cyrus in the arts of generalship. But the following occurred:

Then again recently, having been softened up by my present wealth and by those who asked me to become their leader, and by the gifts that they gave me and by the human beings who flattered (kolakeuontes) me (for they said that if I were willing to rule, all would obey me and I would be the greatest of human beings)—being puffed up (anaphusómenos) by such words, when all the kings around chose me to be their leader in the war, I undertook the generalship as if I were competent to become greatest, not knowing myself,
as we now see, because I thought I was competent to make war against you[.] (VII.2.23-24)

Whereas self-knowledge had earlier been linked to greatness of spirit (II.1.29), the deception of the self, aided and abetted by the kolax, leads to the quality of being ‘puffed up’ or arrogant, a kind of vain-glory. Being anaphusómenos differs from being megalophrôn, however, in that the latter can be a form of justified pride in one’s capabilities and worth, whereas the former carries with it connotations of vain-glory, unjustified pride.277

Croesus attributes Cyrus’ superiority to his being descended from the gods, from kings, and also to practicing virtue since youth. Whereas Croesus admits that his ancestors became kings and freemen at the same time, that is, that they had been slaves.

Cyrus pities Croesus and offers him a life as follows:

I grant already that you may have again the wife you had, as well as the daughters (for I hear you have some), the friends, the servants, and meals with which you used to live. But battles and wars I forbid you. (VII.2.26)

Croesus replies that to live such a life is to live one ‘that others have believed to be most blessedly happy, and on which I agree with them’, citing the case of his wife:

She shared equally in all of my good, refined, and delightful things, but of my cares about how to secure these things, and of war and battle, she did not partake. You seem to be putting me in just the same condition in which I put her whom I loved more than any other human being. (VII.2.28)

Croesus is to be offered a safe, but ultimately unmanly, life of comfort and ease. He is made into a woman as a result of his failure, a failure which occurred because he ceased to

277 For the earlier discussion of self-knowledge and greatness of spirit, see pg. 185.
‘know himself’ due to the distortions of flatterers. Cyrus, hearing Croesus accept this life, is ‘amazed at his good spirits (euthumian; VII.3.29)’.

Ultimately, both men, the Median king Cyaxares and the Lydian king Croesus, accept apolitical roles in which they surrender their exercise of spirited passion in the political realm (they may of course continue to express spirited passion in personal and domestic life). They are in that respect similar to the conquered peoples to whom Cyrus denies arms and political service in competition for honor.

§5.4 BABYLON: SUPPRESSING REBELLION, SECURING ORDER AND FAME

In this section, the spirited passions can be used to show how Cyrus ultimately succeeds in establishing a long-lasting form of governance over his conquered territories which effectively suppresses rebellion, the likelihood of which had been the initial and orienting problem of the work as a whole. By analyzing the language used to describe Cyrus’ political activity, and its effects, in Babylon—the means by which he secures his governance—we will reveal how the spirited passions are central to the end of the work. As in the rest of the work, Cyrus continues to motivate his subordinates through instituting competitions for political honor. But we also see, as in the last section, how Cyrus manipulates the spirited passions of his subordinates and subjects in order to prevent rebellion to his governance. Rebellion in the Cyropaedia arises from one of two
spirited motivations: a reactive spirited desire for freedom from oppression and an aspirational spirited desire for a ruling office within a system of governance.

The reactive spirited desire for freedom was first seen in Book II in the case of the Armenian king, who rebelled against the Median emperor in an attempt to gain the freedom of his kingdom. In Books VII and VIII, Xenophon does not choose to describe the motivations of the Babylonians themselves: unlike the Armenian, they are not given a speech or dialogue in which to express their reasons for action. However, Cyrus does emphasize that the one thing he and his army-cum-oligarchy will deny their subjects, including the Babylonians, whom they wish to make their ‘workers and tributaries’, is ‘military science and practice’—because these are ‘the tools of freedom and happiness for human beings’ (VIII.5.79). Cyrus may be suggesting there are some among the Babylonians who would have the spirited desire to use such martial skill, were they to acquire it, to fight for their freedom. But there is another aspect to this language of the spirited passions and arms, expressed at IV.2.33, which is that the possession of and practice of arms itself stimulates spirited passion: ‘he who whets his spear whets in some measure his soul as well’ (IV.2.33). As we have seen, for Xenophon spirited passion is not wholly a matter of native psychological endowment—although it is in part that, as some persons are by nature more spirited than others—but also dependent upon beliefs about one’s capacity to secure the aims of spirited desire.
That is, for Xenophon, one possesses more spirited passion the more one practices in the activities, or the more one has confidence in one’s leader or trainer of those activities, by which the objects of spirited desire—victory, honor, and political power—can be secured. This explains why Xenophon, in reference to the dominance Cyrus and his elites will maintain over subjects like the Babylonians, describes Cyrus’ practices thus: ‘regarding those whom he was preparing for slavery, he neither urged them to train in any of the labors of freemen (eleutheriôn ponôn) nor permitted them to possess weapons’ (VIII.1.43). To first conceive oneself as a freeman, or one capable of gaining the status of a freeman (through the exercise of arms), is a prerequisite for taking the rebellious action by which such a free status could be secured.

The aspirational spirited passion for a position of political power also threatens Cyrus’ position and governance, but the threat in this case comes from his own elites. He perceives that many of them have the ‘high thought (phronêmata) that they were competent to rule’ (VIII.1.46), that is, the spirited motivation to challenge Cyrus’ rule. Xenophon describes a number of practices in Books VII and VIII used by Cyrus to prevent his own elites from rebelling against him. The most important, in terms of the discourse of the spirited passions, is his creation of a unique class of guards (phulakês; VIII.5.58, 59) who stand between his person and his own martial elites. Cyrus class of guards is composed entirely of eunuchs. He does this in part because they lack erotic and familial attachments and are thereby more loyal to him. As they lack erotic and familial desires,
they are motivated only by the interests of gaining wealth, in being protected from those who would harm or mistreat them on account of their castrated condition, and in gaining honors (VII.5.60). Eunuchs lack rebellious forms of spirited desire, *hubris* and *mega phronein*.

§5.4.1  *Eunuchs as phulakês: spirited passion without rebellion*

Cyrus’ eunuchs, uniquely among Cyrus’ subordinates, possess the spirited passions useful to a ruler like Cyrus but do not possess the spirited passions which lead to rebellion. The act of castration has the effect of removing precisely the psychological qualities which motivate rebellion: *hubris* and *mega phronein*.278 The eunuchs lose none of their capacities of exercising care or management (*epimeleia*) over that which they are entrusted, they are skilled in war, and even continue to be motivated by *philotimia* and *philonikia*. Uniquely among persons, the spirited qualities of *philotimia* and *philonikia* do

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278 Gray, *Xenophon’s mirror of princes*, 261-2, 282, has brief comments about the eunuchs which do not contradict my account but gloss over the unusual qualities of Xenophon’s description. Cairns, *Hybris, dishonour, and thinking big*, 24, is much more alert to Xenophon’s point, which is that *hubris* in particular has sexual and gendered connotations affecting its status as a form of spirited excess. He adduces a number of classical comparisons in which the animals like bulls and male donkeys are described in similar terms and concludes, ‘We do not have to look far to discover why it is that castration should be felt to cure *hubris*—there is clearly a link between the powerful forces of masculinity and a headstrong spirit which values self over others and rejects external restraint’.
not threaten to lead to rebellious activity against their ruler. In eunuchs, Cyrus has found a way to gain the advantages of spirited passion among subordinates without subjecting himself the dangers those passions pose. That this division could come as surprise to his readers is indicated by Xenophon’s introduction to his discussion of Cyrus’ use of eunuchs:

One might especially think that eunuchs would lose their strength (analkidas), but this did not appear to him to be so. From other animals he took it as evidence that unruly (hubristai) horses when castrated (ektemnomenoi) cease biting and being unruly (hubrizein), but they become no less warlike (polemikoi); and bulls when castrated (ektemnomenoi) give up their big thoughts (mega phronein) and disobedience (apeithein), but they are not deprived of their strength and energy; and dogs, similarly, cease to abandon their masters when they are castrated (ektemnomenoi), but they become no worse at guarding and for the hunt. And human beings become similarly more gentle (êremesteroi) when deprived of this desire (epithumias), but they do not, however, become more neglectful (amelesteroi) of what is assigned them, nor at all less skilled as riders, nor at all less skilled as spearmen, nor less ambitious (philotimoi). It showed quite clearly in wars and on the hunt that they safely retained the love of victory (philonikon) in their souls. (VII.5.62-64)

There are a number of theoretical and linguistic parallels between this account and Plato’s descriptions of spirited passion and its role in politics. Plato introduces his concept of spirited passion, thumoeides, in the context of a discussion of the nature of phulakês in Republic II-III. The aim of the discussion in the Republic is also to create guards who are spirited in certain respects but gentle in others. Furthermore, the language of castration, specifically the verb ektemnein, is central to Plato’s description of spirit passion. Plato’s Socrates describes spirited passion as the ‘sinews of the soul’ which can be ‘cut out’—and the soul metaphorically castrated—through an excessive education in mousikê which overcomes the spirited passion a person has either by nature or has gained through a
conditioning in *gumnastikê*. In Xenophon’s theory, in contrast, the key to gaining the positive aspects of spirited passion without the negative, rebellious, aspects is not a form of balancing of *mousikê* and *gumnastikê*, as in Plato, but physical castration itself, which eliminates only the negative aspects of spirited passion, *hubris* and *mega phronein*.

§5.4.2 *Spectacle and the intimidation of subject peoples*

Cyrus’ stance toward the subject people under his rule at the end of the work is marked by efforts to ‘bewitch’ (*katagoêteuein*) the people through the various arts of the spectacle. He enhances his physical appearance and size, and that of his leading men, with the intention of overawing the populace. The people are also, as noted above, thoroughly disarmed. The one thing they will not share with their subjects is ‘military science and practice’, for these are ‘the tools of freedom and happiness for human beings’ (VII.5.79).

Xenophon hedges the next discussion with the qualification, ‘We think we learned of Cyrus that he did not believe that rulers must differ from their subjects by this alone, by being better, but he also thought they must bewitch (*katagoêteuein*) them.’ He did this

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279 See §2.2.2.
280 Cf. the passage, discussed above, stating that ‘regarding those whom [Cyrus] was preparing for slavery, he neither urged them to train in any of the labors of freemen (*eleutheriôn ponôn*) nor permitted them to possess weapons’ (VIII.1.43).
by dressing himself and his partners in Median robes, in wearing shoes that made them
taller, in enhancing their eyes and complexion with cosmetics, and by walking with a
certain bearing which ‘wondered at nothing’; the purpose of such actions was to make the
elites ‘harder to hold in contempt’ in the eyes of their subjects (VIII.1.40-42). As we have
seen, contempt is a type of belief about the relative lack of strength of an enemy or rival
compared to oneself. Such people were cared for in all essential respects, however, and
they called him ‘father’ (\textit{patēr}, VIII.1.44).

Later, Cyrus expands his methods for creating an intimidating impression over the
people. He introduces the techniques of the spectacle. He gives his Persians Median robes
for the first time (VIII.3.1). Pheraulas, the new man from the class of commoners, who
played an important role in the constitutional debate in Book II, is put in charge of
orchestrating a spectacular procession so as to intimidate the populace, a ‘procession most
noble for those of goodwill to see, and most frightening for those who harbored ill will’
(VIII.3.5). Even Cyrus’ driver, while tall, is positioned so that Cyrus looks taller. On
sight, the onlookers prostrate themselves, in part encouraged to do so by individuals who
were either paid or planted there to do so (VIII.3.14). The issue of \textit{proskynēsis}, prostration
in obeisance, is extremely potent one, as the debate on its introduction by Alexander
attests. In Arrian’s \textit{Anabasis} IV.11.9, a speech by Callisthenes in fact attributes the
introduction of *proskynēsis* to Cyrus,\(^{281}\) and Alexander’s demand of *proskynēsis* will weigh heavily in debates about his claim to worship as if he were a living god.\(^{282}\)

§5.4.3 *Managing elites*

Upon taking the city, Cyrus disarms the Babylonians, sets his army over the Babylonians as rulers, and goes about establishing himself as king, *basileus*, using a variety of techniques which sustain certain kinds of spirited passions in his elites—spirited passions needed to maintain the empire they have gained together—while preempting motivations which might lead to rebellion by his elites to his own rule. His aim is to provoke as little envy as possible through appearing in public infrequently and then with dignity (*semnos*; VII.37). He delegates rule increasingly to others, whereas before, during the war, as he puts it, ‘I put myself in the center (*mesos*; VII.5.46)’.\(^{283}\) He

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\(^{281}\) A. B. Bosworth, *A historical commentary on Arrian’s History of Alexander*, 2 vols. (Oxford and New York, 1980), ad loc., argues Arrian is there making direct reference to this passage in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*. Callisthenes opposes the introduction of *proskynēsis* by Alexander and is subsequently executed; the impact of this incident and its aftermath will be great. Truesdell S. Brown, ‘Callisthenes and Alexander’, *The American Journal of Philology* 70, no. 3 (1949), 225, concluded that, ‘The execution of Callisthenes by Alexander has had more effect on our tradition about the Macedonian conqueror than perhaps any other single episode’.


\(^{283}\) The expression *es to meson*, in the middle, can refer to the physical center of the city, for example the agora, and thereby metaphorically to the public commons. Thus, as Jean
considers that his Persians, whom he now calls ‘mercenaries’, are so much less numerous than those over whom they rule, and outlines the plan by which they will continue to maintain and expand ‘his whole empire (archê)’ (VII.5.70). He calls together the Persian homotimoi and his chief aides and urges that they must all avoid turning toward ‘easygoingness’ (rhaidiourgian) and ‘pleasure-seeking’ (hêdupatheian) which are characteristic of bad, kakos, human beings, ‘who believe that laboring is misery (athleiotêta) and living without labor happiness (eudaimonian)’ (VII.5.74). Cyrus’ statement is a locus classicus summarizing the motivations of those persons who are dominated by appetitive desires. He urges that their rule depends on not succumbing to such appetitive desires through the practice of askêsis: ‘Just as also the other arts become worthless when neglected, and bodies, or at least those in good condition, are again worse when one abandons them in favor of easygoingness, so also moderation (sôphrosunê), continence (enkrateia), and strength (alkê) turn again to worthlessness whenever one abandons their practice (askêsìn)’ (VII.5.75).

Cyrus states that ‘it is a great work to gain an empire (archên), but it is an even much greater work to keep one safe in taking it’ (VII.5.76), and we can draw a distinction between the role of aspirational spirited passion in gaining archê and the qualities needed to maintain archê—the latter turn out to include various ways of managing spirited

Vernant, *The origins of Greek thought* (Ithaca, 1982), 47, 127, relates (referencing Herodotus III.142), tyrannical rule (archê) can be laid down *es to meson* so that *isonomia*, equality under the law, can be proclaimed.
passion, particularly reactive spirited passion (VII.5.76). The aspirational spirited passion by which Cyrus’ army gained empire is said to be *tolma*, boldness. The qualities needed to maintain that empire are threefold: (1) rendering one’s own spirited passion stable against temptations to succumb to appetitive desires through continence, (2) avoiding reactive responses from subjects through the development of moderation, (3) exercising care, *epimeleia*, which we have seen to be the quality of overseeing subordinates and rewarding them for good behavior, through honors, and punishing them for bad behavior, through shaming, expulsion, or execution. Vigilance is now needed to exercise those qualities and avoiding a turn to ‘immediate pleasure’. He concludes:

\[
\text{[W]e must now practice virtue much more than before we acquired these good things; being well aware that when someone has the most, then most people envy (phthonousi) him, plot (epibouleuousi) against him, and become his enemies, especially if he also has his possessions and service from unwilling [subjects] (akontôn), just as we do. (VII.5.77)}
\]

The presence of envy here suggests the imperial nature of the rule Cyrus and his elites exercise over their conquered territories.\(^{284}\) Surprisingly, and quite contrary to the sense one has from the *Cyropaedia* thus far, Cyrus next announces that this great work of having gained a vast *archê* had been itself reactive in nature: ‘Now the gods, we must think, will be with us, for we do not have [what we have] unjustly, having plotted against others, but after having been plotted against, we took the role of avenging our honor (*etimôrêsametha*; VII.5.77).\(^{285}\)

\(^{284}\) Cf. Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, 32: ‘The colonized man is an envious man’.

\(^{285}\) I have modified the translation to bring out the sense of *etimôrêsametha* as taking
Cyrus concludes ‘we must now accept being commanded toward manly goodness (andragathian), both in order that we may enjoy the good things in the way that is best and most pleasant and in order that we may be without experience in the harshest of all things, for not to have taken the good things is not so harsh as it is painful to be deprived of them after having taken them’ (VII.5.82). Andragathia is here summarizing the complex of qualities discussed in the last paragraph by which spirited passions are manipulated in oneself, subordinates, and subjects—that is, rendered stable, incited, or suppressed, depending upon who is in question. We had last seen the quality of andragathia at III.3.55 when it was used to summarize the various proactive and aspirational spirited qualities needed in Cyrus’ imperial initiatives.

The peers must devote themselves wholly to government business, as was done in Persia. Cyrus will ‘honor those whom I see practicing what is noble and good’ (VII.5.85). Manuscripts differ on whether homotimoi or a new term within the text, entimoi, ‘those in honor’, is here used. But all manuscripts agree that after this point, entimoi is always used to describe the elites under Cyrus. Politically, a two-fold shift occurs in the status of vengeance to restore one’s honor. For recent iteration of the argument that modern imperial projects are represented to the domestic metropole as defensive in nature, see Andrew Smith, ‘Hemmed in: on the representation of imperial defeat’, Race & Class 53, no. 4 (2012). Smith revives Joseph Schumpeter’s view, articulated in Imperialism and Social Classes; that this was an important and uniquely modern strategy without parallel in the two pre-modern cultures, the Roman and Islamic, he discusses. But Schumpeter had neglected the Greeks, and we here see evidence in the Cyropaedia of a justification of imperial expansion through representing it as a defensive reaction.

See Xenophon, Institutio Cyri, ed. W. Gemoll and J. Peters (Lipsiae, 1968), ad loc.
those elites: first, from an equality of honor in Persia itself (similar, as we have seen to
that of Spartiate homoioi contemporary to Xenophon) to a system in which collectively
they are all ‘in honor’ relative to the subjugated peoples they rule but, second, they are
now ‘in honor’ only contingently, depending on how well, and how obediently, they serve
Cyrus.

§5.5 CONCLUSION

The reading of the Cyropaedia advanced here runs directly counter to David
Whitehead’s belief that Xenophon’s works present the ‘unproblematical idea of philotimia’
by holding that timê is a proper object of desire and that such a desire can be
straightforwardly pursued through success in battle and the holding of magistracies and
public office. Instead, I have argued that the Cyropaedia illustrates a carefully
reconstructed honor ethic which frees Xenophon from Whitehead’s accusation of ‘burying
his head in the sand’ and persisting in espousing an unmitigatedly positive notion of
philotimia in the face of works in the 5th century which had already called into question
the appropriateness of philotimia in the context of the polis.287 While Xenophon’s works
stand out as evidence of a revived competitive honor ethic in Greek society in the early

287 Whitehead, ‘Philotimia’, 56-7; further implications of the argument of this work for
Whitehead’s conclusions regarding Xenophon are discussed in §4.1.1.
fourth century, Xenophon conceptualizes that ethic with care and he is not blind to its problems.

The arts whereby Cyrus gains the vast empire which afforded him the good repute, *eukleia*, he considers the essence of happiness are the arts of manipulating honor and the desire for honor. His own reputation and the desire for honor of others are manipulated as the occasions demand in order to afford him success over his enemies and in order to secure him the enthusiastic cooperation of his friends. Cyrus proves supremely adept at appealing to both the ambition and the resentful anger of potential subordinates. Both ambition and resentment are spirited passions, and both, in their own way, link to notions of honor: the honor one thinks oneself deserves, in the case of ambition, and the honor one thinks another does not deserve, in the case of resentment.

Cyrus is described from the start of the work as the sort of person who believes that the desire for honor is the primary form of human motivation and, to Cyrus, it is. The attendant competition for honor is endemic to human life, on Cyrus’ view. We see that not only his *motivational set* but also his *belief structure* is conditioned by the predominance of his spirited character type. On numerous occasions in the early parts of the work, Cyrus is shown creating, and participating in, competitions for honor between himself and his peers. As the work progresses and he gains more power and status, he institutes competitions for honor among his subordinates. He believes that creating a competition for honor helps make individuals perform better certain types of activities.
That is, Cyrus believes individuals perform at a higher level when their performance is subject to evaluation, comparison and rank-ordering. In imputing such beliefs to Cyrus, Xenophon is portraying the belief-structure of the spirited character type.

In short, Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* is saying to his readers that if they want a good ruler, they should look to a person with a nature and education like that of Cyrus. Such a nature is the essential starting point for a political leader. With such a nature, an education like that depicted in the *Cyropaedia*, attuned to the characteristic excesses of such a nature, can be effective in creating a good political leader. That Cyrus has excesses at all has puzzled many modern commentators, particularly in light of Cyrus’ idealization in the work after Book I. However, as has been argued in this and the previous chapter, such excesses are clearly meant to be *endemic* to spirited passion and thus, so long as spirited persons are needed in political leaders and followers, inescapable.

Finally, there is more to Xenophon’s conceptualization of the spirited passions in the *Cyropaedia* than is revealed by exclusive attention to the character of his Cyrus and his elites. Xenophon’s depiction of the spirited passions in political life also extends to persons in a subordinate position, like the Persian commoners, or a state of domination, like the Armenian king. In both cases, Xenophon recognizes that some persons, even in states of subordination or domination, will continue to possess and be motivated by spirited passions. If given the opportunity, such passions can be manifested, for example, in the pursuit of public honors—as Cyrus’ egalitarian reforms made possible for the
commoners—or in rebellious action against the dominating power—as in the case of the Armenian king’s rebellion in pursuit of the freedom of his people.
CHAPTER 6 – SUPPLEMENTING THE CYROPAEDIA: XENOPHON’S HIERO & OECONOMICUS

§6.1 INTRODUCTION

How widespread are the spirited passions as forms of motivation? The texts considered in this and the next chapter—Xenophon’s Hiero, Oeconomicus, Memorabilia, and Symposium—all indicate that for Xenophon spirited passion is not considered to be a universal form of motivation for either humans or non-human animals. At the center of the Hiero is an opposition between a class of humans, the andres, who are motivated by philotimia, and another class of animals and mere human beings, anthropoi, who are not (7.3-4). In the Oeconomicus a similar contrast between animals and anthropoi on the one hand, who do not have philotimia, and andres on the other, who do, is modified by extensive illustration that some women and slaves are also motivated by philotimia (13.6-12).

As we have seen, the contrasting motivations of humans and animals are also crucial to the introduction of the Cyropaedia: there the contrast is in the tendency to rebel against forms of rule.288 All these oppositions, which may appear dissimilar, are linked.

288 See §5.2.
Animals, and some humans, are not motivated by spirited desire, and among humans some are motivated by spirited desire to a greater or lesser degree. And spirited passion can manifest itself in aspirational form, as ambition and the desire for honor, or reactive form, in response to impositions of rule, denigrations of standing or capability, or the diminution of freedom.

The spirited passions can also be analyzed in their distinct workings in the pedagogical and the political realms. As will be seen in detail in the next chapter, essential to Xenophon’s Socrates’ pedagogical method is a process of *elenchus* which reduces his interlocutor, who is often quite self-assured and even prideful, to a state of extreme despair, *athumia*, which is the turning point after which they submit to Socrates’ instruction. Socratic *elenchus* leads them to this *athumia* through a process of self-incrimination in which they reveal themselves, to themselves, as incapable of achieving their most desired ends. This effect has the additional benefit, beyond turning prideful self-assurance into obedient tutelage, of also dissuading high-spirited youths with political ambitions from putting their hand to those ambitions and likely causing harm to the city. The dispiriting effect of Socratic *elenchus* thus serves a dual role as pedagogical propaedeutic and a force for political moderation.

As seen extensively in the *Cyropaedia*, however, spirited passions are also central to Xenophon’s own thought on political leadership and motivation. A shadowy Socrates-like *sophistēs* appeared in *Cyropaedia* III, but the lessons learned by Tigranes, and
conveyed by him to Cyrus, about how to render others dispirited are deployed by Cyrus not for the purposes of pedagogy but of political control. In the *Hiero*, techniques for preventing the rebellion of subjects, and for motivating other subjects to action, both hinge on the manipulation of the spirited passions. In the *Oeconomicus*, techniques for motivating family members and servants are similarly formulated in terms of the spirited passions. Xenophon has a unique theoretical approach both to the relation of Socrates to the class of spirited passions and to the way those passions can be manipulated more broadly in political life.

In addition to their difference on the effects of Socratic *elenchus*, Xenophon’s Socrates and Plato’s also diverge regarding the aim of Socratic instruction of his interlocutors, particularly in respect of moderation or mastery of non-intellective desires: Xenophon sometimes shows Socrates attempting to help his spirited young interlocutors pursue their spirited desires for political honor.289 The *Hiero*, the *Oeconomicus*, and the *Memorabilia* all begin with considerations of all typical forms of non-intellective desire, appetitive and spirited, but later in each the focus turns to spirited desire in particular. Xenophon in these works is in agreement with Plato’s Socrates that temperance should be exercised in respect of appetitive desires so as to free psychological energy and focus for the pursuit of other desires. But where the two diverge is in the other class of desires to be pursued: these texts, alongside the *Cyropaedia*, reveal how Xenophon is concerned to

289 Socrates in Plato’s *Alcibiades*, however, similarly claims to be helping Alcibiades pursue his political ambitions even after the aporetic turn at the heart of the dialogue; see §3.2.
encourage the pursuit of spirited desires and thinks their proper pursuit to be sufficient ground for good political leadership.

§6.2 HIERO, ON TYRANNY

Xenophon’s Hiero, on tyranny has been considered by some as ‘a sort of prolegomena’ to the Cyropaedia, while others have argued it is a later work which is at odds with the political message of the Cyropaedia in more openly advocating for a theory of beneficent tyranny. In light of the closing books of the Cyropaedia, however, in which a beneficent tyranny is placed, in effect, over the peoples conquered by Cyrus, there is no space for a substantive divergence between the two theories of beneficent tyranny. That is, the kinds of actions a tyrant should take, and refrain from, in order to cultivate the good will of those whom he rules—the means by which he becomes ‘beneficent’—are

290 Newell, ‘Machiavelli and Xenophon’, 112.
291 Aalders, ‘Date and intention of Xenophon’s Hiero’, 212-213. Leo Strauss, ‘The problem of Socrates’, in The rebirth of classical political rationalism (Chicago, 1989), 147, also took the Hiero to be a lesson in ‘beneficent tyranny’.
292 There is a difference between the idealized setting of the Cyropaedia, in Persia, and that of the Hiero, in the court of a Greek tyrant, however. Aalders, ‘Date and intention of Xenophon’s Hiero’, 212, thought the difference implied a growing willingness on Xenophon’s part to show how his theory of beneficent tyranny could be applied to Greek political challenges and development. But it seems unlikely an Athenian audience would ever have been receptive to praise of any form of tyranny in this period. Athenians in 410 and again in 336 passed laws defining and criminalizing tyrannical acts; the laws placed the tyrant outside the pale of civic life, not in the status of being atimos, which would have left him some civic rights, but polemios, an enemy and outsider to the city. In any event, the argument here is that, pace Aalders, Xenophon’s Hiero is by no means a positive depiction of tyranny.
similar in both works.293 There is a sharp divergence, however, between the two works regarding the kinds of honor a ruler can possess if his subjects are not free (eleutheros) but subject to forms of coercion and the attendant psychological response of fear, as indeed the subjects of both Cyrus and Hiero are. In the Cyropaedia, Cyrus ends his life at the height of honored renown, whereas Hiero is in anguish over his inability to gain genuine honor.

In light of this divergence, the Hiero should be seen not as a prolegomenon to the Cyropaedia but as a kind of corrective to its closing books. That said, the work also stands as a link between the Cyropaedia and Xenophon’s Socrates, for in the Hiero the point of rendering the interlocutor athumos is to prepare him for the education which follows, as indeed is the practice of Xenophon’s Socrates.

The political message of Hiero, as a dialogue, is difficult to discern, and the positioning of the interlocutors is, on its face, puzzling. The Hiero poses a ‘choice of life’ question—whether the life of the private person (idiôtês) or the tyrant is superior in respect of the pleasures and pains attendant of each way of life—but features a tyrant arguing against the desirability of the life of a tyrant.294 In counterpoint, a non-tyrant, the

293 As argued by Gray in separate discussions of the Hiero and Cyropaedia, for example, Xenophon’s theory of leadership as including the ability to elicit the ‘willing obedience’ of subjects is central to both works; Gray, ed. Xenophon on government, 7-8; Gray, Xenophon’s mirror of princes, 180-196.

294 The ‘choice of life’ question would be refocused by the Hellenistic philosophical schools, especially the Epicureans and Stoics, in more narrow terms as the question of whether a philosopher should engage with political life or rulers, on which see Malcolm Schofield, ‘Epicurean and Stoic political thought’, in The Cambridge history of Greek and Roman political thought, ed. Christopher Rowe, et al. (Cambridge, 2000), 435 ff.
poet Simonides, argues initially for the desirability of the life of the tyrant and then, after driving Hiero to a despairing self-critique of that life, offers instruction on how the tyrant can overcome undesirable elements of the tyrannical life and gain a form of happiness.

The puzzle of the *Hiero* deepens when the layers of the dialogue are peeled away and the heart of the work revealed: the impossibility of the tyrant’s gaining genuine honor from subjects who are coerced. That impossibility is not overcome by Simonides’ subsequent instruction. This heart of the work is central in both conceptual and literary senses. The dialogue is divided into two halves: the first half (1-7) is a form of *elenchus* which reduces Hiero to a state of extreme dispirit, *athumia* (8.1), and the second consists of Simonides’ instruction of Hiero. What prompts Hiero’s extreme dispirit is the impossibility of gaining genuine, uncoerced honor. The approach to the dialogue here pursued considers the crucial turning point or fulcrum of the dialogue to be that moment of *athumia* which shifts Hiero from a defensive and combative argumentative position to one of engagement with Simonides’ instruction. This approach thus focuses particularly on the final stages of argument which immediately precede Hiero’s becoming *athumos* and asks the question: how does Simonides bring about this propaedeutic state of extreme dispirit?

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295 Gray, ed. *Xenophon on government*, 35-6, similarly notes the bifurcation of the dialogue and that Simonides ‘drives Hiero to despair’ at 8.1 but does not make anything of the latter, nor focus attention on the line of argument which drives Hiero to despair. Strauss, *On tyranny: revised and expanded edition*, 19, calls attention to the two halves of the dialogue and, at 54, following K. Lincke, considers Hiero’s extreme dispirit to be the ‘peripeteia’ of the dialogue.
Consideration of the dialogue’s structure reveals that it is typically Socratic in this crucial respect: Hiero is reduced to a state of extreme dispiritedness, *athumia*, as the culmination of considering his way of life. So extreme is this state that he pronounces it would be better for a tyrant like him to be hanged than to go on living (7.13). From this state of *athumia* Simonides ‘took up’ (*hupolambanô*; 8.1) Hiero and shows him a better way through his instruction. We see this typical feature of Socrates’ pedagogical method in dialogues like Plato’s *Alcibiades* and Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*. It is also typical of this Socratic approach that the interlocutor is led to this state through a form of self-incrimination, making the case against his own views or way of life. It is unique to Xenophon’s account of this Socratic method, however, that this state is described as that of the interlocutor being rendered *athumos*; Xenophon analyzes in greater detail the psychological effects of Socratic *elenchus*. In Plato’s dialogues, this crucial turning point is usually described simply as aporetic, the interlocutor being reduced to a state of *aporia*, being utterly lost or without a way forward.

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296 Discussed in §3.2 and §7.2.2.
297 It has been said that the *Hiero* is unusual in that the two speakers are evenly matched to such a degree that it’s closer to being a dialogue between ‘two Socrates’ than a typical Socratic dialogue between Socrates and a less acute and articulate, often younger, interlocutor; Gera, *Xenophon’s Cyropaedia*, 26-49, part of a larger contrast between Xenophon and Plato on Socrates. However, Hiero’s fall into the state of extreme dispirit, the effect of *elenchus* and the essential propaedetic for subsequent instruction, a feature of Socratic dialogue elsewhere in Xenophon’s corpus, suggests Gera has overstated the case for the relative equivalency of the interlocutors.
Focusing on the line of argument (7.1-8.1) which culminates in Hiero’s athumia reveals it to be centered on honor and its pursuit. Indeed, the dialogue contains what has been considered to be the locus classicus for Xenophon’s conceptualization of philotimia. It hinges on a contrast between certain types of persons, ‘real men’ (andres), and all other animals, including other human beings (anthropoi), in respect of the presence of philotimia as a motivation to action.

I myself think, Hiero, that a real man (anêr) differs from the other animals in this striving for honor. Since, after all, all animals alike seem to take pleasure in food, drink, sleep, and sex. But ambition (philotimia) does not arise naturally either in the irrational animals or in all human beings (anthropoi). Those in whom love (erôs) of honor (timê) and praise arise by nature differ the most from cattle and are also believed to no longer be human beings merely but real men. Accordingly, it seems to me that you probably endure all these things you bear in a tyranny because you are honored above all other human beings. For no human pleasure seems to come closer to what is divine than the joy connected with honors. (7.3-4)

In Plato’s Republic, the view that an anêr is particularly concerned with, and desirous of, honor is expressed at 550a-b, in reference to the young timocratic-souled man who, despite his father (who has philosophic leanings), becomes motivated by spirited desires for victory and honor. Here, the anêr in question is the tyrant Hiero, who admits to vehemently desiring and seeking honors. Both the timocrat and the tyrant are andres in the dominance of their spirited passion for honor. The difference between them is that

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299 Unless otherwise noted, translations of the Hiero are those of Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth in Strauss, On tyranny: revised and expanded edition.
300 That the tyrant vehemently desires political honor is also indicated by accusations of tyranny targeting those citizens, like Alcibiades, who clearly manifested extreme ambition, on which see Gribble, Alcibiades and Athens, 5 ff.
the timocrat is focused on honor to the exclusion of other goods, whereas the tyrant is
initially portrayed as vehemently pursuing all goods. Simonides’ questioning leads Hiero
to admit, first, that what he most deeply desires is honor and, second, that it is impossible
to gain genuine honors from his subjects so long as they are under coercion. The honors
granted from coerced subjects are not worthy of consideration, a realization which
prompts Hiero to fall into athumia, the fulcrum of the dialogue.

Honor is not the focus of the dialogue’s start or early sections, however, in which
other disadvantages of the tyrannical life are discussed but which do not culminate in
Hiero’s becoming athumos. Tyranny is introduced in the dialogue by Simonides as a status
in which a tyrant can give free rein to the pursuit of all his desires, and do so publicly in
the full sight of others. Tyranny is presented as the ability to do as one pleases, including
against or with other people. For these reasons tyranny was thought to be desirable by
those who were not tyrants.301 Simonides begins with a discussion of how the life of a
private person or the life of a tyrant ‘differ in human joys and pains’ (1.2). Simonides
establishes that pleasures and pains are experienced through the five bodily senses. He
takes the position that the tyrant’s pleasure is multiplied and his pain lessened by virtue
of his position as a tyrant. Hiero claims that the reverse is the case, but Simonides
counters with the question of why so many seek to be tyrants, particularly ‘the most able

301 In Plato’s Republic, at 344b-c, the view that the tyrant is ‘called happy and blessed’ by
other citizens and, indeed, by non-citizens, is expressed by Thrasymachus.
(hikanos) men’. Hiero claims that it is due to their lack of experience of the life of the tyrant that their speculation on its pleasures is not tested and proven incorrect (1.9-10).

Hiero goes about demonstrating that the life of the tyrant is deficient in pleasure and abundant in pain, in comparison with the private life, by going through each of the five senses in turn. The experience of two pleasures is uniquely marred by the lack of freedom and the presence of coercion in the tyranny, however: the pleasures of hearing and of sexual love. Strikingly, the pleasure of hearing is said by Simonides to consist in the hearing of praise; the tyrant has the better of the private man, hearing praise frequently and reproach rarely. But Hiero responds that such praise is essentially flattery. The praise of a flatterer (kolax) is not genuine, and the tyrant knows he is surrounded by flatterers. Simonides agrees and posits a definition of praise which will prove significant in light of the rest of the dialogue: ‘the sweetest praise comes from those who are free (eleutheros) in the highest degree’ (1.14-16). This is one of only two appearances of freedom in the dialogue on tyranny. It is revealing of Xenophon’s emphasis on honor in the dialogue, therefore, that the mention of freedom occurs in the

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302 Uniquely marred because, as we will see, the freedom of those who praise or grant sexual favors to the tyrant is constitutive of the goods—genuine praise and sexual favor—they grant him. The pleasure of sight is different: Hiero mentions spectacles, sights a private person may go seeking out in his own or other cities, chiefly ‘common festivals, where the things which human beings hold most worth seeing are brought together’. In this case, the tyrant is not able to experience these simply because he is not able to travel due to fear that his position at home is always under threat and has to be maintained personally (1.11-12).
context of the distribution of praise. In contrast to the valueless praise of the flatterer, the most highly valued praise is that which comes from those who are most free.

The second pleasure negatively impacted by the lack of freedom in a tyranny is the pleasure of sexual favors. Such pleasure is marred for two reasons. The first is the problem of surfeit, a problem shared with the pleasures of taste: Hiero argues that feasts are enjoyed less by tyrants because they are always expected and posits that surfeit removes the longing (pothos) which is the prerequisite of pleasure (1.17-19). This argument about taste links to the first of two arguments for why the tyrant cannot experience sexual relations with as much pleasure as the private person. First, there is with a surfeit of sex no longing for sex and Hiero argues that a pleasure cannot be experienced without the prior experience of lack which occasions longing. In sexual pleasure, the experience of lack he names love, erôs (1.29-30). The tyrant cannot feel erôs because he does not experience pothos. The second argument about sexual desire differs from that of pleasures of taste, however. The tyrant cannot receive sexual favors from boys with their genuine love, philia, because all subjects in a tyranny operate under compulsion (anankê) and fear (phobos). The tyrant thus never knows whether he is truly being loved in return by his beloved (1.32-38). The pleasurable experience of love, philia, depends on the free granting of love by others, un-coerced and without fear.

Simonides counters that these inconveniences are insignificant, and he does so in a manner which subtly foreshadows the dispiriting culmination of the elenchus. Simonides
responds to Hiero’s argument by claiming that he has seen many ‘reputed to be real men (andres)’ willingly forgo the pleasures of food, drink, delicacies, and even sex (2.1). The poet pointedly leaves out the desire for praise, suggesting thereby that while an anêr willingly gives up the various forms of pleasure which satisfy appetitive desire, he does not give up the form of pleasure at which spirited desire aims.

It’s not immediately apparent that Simonides is heading to a focus on spirited desire, however, as he goes on to describe other respects in which the tyrant’s life is superior to the private man’s, which consist in a mix of goods desired by appetite and spirit. He says most people think that a tyrant has ‘the greatest amount of superfluous things’: horses, arms, adornment for women, houses, the furnishings of houses, and servants. Tyrants are even able to ‘devise great enterprises’, ‘execute them swiftly’, and are ‘most capable of harming your private enemies and benefiting your friends’ (2.1). Simonides’ description contains a number of advantages united by the fact that they are all desired by the private man but held to a greater degree by the tyrant: ‘tyranny displays openly, evident for all to see, the possessions which are held to be of much value’ (2.4).

Hiero replies that it is the multitude which are deceived about these goods by being taken in by appearances. By seeing the tyrant’s advantages, the multitude thinks him to be happy. But they cannot see into the tyrant’s soul (psuchê), ‘where human happiness and unhappiness are stored up’ (2.4). Hiero then expands on the considerable disadvantages of being a tyrant. The tyrant is always at war, even domestically with his
own people and in his own home. The tyrant always fears domestic plots and, unlike the ‘brilliant reputation’ gained in foreign wars, cannot take public pride because he kills domestic enemies (2.7-18). The tyrant cannot even experience the friendships to which nature inclines between parents and children, husbands and wives, and comrades for comrades, as each of these will turn against a tyrant (3.1-9). The tyrant is denied the experience of trusting anyone (4.1-2); cannot delight in the common protection afforded by fellow citizens in a fatherland, as his fellow citizens would honor a tyrannicide were one to arise (4.3-5); cannot take pleasure in having greater wealth than private men, for the tyrant’s rivals are other tyrants and he judges his wealth in comparison with them, desiring difficult to obtain goods like other cities and territories whereas the private man desires only another house or field (4.6-7); has great necessary expenses arising from the constant need to protect his life with guards and an army (4.8-11).

Hieron’s long litany of inconveniences endemic to tyranny eventually lead him to state that tyrants, due to their position, are forced to fear rather than admire certain types of ‘good’ persons: ‘the decent (alkimos), wise and just’.303 They fear the brave (andreios) because they might dare (tolmaô) something for the sake of freedom (eleutheria); the wise, because they might contrive something; and the just, because the multitude might desire to be ruled by them. When, because of their fear, they do away secretly with such men, who is left for them to use save the unjust, the incontinent and the slavish (andrapodôdeis)? The unjust are trusted because they are afraid, just as

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303 In the constitutional debate in Herodotus, the Persian Otanes, the champion of democracy, makes a similar argument about tyranny: that the tyrant envies the best and is pleased by the worst (III.80.4).
the tyrants are, that some day the cities, becoming free, will become their masters. The incontinent are trusted because they are at liberty for the present, and the slavish because not even they deem themselves worthy to be free. (5.1-2)

In the present analysis, emphasis is placed on the first category of persons because of their link to freedom, which had been central to the desire for praise. The *alkimos* are dangerous to the tyrant because they are motivated by a desire for freedom to undertaking actions of daring, *tolmê*. The three virtuous types have been described as forming a ‘liberation movement’: ‘The brave begin the movement against the tyrant in armed struggle or assassination’, while, ‘The wise devise ideal government and the just implement it for the masses’.304

The *alkimos* type of person who initiates the liberation struggle against a tyrant is opposed to the type who is slavish or servile, *andrapodôdês*, confined by a belief he or she is unworthy of a free state. The opposition brings to light that the distinction between the *alkimos*- *andrapodôdês* is not bravery vs. cowardice but spirited self-estimation vs. slavish self-denigration. Other usages of the term *alkimos* prior to Xenophon also suggest such a definition. The psychology of the *alkimos* is expressed in the *Iliad* when Ajax exhorts the Argives:

Dear friends, be men, and put respect (*aidôs*) into your *thumos*, / respect (*aideiste*) one another in the strong fighting; / by respecting (*aidomenôn*) men more are safe than are killed; / but in fleeing there is no glory (*kleos*) and no *alkê*.305 (15.561-4)

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304 Gray, ed. *Xenophon on government*, 128.

305 A very similar formulation is used by Agamemnon to the Danaans: ‘Dear friends, be
Sophocles (*Philoctetes* 326) uses *alkimos* to describe the type of men, *andres*, who takes action to satisfy *thumos* (the action in question in the passage is an act of violent revenge). Tyrtaeus uses it to describe *thumos* itself and Callinus to describe the heart, *étor*, which is the seat of spirited passions.\(^{306}\)

In short, the *alkimos* person is one who has the kind of self-estimation which is the prerequisite for spirited motivations. The opposite of the *andrapodôdês*, such persons believe themselves worthy of freedom, and then put their hands to the daring actions which will initiate their liberation. Hence, the term again appears at the close of this passage, as tyrants ‘do not rejoice in making the citizens either brave (*alkimos*) or well-armed (*euoplos*)’ (5.3). The other occurrence of ‘well-armed’ is in the context of the city as a whole being well-armed by virtue of the mercenary forces (11.3). Simonides counsels Hiero to have a well-armed city but not a well-armed citizenry; the solution to this puzzle proves to be the use of mercenaries. The linkage between bravery and being well-armed in this passage suggests the reason why the citizens cannot be well-armed: the well-armed, like the brave, ‘might dare something for the sake of freedom’.\(^{307}\) These

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\(^{306}\) LSJ s.v.

\(^{307}\) McGlew, *Tyranny and political culture in ancient Greece*, 185-6, argues that just as a tyrant could emerge from any citizen so must every citizen be prepared to be a tyrannicide (187), defining democratic citizenship in terms of ‘the individual citizen’s theoretical potential for violent action on the city’s behalf’ (188, n. 10).
formulations are in accord with those of the *Cyropaedia*, in which arms and the capacity to demand and maintain freedom are linked.\textsuperscript{308}

Ultimately, the tyrant is wracked with fear of a certain kind of person whose quality is likened to that of horses. ‘Fear, you know, when in the soul is not only painful in itself, it also becomes the spoiler of all the pleasures it accompanies’ (6.6).\textsuperscript{309} Those whom the tyrant fears are compared to a good horse ‘who yet gives rise to the fear that he might do some irreparable (*anêkeston*) harm; a man would find it hard to kill him because of his virtue, yet hard to manage him alive, being constantly alert against his working irreparable (*anêkeston*) harm in the midst of danger’ (6.15). As we have seen, for Xenophon good horses are particularly spirited by nature, and thus prone to rebellious behavior unless properly broken. In Plato’s *Republic*, at X.619a, it is the tyrant who works irreparable (*anêkesta*) ills and suffers worse himself. In the present passage, spoken by a tyrant, the emphasis is placed on the irreparable harms he may suffer—leaving out reference to the irreparable harms he has done. These are the pains which mirror the description of the reduced or vitiated pleasures earlier in the dialogue and complete Hiero’s early claim that the tyrant both experiences fewer pleasures and more pains than the private man.

\textsuperscript{308} See §§5.3-4.

\textsuperscript{309} In the *Cyropaedia*, fear is capable of subjugating spirit, in contrast to the emphasis here on how it damages the experience of pleasures.
All of the forgoing is preparatory to the final stage of Hiero’s self-incrimination, launched by Simonides through an emphasis on honor:

Honor seems to be something great, and human beings undergo all toil and endure all danger striving for it. You too, apparently, although tyranny has as many difficulties as you say, nevertheless rush into it headlong in order that you may be honored, and in order that all—all who are present—may serve you in all your commands without excuses, admire you, rise from their seats, give way in the streets, and always honor you both in speeches and deeds. For these are of course the kinds of things that subjects do for tyrants and for anyone else they happen to honor at the moment. (7.1-2)

Immediately following this is Simonides statement that human beings differ from animals in the former’s desire for praise, and that even among human beings some are marked out as particularly desirous of honor.310

Simonides argues it is in respect of honor that the tyrant definitively surpasses the private man and for which persons seek to be tyrants. Hiero responds that, as in sex genuine love is impossible to discern under conditions of compulsion or fear, so is praise impossible to judge as genuine when given in a tyranny. Hiero’s final monologue is an extended description of the genuine honors given to a ‘real man’, a ‘benefactor’, by those whom he helps. They honor him with praise, with acts of deference like standing when he approaches and giving him way in the streets and, indeed, ‘they crown him for his public virtue (koinês aretês) and beneficence (energesia) and willingly bestow gifts on him’. By such acts, those honoring such a man honor him ‘truly’ and he is honored ‘in reality’.

310 Discussed at the start of this section.
Hiero concludes, ‘I myself count blessed (makarizô) the one so honored’, for he is free of the plots against his life and from the fear, envy and danger endemic to the life of the tyrant (7.8-10).

After Hiero’s falling into a state of extreme dispiritedness, becoming athumos (8.1), Simonides sets about educating him. He starts by explaining that what Hiero desires is to be loved by human beings and that tyranny is an ‘obstacle’ to that goal. Simonides argues, in contrast, that ‘ruling’ does not prevent such love and indeed has advantages over the private life in respect of garnering love from others. He goes about showing how the tyrant can win over the people through acts of beneficence (8.1-5). What distinguishes Simonides’ approach to Hiero’s rehabilitation, and which demarcates the dialogue from later mirrors for princes, is the ambiguous nature of Hiero’s rehabilitation. That the tyrant would lay down his tyranny is not envisioned or suggested by Simonides. He proposes an improved tyranny, a tyranny rendered more secure and capable of bestowing greater happiness on the man possessing it.311

Simonides turns the question of the comparison of the lives of the tyrant and the private man into one of who gains more ‘gratitude’ for acts of well-doing to others. He

311 In the following, several stratagems for ruling more effectively are proposed. A reader today would be inclined to call such stratagems ‘Machiavellian’ and it should give us pause as to why that characterization comes so easily. Several of Simonides’ teachings do closely mirror teachings found in Machiavelli’s works, and we await a study of the close parallels between Xenophon and Machiavelli which will advance our understanding of the former’s influence on the latter.
argues that even small attentions from a ruler are more pleasant to the recipient than similar attentions from a private person. Gifts from rulers of the half the value of a gift from a private man receive at least as much gratitude. The gods grant a ‘certain honor and grace’ to the man (anēr) who rules, and ‘not only does ruling make a real man (anēr) nobler, but we behold with greater pleasure the same man when he is ruling than when he lives privately; and we delight more in discoursing with those preeminent in honor than with those equal to us’ (8.2-5). Simonides even goes so far as to argue that boys will pay less attention to a ruler’s old age and ugliness, ‘for his being honored itself helps most to dignify him, so that his offensiveness disappears, and what is noble appears more resplendent’ (8.6). The claim that a status of greater honor shifts how others view the possessor of the status relative to others is made in the Cyropaedia in reference to Cyrus' distributions of honors.

Hier will not put forward an argument which tries to disprove the disparity between the desirability of the lives of rulers and private person. He argues that, on balance, the things the ruler has to do to rule incur greater ‘enmity’ among people than the actions of a private person. Simonides responds by arguing that actions which will incur ‘hatred’ should be delegated to a ruler’s subordinates, while the ruler reserves for himself the dispensing of ‘praise and honor’ and the prizes which are their physical manifestations. He then argues that ‘emulation’ and a ‘striving for honor’ in any field in

312 A motif also utilized in the Cyropaedia, see p. 177.
which prizes are offered will motivate the persons in those fields to work harder and better, whether it be in warfare, ‘justice in contractual relations’, and even farming and importing foreign goods (9.5-9).

Heading off a potential objection from Hiero that such prizes are bound to be expensive, Simonides argues that ‘no articles of commerce are cheaper than what human beings purchase by means of prizes’ citing the small prizes given in competitions of horsemanship, gymnastic and chorus in comparison with the great expenditures, toil and care competitors put into them (9.11). This is a response which is nowhere given in the Cyropaedia to the problem posed there about the insolvency which comes from distributing honors overzealously.313

The key piece of evidence that tyranny has not been done away with is the continued presence of foreign mercenary guards. Hiero asks about them, explicitly holding open the possibility that the techniques Simonides has proposed might rule out the need for such guards. Simonides vehemently denies that the mercenaries can be done away with:

For I know that it is inbred in some human beings, just as in horses, to be insolent (hubristoteros) in proportion as the needs they have are more fully satisfied. The fear (phobos) inspired by the bodyguard (doruphoron) would make such men more moderate (sophronoi). (10.2-3)

313 See p. 186.
In this beneficent tyranny, the more the tyrant succeeds in ordering the regime so that the subjects prosper, the more hubristic they will become. To counter this, the tyrant will have to maintain guards. As in the *Cyropaedia*, the beneficence of the regime does not serve to counter the need for bodyguards around the tyrant or the need for ‘moderation’ among the ruled—that is, a particular kind of disinclination to rebel. However, Hiero’s argument in the dialogue’s first half had been that any presence of compulsion and fear vitiates the honor and praise received, just as compulsion and fear vitiates the genuineness of the love a beloved gives. As a result, the implicit point of the *Hiero* is that so long as the mercenary bodyguards remain in the city, true praise from the citizens still cannot be gained.

Resistance to these guards among the *kalois kagathois* and others can be countered, Simonides argues, by turning them into a police force which is quick to punish the ‘evil-doers’ which inevitably arise in cities and to give ‘confidence and safety’ to those with property. The guards will also be ‘useful to citizens’ in being a highly trained, and thus more effective, force against foreign invasion (10.2-8). Simonides says the guards will provide ‘the citizens with leisure to concern themselves with their private property’ (10.5). All these advantages will be such that the citizens will be willing to spend to maintain these guards. In this account, no mention is made of the lost liberty of the citizenry occasioned by the presence of mercenary force in their midst. The guards are ultimately, despite the various provisions of security described by Simonides, still the
‘bodyguard’ of the tyrant (10.2). Simonides envisages a citizenry willing to surrender its liberty, and its active participation in maintaining the conditions of that liberty, in return for the leisure to cultivate their private property.\textsuperscript{314}

Ultimately, Hiero is to identify the fatherland with his private estate and seek the benefit of the former (11.14). The reason he is to do this is that his ‘contest is against others who rule cities’ and a victory in that contest will result in his being ‘declared by herald the victor in the most noble and magnificent contest among human beings’ (11.7). He will gain thereby the ‘love’ of his subjects and indeed human beings in other cities will praise him publicly (11.8-9). Indeed, he will ‘acquire the most noble and most blessed possession to be met with among human beings, for while being happy, you will not be envied for being happy’ (11.15). This is only the second occurrence of the term ‘blessed’, the first being in reference to the man receiving honor from free men (7.9). The honor that man gained was also free of envy. The elaborate advice given by Simonides to the tyrant is meant to simulate the state of envy-free happiness the successful ruler in a free polity can gain.

While happiness free of envy is the final claim Simonides makes for his teaching, he nowhere claims that the tyrant, even the beneficent tyrant he describes, will possess the ‘sweetest honor’ which comes from those who are ‘free in the highest degree’ (1.16).

\textsuperscript{314} For a recent utilization of a similar kind of argument, used to critique a passive citizenry, see Maurizio Viroli, \textit{The liberty of servants: Berlusconi’s Italy} (Princeton, 2012).
Furthermore, the continued presence of mercenaries dictates that the ‘brave and well-armed’ not be allowed to exist in the city—the brave being those most like to ‘dare something for the sake of freedom’—and that fear remain a tool by which the tyrant’s subjects are rendered ‘moderate’. Even the reformed, beneficent tyrant being can’t tolerate the brave, wise or just in his city. A liberation movement could still arise from such types.

As in the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon here articulates both a psychology of honor and a normative critique of forms of honor which are granted under coercion or fear. The primary good a person desires in seeking to rule are the honors that come from that rule. In Xenophon’s discourse, it is the *anêr* whose nature compels him to seek honor and pursue the difficult means whereby it is gained. Other human beings, mere *anthropoi*, are akin to cattle in lacking a native inclination to the desire for honor (*philotimia*). To aspire to tyranny is to aspire to be honored above all others and to experience the joy which is closest to being divine (7.1-7).

The psychology of honor Xenophon formulates is meant to be explanatory and predictive. It explains what motivates the *anêr* by nature and thereby explains the origin of ambition in human society and predicts what future *andres* will attempt. Xenophon’s normative critique of certain forms of honor is formulated in terms of the freedom of those granting the honor. If they are operating under fear or compulsion, the person doing acts which would otherwise be considered acts of honor is not in fact honoring. Indeed, those
acts are considered ‘deeds of slavery’ (7.8). Freedom is a prerequisite for an agent to be able genuinely to distribute praise to another.

Furthermore, certain types of persons, in Xenophon’s view, have a unique relationship to freedom. The brave are willing to ‘dare something for the sake of freedom’ and must be eliminated in the tyrant’s regime. The slavish, in contrast, are unique in that ‘not even they deem themselves worthy to be free’ (5.2). Accordingly, the slavish are one of the types of person the tyrant wishes to fill his regime with, but by doing so he denies himself the honors which can only come from the free. Simonides gradually works to the high point of the dialogue in which honor is revealed as the final end of the anêr and philotimia the natural outgrowth of his nature (7.3). This discourse on honor prompts Hiero’s startling admission that true honor is only possible in a polity of the free, eleutheros. But the tyrant is in a double-bind: he cannot gain the honor he desires, as a spirited person, save from those who are free, but to allow into his polity those persons who believe themselves worthy of freedom, the alkimos, is to admit precisely those who will imitate the action to overthrow the tyrant. In seeking to satisfy his ambition, philotimia, the tyrant will put in motion the rebellion which will effect his downfall.

One component of the argument sometimes made that the Hiero is a late work rests on the claim that ‘Tyranny and laconism do not go together’.315 Because Sparta was

315 Aalders, ‘Date and intention of Xenophon’s Hiero’, 212.
known to be particularly inimical to tyranny and played a part in overthrowing several,\(^{316}\) it is inferred that since Xenophon was a laconophile he could not have been a proponent of tyranny.\(^{317}\) But with the Spartan defeat in 362 BCE—so Aalders’ argument goes—tyranny became a viable option to an anti-democratic thinker like Xenophon. However, as we have seen, at the core of the \textit{Hiero} is a political message which belies that conclusion. The impossibility of a ruler’s obtaining genuine honor from a body of subjects who are subject to coercion suggests that tyranny cannot be a reasonable anti-democratic alternative for the kind of \textit{philotimoi} which Xenophon envisions as the best potential political leaders. The subtle point of the \textit{Hiero} is that tyranny can’t fulfill the potential or actual tyrants’ spirited desire for honor, the very desire which prompts their aspiration to tyranny. For Xenophon—and here his theory again contrasts with Plato’s—the desire for honor itself, if pursued in an open-eyed way, reveals the undesirability of tyranny.

\section*{§6.3 \textit{OECONOMICUS}}

The \textit{Oeconomicus}, the oldest treatise on household management in Western literature, is on close inspection a dialogue about managing persons by motivating them to

\(^{316}\) Aristotle, \textit{Politics} 1312b7-8.

\(^{317}\) For a related argument that aristocrats more broadly—a body with extensive overlap with that of laconophiles—were prior to the close of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century and the 4\textsuperscript{th} century deeply opposed to tyranny, see Kurt von Fritz, ‘Conservative reaction and one man rule in ancient Greece’, \textit{Political Science Quarterly} 56, no. 1 (1941), 52-4.
act as the ruler wishes. The most effective way to motivate such persons is by inciting them to action through the prospect of honor and praise. Ischomachos himself teaches both his wife and steward how to rule their subordinates through the awarding of praise and honor and the meting out of blame and dishonor. These are also the means by which the wife and steward are ruled by Ischomachos, who also reserves for himself the capacity to exercise capital punishment over the servants. Overall, however, for Ischomachus, as for Cyrus, ruling is primarily a matter of allocating honor and praise and, as a prerequisite of that practice, being able to discern which subordinates are motivated by philotimia—as opposed to other forms of desire, chiefly appetitive.

The dialogue occurs between Socrates and Kritoboulos, a young man, son of an aristocrat, who is also Socrates’ interlocutor in the Memorabilia (II.4). The subject of the dialogue is the activity of the gentleman, the kalos k’agathos. Structurally, the bulk of the dialogue is another dialogue between Socrates and the gentleman Ischomachos. Socrates says Ischomachos is ‘highly reputed’ (eudokimeis) for the ‘works of the gentleman’ (ta tou kalou kagatou andros erga; 11.1) and indeed calls him a ‘perfect gentleman’ (andra apeirgasmenon kalon te kagathon; 11.3). The purpose of Socrates relating the conversation with Ischomachos is to demonstrate to Kritoboulos how Socrates went about

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318 Unless otherwise noted, translations of the Oeconomicus are those of Carnes Lord in Strauss, Xenophon’s Socratic discourse.
trying to determine the definition of the gentleman. He did so by going to a man reputed to be such, Ischomachos, and asking him how he conducted his life and affairs.319

Of significance for our understanding of Xenophon’s Socrates, the one occasion in Xenophon’s corpus of Socrates becoming athumos is in the Oeconomicus. It is, as will be seen in detail in the next chapter, characteristic of Socratic elenchus that it renders the interlocutor athumos and, thereby, opens him to education. In the Oeconomicus, Socrates describes himself as growing disheartened not, however, through being subjected to a form of elenchus but by being publicly ridiculed by Aristophanes. Aristophanes, of course, had called Socrates a man of no consequence, poor, and an idle talker. When Socrates found himself athumos with the accusation, he to turned to another for education—but not to Aristophanes. He turned instead to Ischomachos to learn how to become a kalos k’agathos. So Xenophon’s story goes.

‡‡

The dialogue opens with Socrates establishing that oikonomia, estate management, is a kind of knowledge, epistêmê (1.1),320 a knowledge of an art (technê; 1.4). One of the early problems posed by Kritoboulos to Socrates is that of persons who possess types of knowledge, some of use in war, others of use in peace, and yet they fail to put that

319 On the ‘prototype’ approach of Rosen and Sluiter, Andreia: studies in manliness and courage in classical antiquity, discussed in §1.2, Xenophon’s Socrates points Kritoboulos to Ischomachus as the prototype of the kalos k’agathos in order to determine the meaning of the abstract concept of kaloskagathia.

320 The Cyropaedia begins with similar claims to advancing an epistêmê; see ch. 4.
knowledge to work. Kritoboulos suggests that failure comes from their lack of a master 
(*despotês*). Socrates counters that such a person does in fact have a ruler (*archôn*), indeed, 
several such rulers who are ‘unseen’ (*aphanês*), that is, they rule within the psychology of a person. He advances a division between types of rulers. The first are ‘most wicked’ 
(*ponêrotatoi*) and are characterized by ‘inactivity and softness of soul (*malakia psuchês*) 
and neglect’ (1.19). Socrates articulates the view that a person can be governed by ‘unseen rulers’ in the form of inclinations and desires which prevent the person from undertaking activity at all.

The second type are ‘mistresses’ (*despoinai*) who take the form of overweening desires for various pleasures which prevent persons from achieving works beneficial to themselves. Socrates describes persons who work hard but nevertheless have the fruits of their work consumed by various kinds of desire (*epithumia*). They seem to be wellborn but are in fact slaves to ‘harsh masters’ like gluttony, lust, drunkenness, and ‘foolish and expensive ambitions’; such rulers use human beings while they are in their prime and can work and then abandon them when they are no longer capable of working due to age (1.22).³²¹

In the first form of domination—which will prove the more conventional form of domination, as by a foreign power—the ‘masters’ in question render the person inactive or

³²¹ The language of using a person until old age arrives is reminiscent of that of suitors who pursue the young until their beauty fades. For an example, see the beginning of Plato’s *Alcibiades.*
effeminate, literally ‘soft of soul’, a phrase suggesting the quality of being dispirited. In the second form, the ‘masters’ allow the person to seem wellborn but secretly enslave them and consume the fruits of the person’s labor. Socrates is extending one account of the psychology of slavery—that to be dominated creates the qualities of inactivity and dispiritedness in the dominated—into a new version. Socrates’ attempted recasting of the discourse of slavery and freedom into his own psychological account is also seen in his attempt to stretch the language of resistance—literally, to struggle for freedom—to dominating the epithumotic desires: ‘It is no less necessary, Kritoboulos, to fight for freedom (diamachesthai peri tês eleutherias) against them than against those who attempt to enslave by arms’ (1.23). Indeed, the enslavement of the soul by the appetitive desires can be worse, in Socrates’ account, than actual enslavement by a foreign power, for:

Enemies, when they are gentlemen and have enslaved others, have in fact compelled many to become better by moderating them and have made them live in greater ease in the time remaining to them; but these mistresses never cease to plague the bodies, the souls, and the households of human beings as long as they rule over them. (1.23)

The above is the sole mention in the Oeconomicus of fighting for freedom from a kind of rule. In the Hiero, certain individuals, those who are alkimos, were characterized by

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322 The same term for ‘softness’ of soul, malakia, is central to discussion of dispirited states in Republic III. See §2.2.2.

323 Indeed, eleutheria appears only twice more in the dialogue. The first appearance is as part of the title ‘Zeus Deliverer’, to whom the temple is dedicated on which colonnade Socrates finds Ischomachos and conducts their discussion. The second occurs in Ischomachos’ description of his and his wife’s training of a female slave to keep their home in order: they tell her that she will live a ‘richer and freer’ life if she is just—that is, cares for and does not neglect or steal their property—than if she is not. Ischomachos also
their willing to exercise daring in acting to effect their freedom. Here, it is not fighting for
freedom from actual slavery—the condition first envisaged—but fighting for freedom from
appetitive desires—the second, extended psychological sense here introduced by
Socrates—which is advanced.

Among the list of desires is included one which is spirited: a form of *philotimia*.
The qualifying adjectives—foolish and expensive—are sufficient to show that it is not
*philotimia* generally which is here being criticized as a vice, but only certain forms of it.
This is consistent with statements in the *Oeconomicus* itself, as indeed in the *Hiero* and in
the *Cyropaedia*, which allow for and indeed embrace *philotimia* as a positive motivation.
However, as we shall see, the form of *philotimia* pursued by Kritoboulos is expensive, and
occasions the *aporia* which leads him to submit to Socrates’ instruction.

Immediately after Socrates’ description of the various vices which rob a person of
his best years, Kritoboulos asserts that he is free of such ‘mistresses’. Socrates counters
that he thinks Kritoboulos has in fact been made poor on account of the expenses needed
to maintain the ‘pomp’ (*schêma*) and ‘reputation’ (*doxa*) he has assumed (2.4). The
expensive tasks dictated by Kritoboulos’ standing in the city include paying often for large
sacrifices, housing foreign visitors and treating them with ‘magnificence’ (*megaloprepês*),
providing feasts for fellow citizens, and responding to the city’s call for him to accomplish
great things like breeding horses, training choruses, supporting the gymnasia, and other
treats his best servants as ‘free men’ (14.9).
forms of public leadership. Finally, in war, Kritoboulos will be expected to finance the support of a trireme. (2.5-6) Kritoboulos’ standing as a gentleman in the city, represented in his *doxa* and the *schêma* he has adopted—his dignity and rank, his public face and figure—burdens him with great expenses. The work begins with an implied critique of the political role Kritoboulos expects to fill.

Kritoboulos fails to see how he can maintain such a public persona and its associated expenses—such is the orienting problem of the work. As in the *Hiero*, a failure to gain a type of honor occasions the *aporia*. Kritoboulos then submits to Socrates: ‘it’s time for you to take command of me lest I become really pitiable (*oiktros*)’ (2.8). The skill Socrates has which can help him out of this *aporia* is, as Kritoboulos puts it, the knowledge of ‘how to produce a surplus’. Socrates has shown that he has more than he needs, and Kritoboulos looks to him to teach him that skill on the following logic: ‘I expect that one who saves something from a little could very easily produce a large surplus from much’. On such reasoning, Kritoboulos submits himself to Socrates’ instruction in the arts of *oikonomia*.

Kritoboulos believes that Socrates possesses the knowledge of estate management (*epistemê oikonomias*). Socrates warns him, however, that just as a person who has never played a flute ought not to be expected to possess the knowledge of how to play, if he has never possessed the instrument (*organon*) of wealth how can he possess the knowledge of its use? Kritoboulos accuses Socrates of merely playing *coy*, and in response Socrates
admits that he has sought out those in the city who are knowledgeable. He discovered that among those who pursued the same kind of work, some were very poor and others very rich. At this, he ‘wondered greatly (apothaumazô)’ and investigated the cause. He discovered that those who acted at random (eikêi) suffered loss while those who exercised diligence (epimeleomai) and focused their mind (gnômê) succeeded in doing things quickly, easily and profitably. Socrates allows that if Kritoboulos wishes to learn from these men he can become ‘an extremely clever money-maker (chrêmatistês; 2.18)’.

Xenophon’s Socrates does not urge—in the manner of some later Cynics—his interlocutor to give up the desire to be a kalos k’agathos, motivated by the philotimia, which leads to many expensive obligations to the city. To the contrary, Socrates sets about showing Kritoboulos how to fulfill that desire. Similarly to the Hiero, the interlocutor in the dialogue is led to the aporia in which submits to the wiser man for instruction is accomplished after they have reached a failure, by their own lights and practices, to gain and maintain the kind of honor they wish to possess in political society. Their admitted failure to adequately fulfill their ambition for honor and reputation in the community leads them into the wiser man’s pedagogical grip.

Also similarly to the Hiero—and, indeed, to Plato’s Alcibiades—the wiser man does not set about changing the goals of the interlocutor but argues that his teaching will help the interlocutor better achieve those goals. In the Alcibiades, Alcibiades’ desire to be honored as ruler of Athens is to be achieved through his tutelage under Socrates in
philosophy. In the *Hiero*, Hiero’s desire to be a tyrant who is not envied is to be achieved through Simonides’ teaching regarding beneficence toward the ruled. In the *Oeconomicus*, Kritoboulos’ desire to adequately fulfill his role as gentleman, maintaining his reputation (*doxa*), is to be achieved through Socrates’ recounting of Ischomachos’ teaching regarding estate management and, more broadly, ruling itself. In each case, it is the interlocutor’s desire for honor and reputation which is to be better pursued through the wiser man’s teaching.

Plato’s *Alcibiades* and the *Oeconomicus* are also in opposition. Both present a man desirous of political standing and success in the community, though admittedly Alcibiades’ ambition is markedly more extreme than that of Kritoboulos. Both reach an *aporia* in respect of their ability to describe how they will pursue that goal. Both submit, in the wake of that dispiriting *aporia*, to the teaching of a wiser man who claims to be able to show them how to better pursue that goal. In the case of the *Alcibiades I*, however, Plato’s Socrates argues that Alcibiades must become his pupil in philosophy. In the *Oeconomicus*, Xenophon’s Socrates admits his ignorance of the gentlemanly arts of estate management and rule over human beings and points to the gentleman Ischomachos as Kritoboulos’ proper teacher. Plato’s Socrates redefines gentlemanliness as the pursuit of philosophy. Xenophon’s Socrates redefines gentlemanliness as the management of people and the pursuit of wealth. In neither case is the type of the gentleman presented as stable, as capable of being motivated by his own norms. The most straight-forward definition of the
kalos k’agathos may well be that of Alcibiades in the Alcibiades Major: one who has knowledge of foreign policy (106c ff) and knowledge of domestic friendship and concord (126a ff). Socrates in the Oeconomicus elides the political realm and the economic: all the activities Kritoboulos undertakes for the city, as a gentleman, come with a monetary expense and are clearly civic acts, but the kind of active political agency Alcibiades dreamt of providing Athens—being at the center of, and influencing, political decision-making—is not here envisaged.

Socrates does not immediately describe the arts of the money-maker, however, but instead launches into a long excursus, running nearly three sections of the dialogue, describing the various ways farming is ideal for the gentleman (3.1-6.10). Indeed, it is good for free man (anêr eleutheros) generally. Farming keeps a man out of doors, robust of body and soul, capable of working with others, exhorting subordinates to labor, and provides him the leisure ‘to join in the concerns of friends and of the city’ (4.3). These qualities are contrasted to those brought about by the ‘mechanical’ (banausikos) trades, which keep their practitioners indoors, render their bodies effeminate, their souls diseased and enervated, leave them with no leisure to tend the affairs of their friends or the city, and incline them to hide behind the walls of the city during an invasion instead of standing in the countryside. Socrates sums up his praise of farming as a way of life for free men, and a kind of knowledge to be possessed by gentlemen: ‘This manner of living is,

324 Similar advantages, with the exception of leisure, are discussed in the Ps.-Ar. Oeconomicus 1343b2-6.
as a result, held in highest repute by the cities, for it seems to provide the best and best-willed citizens (politês) to the community’ (6.10).  

Socrates’ excursus—his stirring praise of farming, as befitting gentlemen, free men, and citizens—does not satisfy Kritoboulos, who gently reminds Socrates of what he had earlier promised to discuss: why some who practice a trade like farming end up with more than they need (a surplus) why others end up lacking (6.11). It is at this point that Socrates offers to describe how he went seeking out a person reputed by all to be a gentleman. Kritoboulos responds most eagerly: ‘I would like very much to hear it, as I too desire (eraô) to become worthy of that name.’ (6.12). It is with an ‘erotic love’—that is, an especially vehement love—that Kritoboulos desires to become a kalos k’agathos. This language of an erôs for the honored status of gentleman, as with the categorization of philotimia above as a kind of epithumia, show in a manner paralleled in the Republic how spirited desires can be described using terms drawn from appetitive desire: it is the object, not the terms for desire itself, which makes a desire spirited.

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325 The prerequisites for the training of good citizens is also discussed at 4.3, when Socrates sums up the failings of the banausic life: ‘Lack of leisure to join in the concerns of friends and of the city is another condition of those that are called mechanical; those who practice them are reputed to be bad friends as well as bad defenders of their fatherlands. Indeed in some cities, especially those reputed to be good at war, no citizen (politis) is allowed to work at the mechanical arts’. Sparta is no doubt here implicitly referenced.

326 The only other occurrence of erotic love in the Oeconomicus is at 7.15, in which the vehement ‘erotic love’ of profit is contrasted to a more moderate, ‘friendly’ love of profit at 7.16.
Socrates relates how he found Ischomachos in the colonnade of Zeus the Deliverer at leisure, waiting for foreign visitors. Ischomachos laughs when it is suggested that he is known as a gentleman, observing that when he is called upon to pay for a liturgy, or fund a trireme or a chorus, it is not by the generic term ‘gentleman’ that he is summoned, but by name, and by his father’s name. Ischomachos indicates thereby that one of the marks of the gentleman is that he is not anonymous, that he has a name in the community and is called upon specifically to perform certain tasks.

Ischomachos begins his discussion of oikonomia with discussion of the training of the wife, who manages the part of the estate which is indoors. This division of labor between husband and wife proves to be unimportant to the techniques needed for governing the two parts of the estate, however. Both hinge on the techniques of motivating subordinates through oversight of them and the distribution of honor and praise, primarily, and in some cases blame and punishment.

Ischomachos motivates his wife with the prospect of honor. He concludes his initial teaching to his wife, in section 7, by holding out the possibility that, if she does well, she will not be ‘honored’ any less inside the household than he. The better she is at being a partner to him and for the children a guardian the more she will be ‘honored (timios) in the household’ (7.42). Hearing this offer of being honored in the household, Ischomachos’ wife was ‘stirred (kineó) to diligence’ (8.1). She was clearly sensitive to the obverse of a desire for honor, a sense of shame, as she blushed deeply when she failed in one of the
crucial tasks Ischomachos had taught her: to know where everything in the household is so that it is ready to hand for all occasions, especially emergencies (8.1, 16-17). The most necessary quality for a household is ‘order’ (*taxis*), just as in a chorus, an army, a trireme, or a farm. Indeed, Ischomachos concludes, ‘There is nothing, wife, so useful or fine for human beings as order’ (8.3). The language of motivation is similar to that deployed in the *Cyropaedia* but is suitably modified for the feminine context and the type of activity the wife pursues: rather than the prospect of honor ‘whetting the spirit’ for difficult or dangerous deeds, it ‘stirs to diligence’ Ischomachos’ wife to her task of creating order in the household.

Ischomachos’ wife’s fails to order the household successfully, however, and reveals the negative spirited reactions of being ashamed and blushing. So deep is her distress that she is in danger of becoming *athumos*. Ischomachos has to encourage her: ‘Don’t be discouraged (*athumeô*)’ (8.1). Section 8 ends with him again exhorting her, ‘Nor should we be discouraged (*athumeô*)’—at the possibility that they will fail to find someone to keep the household in order, a housekeeper. This extreme reaction of being rendered dispirited arises from Ischomachos’ wife’s failure to achieve the most important task she has in the household. Ischomachos closes by expressing a highly Xenophontic conception of the relation between a dispiriting experience and the more serious failure to revive oneself.
after such a setback, a cause for condemnation: ‘The god threatens andpunishes the slack (blax; 8.16)’.327

Ischomachos and his wife prove not to be slack but continue in pursuit of their endby way of knowledge of ruling other human beings, and Ischomachos describes how he taught both his wife and his estate steward how to rule their subordinates. To his wife, he exhorts her to see herself as a ‘guardian of the laws’ (nomophulax) of the household. He likens this guardianship to that of a law-governed polity in which citizens do not think the laws alone sufficient but appoint such guardians to examine the citizens’ compliance with the laws and to praise those who act lawfully and punish those who do not (9.14). She is to govern the household in a similar rule, as a nomophulax, and indeed, to conduct herself as a ‘queen’ (basilissa) in addition to praising and punishing, also ‘honor’ (timaô) and ‘rebuke’ (loidoreô) the servants (9.15).

In sections 9-14, Ischomachos teaches both his wife and his steward how to rule their subordinates through the allocation of praise and honor as rewards and by the imposition of blame and dishonor as punishments. Ischomachos even says that he treats his servants as ‘free men’ when they do well, ‘not only enriching them but honoring them as gentlemen’. (14.9) In this striking formulation, Ischomachos reveals that he is willing

327 This important term is opposed to thumoeides by Xenophon in his De re equestri, 9.12. It is similarly used to denote a negative state of low-spiritedness at Cyr. 1.4.12, when Cyrus is afraid to approach his grandfather Astyages, and Mem. 4.2.40, after Socrates has rendered Euthydemus wholly dispirited (athumos) he makes the judgement that those persons who cannot revive themselves after such a dispiriting must be ‘slack’ by nature.
to use the honor of the being accorded the status of the gentleman—if only within the confines of the estate—as a means by which to elicit the obedient service of his subjects.

The reason Ischomachos honors some servants in this way, and does not merely reward them monetarily, is that, as he explains to Socrates, ‘the ambitious man (philotimos) differs from the man who loves profit—in his willingness to toil when there is need of it, to risk danger, and to abstain from base profits, for the sake of praise and honor’ (14.10). One of the concerns of the gentleman is that his servants might steal. One means of preventing such theft is discussed, and employed, by Ischomachos: he draws from the laws of Drakon and Solon which stipulate that those caught stealing should be imprisoned and, if they resist, killed (14.5). Such is one means of inducing justice among his servants, but he proceeds to describe the allocation of honor, including the honor of being considered a gentleman, as an alternative way of motivating those persons who are philotimos.328

In the center of Ischomachos’ description of how he has governed his wife and steward through the allocation of honor, and how he has taught them to govern their own subordinates similarly, Socrates reveals why he has approached Ischomachos.

328 Xenophon’s Ischomachos does not go so far as the writer of the Pseudo-Aristotelean Oeconomicus who argues slaves ought to be given the prospect of the release from their slavery, offering ‘freedom as a prize, for [slaves] are willing to work when a prize is set before them and a limit of time is defined’ (1244b16-17). This is a significant departure from Xenophon’s economic treatise in light of the Ps.-Aristotelian Oeconomicus’s otherwise close accord, particularly in Book 1, with Xenophon’s Oeconomicus.
Ischomachos is ‘highly reputed’ (*eudokimeis*) for the ‘works of the gentleman’ (*ta tou kalou kagatou andros erga*; 11.1). Indeed, Socrates describes Ischomachos as the ‘perfect gentleman’ and reveals that, in contrast to Ischomachos, he has been ‘reputed to be an idle talker and to measure the air’ and ‘reproached for being poor’ (11.3). In response to these accusations, which are the same as those advanced in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, Socrates says he became ‘greatly discouraged (*athumiai*)’. This is the only occurrence, in both the Xenophontic and Platonic corpuses, of Socrates being described, or describing himself, as *athumia*. In contrast to other individuals who are said to be rendered *athumia*, and who need the help of another person to escape from that state of extreme dispiritedness, Socrates is revived only by a chance encounter with the owner of a horse. The horse had been followed and praised by others, so Socrates asks the horseman whether the horse had any wealth. Receiving a suitably incredulous denial from the horseman, Socrates concludes that just as ‘it is permitted a poor horse to become good if it has a soul by nature good’ so can he ‘become a good man’ if he learns from Ischomachos about the works of gentleman and begins practicing them. To begin to live such a life is to begin to practice ‘virtue’ (11.4-6).

Socrates, like Kritoboulos, wishes to learn what it means to be a gentleman. Ischomachos’ concerns are ‘to acquire health, strength of body, honor in the city, good will among my friends, and in war noble safety and noble increase in riches’ (11.8). He is

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concerned to be rich because he wishes to ‘honor the gods magnificently, to aid friends
when they need something, and to see that the city is never unadorned through lack of
wealth’ (11.9). Socrates concludes:

These are fine things (ta kala) you speak of, Ischomachos, and particularly
suited to a capable man (ischurôs andros). Indeed how could it be
otherwise? For there are many human beings who cannot live without
being in need of others, and many are content if they can provide only what
is enough for themselves. But as to those who not only can manage their
own households but even produce a surplus which enables them to adorn
the city and relieve their friends, how could one hold that they are not men
of weight (batheis) and strength (errômenous)? There are indeed many of us
who can praise this sort. (11.10-11)

Socrates’ description concludes with a recognition that such a man is one whom many can
praise. In contrast to the accusations brought against Socrates, as depicted in the Clouds,
Ischomachos is praised in the city.330

Subsequent to chapter 11, Ischomachos describes how he taught his estate steward
to rule subordinates. Socrates exclaims that this is a very important thing to teach:

For whoever is able to make rulers (archikous) of human beings can
evidently teach them also to be masters (despotikous) of human beings, and
whoever can make them masters can also make them kings (basilikous).
And so the one who can do this seems to me to be worthy of great praise.
(13.5)

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330 This is literally the central chapter of the work, and a kind of ring construction can be
discerned in the dialogue as a whole. Before ch. 11 is Ischomachos’ discussion on training
his wife. After ch. 11 is Ischomachos’ discussion of how to train his steward. Before the
discussion of Ischomachos’ wife is Socrates’ discussion with Critobolous on farming. After
the discussion of Ischomachos’ steward is his discussion of farming. The dialogue begins
with a chapter which culminates on how a lack of moderation creates slavish souls. The
dialogue ends with a chapter which culminates in a discussion of how the ‘mysteries of
moderation’ can motivate persons to action.
In selecting his stewards, Ischomachos needs persons who are capable of diligence. As a prerequisite to this he selected those who possessed self-control in respect of sleep, wine, and sex. Such persons being selected, two types of motivation are then considered. Some servants are ‘in love’ (erōtikós) with profit (13.15). For these, they need simply be shown that diligence is profitable. Here, Ischomachos shows how certain appetitive desires can be selected for in subordinates, those which are conducive to work, specifically.

Other subordinates, however, are ‘temperate (metriós) friendly lovers of profit (philokerdeis)’\(^{331}\). They are not motivated by the prospect of profit to the same extent as the first type of servant. To motivate this second type, Ischomachos responds that he allocates praise and honor (13.16). This distinction between two types of servants is expanded upon by Ischomachos, who observes that it is possible to motivate some slaves in a manner akin to how beasts are motivated, namely, by ‘gratifying their bellies to the extent they desire’. However, some slaves possess ‘ambitious natures’ (philotimoi tôn phuseôn) and these are motivated by praise, indeed such natures are ‘as hungry for praise as others are for food and drink’ (13.9).

In order to have means to honor those servants who are motivated by praise, Ischomachos purposefully creates distinctions in the clothing and shoes he supplies to his servants, giving the better attire to those who perform better. He concludes by justifying

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\(^{331}\) This translation draws attention to the distinction, in Greek, between the more vehement type of desire represented by erōs and the less vehement desire represented by philia.
his creation of gradations of honor among his servants with an assertion, based on his observations, of a general principle of human conduct:

It seems to me, that it is a great discouragement (athumia) to the good (tois agathois) when they see that the work is done by themselves and yet that they receive the same as those who aren’t willing to toil or risk danger when there is need of it. I myself, therefore, in no way consider the better and the worse deserve to receive equal things, and when I see that the stewards have given the best things to those who are worth the most, I praise them, but if I see someone being honored before others through flattery (kolakeuma)...I reprimand the steward and try to teach him that what he is doing is not to his own advantage. (13.12)

As was seen in the Cyropaedia, one of Xenophon’s principles is that individuals become dispirited, athumos, if they are undertaking difficult or dangerous tasks and are not recognized for their action in a distinctive way relative to those who do undertake such tasks.332 This form of athumia is contrasted to that seen above, in the case of Ischomachos’ wife, in which athumia is occasioned by the failure to achieve a task to which one has set oneself and which one considers of great importance. The third type of athumia is only seen in the Cyropaedia and is a kind of subjugation of soul which comes from fear of future punishment.

The Oeconomicus ends with a long monologue by Ischomachos on how ‘what is common to all actions—to farming, politics, estate management (oikonomikos) and war’ is ruling (archikos). Ischomachos explains why a ruler is able to elicit superlative effort from subordinates while another ruler is unable to do so, in terms of differences in the capacity

332 See particularly §5.2.
of ‘judgment’ (gnômê) among rulers. Ischomachos first describes how superlative action is achieved in warfare (21.3-8) and then draws similar conclusions about ruling in ‘private work’ (idiois ergois, 21.9-10). Those rulers who possess gnômê is able to ‘say and do such things as whet (akonaô) the souls of human beings and cause them to toil willingly’ while those who are ‘lacking in judgment’ (agnômôn) fail to achieve this.333 The quality of gnômê is, the present analysis suggests, the capacity to motivate subordinates by first discerning to what ends or pleasures they are drawn: to profit, or other appetitive desires, on the one hand, or to spirited desires for honor and the avoidance of shame, on the other.

Ischomachos offers the example of a trireme captain who, with gnômê, is able to accomplish a voyage in half the time of one who is agnômôn. Additionally, the latter arrive in port being hated by the rowers while the rowers in the former case arrive ‘dripping sweat and full of praise for one another’ (21.3) The divine, good, and knowing rulers are capable of instilling shame in soldiers, eliciting willing obedience, and making them such as ‘toil undiscouraged (ouk athumôs) when toil is needed’ (21.5). The ruler is capable of instilling mutual emulation among subordinates such that they willingly seek to outdo one another in the common enterprise. This rule prevents the subordinates from becoming dispirited in the face of toil.

333 As was seen in §6.2, the language of ‘whetting the souls’ of subordinates is crucial to describing the activity of Cyrus and his elites. A different verb for ‘whetting’ is here used, but the underlying notion of stimulating action through competition and prospective reward is clear.
Just as a love of toil may arise in certain private men, so in a whole army under good rulers there may arise both a love of toil and an ambition (philotimia) to be seen doing some fine act by the ruler himself. (21.6)

Rulers who are capable of instilling this philotimia become ‘the strongest (errômenos—formidable, robust) rulers’ in that they surpass their subordinates not in physical strength but in the capacity to incite others to follow them ‘through fire and through every danger’ (21.7).

Indeed, Ischohomachos continues, one ‘might justly call these great-minded (megalognômôn)’ and concludes ‘he may plausibly be said to march with a strong arm whose mind so many arms are willing to serve, and he is really a great man who can do great things by means of the mind rather than by means of strength’ (21.8). Similarly, in private affairs a steward or supervisor who is able to stir workers to be ‘filled with spirit (menos) and a love of victory (philonikia) and an ambition (philotimia) to outdo (kratisteuo) the others’ would have ‘something of a kingly character (êthos basilikos)’ (21.10).

In order for a person to arrive at such ability to rule, he needs ‘education, a good nature, and most of all, to become divine’ (21.11).

For it seems to me that this good— to rule over willing subjects—is not altogether a human thing but, rather, divine; it is clearly given only to those who have been genuinely initiated into the mysteries of moderation (alêthinôs sôphrosunê); but tyrannical rule over unwilling subjects, it seems to me, they give to those whom they believe worthy of living like Tantalus in Hades, who is said to spend unending time in fear of a second death. (21.12)
Curiously, while the essence of good rule has come to light, in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, as the possession of ‘judgment’ (*gnômê*), the ability to inspire willing ambition on the part of subordinates to surpass each other, a quality which if possessed to a superlative degree is termed ‘greatness of mind’ (*megalognômôn*), the dialogue concludes that that it is the mysteries of moderation into which the potential ruler must be initiated. Why are there no mysteries of ambition or emulation? Why is the quality needed by a potential ruler not the *êthos basilikos* described shortly before? The logic of the preceding is that there is a unique capacity, *gnômê*, which is capable of ruling others through the manipulation of their characteristic desires so they are stimulated to willing obedience to and, what is more, a tireless exertion in pursuit of ends chosen by the ruler. This theory of rule has little relation to *sôphrosynê* as conventionally conceived; for example, it does not hinge on asking moderate amounts of one’s subordinates, but rather motivating them to extreme exertion through the judicious use of honor and emulation.

The puzzle of the ‘mysteries of moderation’ at the end of the *Oeconomicus* can be unraveled with the help of Xenophon’s view of moderation seen in the *Cyropaedia* I. There, the Platonic theory of the ‘hydraulic effect’ of desire within the soul helped explain Cyrus’ unique motivational set and avoidance of certain activities. That form of moderation arises from the canalizing of psychological energy into the pursuit of a person’s distinctive desire and away from other desires. Here in the *Oeconomicus*, the capacity of ruling human beings hinges on a particular kind of judgment which can
perceive and appeal to the distinctive dispositions and desires of other persons to motivate them to action. Those who desire appetitive goods can be motivated with the prospect of such goods, of course. But as we have seen, Xenophon’s interest is primarily in those persons with dispositions in which honor is the chief desideratum.

§6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how the overall framework of the spirited passions in politics which Xenophon puts in place in the *Cyropaedia* is modified in subtle ways by his *Hiero* and *Oeconomicus*. Those modifications make Xenophon’s political and social sympathies more clear. In contrast to those who characterize his leadership models as forms of beneficent tyranny, we have seen how the point of the *Hiero* is by no means positive in respect of tyranny. By honing in on the implications of the tyrants’ desire for honor, Xenophon’s Simonides reveals—rather, succeeds through dialogue in making Hiero himself reveal—that the tyrant cannot gain the honor he desires by means of a tyranny. The implication is that, judged on the scales of *philotimia*, a tyranny is not a satisfactory regime even for the tyrant. Xenophon in the *Hiero* also hints at how a tyranny can be brought down by describing the type of person—the *alkimos*—who can serve as the catalyst which initiates a liberation movement against the tyrant. These aspects of the *Hiero* reveal Xenophon’s capacity, in respect of the desire for honor and other spirited
passions, to adopt multiple perspectives, including that of the tyrant and that of the potentially rebellious subject.

Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* offers his analysis of how a certain kind of ruling and being ruled, particularly in respect of the distribution of honor (and blame), works within the Greek household. On the one hand, even the leader of that household, the gentleman aristocrat, participates in a reciprocal relation in which he is at times ruled by his wife in respect of those matters in which she has superior competence. On the other hand, aside from that case, the ruling and being ruled in question is primarily hierarchical. The aristocrat is governed by the demands placed upon him to fund civic liturgies in exchange for the honors the city bestows upon him. He in turn governs his household through the allocation of honors and by training his immediate subordinates to allocate honors appropriately to their subordinates. The whole system is constructed through honor relations: the desire for honor is the primary motivation of the various actors, from the aristocrat down to certain slaves, within Xenophon’s Greek household. A reciprocity in respect of the distribution of honor, and even a kind of liberalism in showing that women and slaves can be motivated by the desire for honor, colors Xenophon’s conceptualization of *philotimia* in the *Oeconomicus*.
CHAPTER 7 – THE SPIRITED PASSIONS IN XENOPHON’S SOCRATIC WORKS

§7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, it was argued that Xenophon considers the spirited passions to motivate only a limited subset of human beings: a subset, however, which can include individuals in the lowest ranks of society, including slaves. In the context of Xenophon’s political thought, that claim is a component of his theory of leadership: part of being a good leader, for Xenophon, is the two-stage process of first recognizing who is motivated by the spirited passions and then working with (or upon) their motivations to spur them to appropriate actions. This component of Xenophon’s thought on the spirited passions—that not all are motivated by them equally—also emerges in Xenophon’s Socratic works, the *Memorabilia* and *Symposium*. The insight shapes Xenophon’s depiction of Socratic *elenchus* and Socrates’ other effects on his interlocutors.

Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* draws a contrast between those persons who possess sufficient spirited motivation to overcome what he sees as the radically dispiriting effects of Socratic *elenchus* and those who do not. The former return to Socrates for instruction, but the latter depart from him either out of shame and self-contempt or anger and

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334 Throughout this chapter references to the *Symposium* are to Xenophon’s work, not Plato’s, unless otherwise stated.
annoyance. In Xenophon’s *Symposium*, the contrast between those who are motivated by spirited passions and those who are not is illustrated in a more personal manner: Callias is motivated by an erotic desire for the young Autocylus, while Autocylus is motivated by *philotimia*. The humor of the *Symposium* arises in part from Callias’ turning to Socrates for instruction in how to win over the city—he asks Socrates to ‘pimp’ him to the city—because he thinks that will ultimately help him win over the *philotimos* Autocylus. The surprising upshot is that Callias becomes *virtually* motivated by spirited desire (by way of his erotic desire for a spirited youth). To sum up these two claims: for Xenophon, not all persons are capable of undergoing Socratic *elenchus* and not all persons need be motivated by spirited passion in order to pursue spirited goals.

Both of these features of Xenophon’s thought emerge in works which, when considered with a broader focus on Xenophon’s language of the spirited passions, also strengthen the case that Xenophon was in dialogue with Plato. Recent scholarship on both the *Memorabilia* and the *Symposium* has argued—persuasively if not conclusively—that portions of each were composed later than the rest: in the case of the *Memorabilia*, Book IV seems to have been composed later, and in that of the *Symposium*, section 8.335

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§7.2 MEMORABILIA

§7.2.1 Political ambition and Xenophon’s defense of Socrates

Xenophon’s Socrates has been the focus of a number of works, mostly in comparison with Plato’s highly literary and philosophical representation of his mentor.336 The person of Socrates, particularly his relations with his native Athens, fired the imaginations of modern philosophers including Hegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, who turned to Xenophon as a source for Socrates.337 When, eventually, scholarly interest focused on Socrates qua philosopher, interest in Xenophon’s representation died out and Plato’s reigned supreme.338 The consideration of Xenophon’s Socrates here pursued returns to the former tradition in attempting to assess how Xenophon saw Socrates engaging with, and impacting, Athenian political life.

The desire for honor and the broader class of spirited passions are central to Xenophon’s account of Socrates, as they are to his model political agent Cyrus. The Memorabilia is rightly viewed as an extended apology for Socrates,339 and Xenophon is quite clear about his position, claiming Socrates ‘deserved honor from the city rather than

336 Paul A. Vander Waerdt, ed. The Socratic movement (Ithaca, 1994), chs. 5-8; Gabriel Danzig, Apologizing for Socrates: how Plato and Xenophon created our Socrates (Lanham, Md., 2010).
death’ (I.2.62 ff).\textsuperscript{340} The role of honor, and the desire for it, is at the heart of the accusations against Socrates, as presented by Xenophon. One of the two accusations leveled against Socrates—as recounted in the \textit{Memorabilia}—was that his students, Critias and Alcibiades, did great harm to the city, the first while part of an oligarchy, the second while part of the democracy.\textsuperscript{341} Both are introduced in the \textit{Memorabilia} as ‘by nature the most honor-loving (\textit{philotimotatô}) of all the Athenians’ and as men who ‘wished that all affairs might be conducted through themselves and that they might become the most renowned (\textit{onomastotatô}) of all’ (I.2.14). Xenophon in the \textit{Memorabilia} begins his defense of Socrates on the charge of corrupting the young by calling attention to the natures of Critias and Alcibiades as \textit{philotimos}, just as he had initiated his presentation of Cyrus by describing his nature in the same terms. But whereas in the \textit{Cyropaedia} the education of the young \textit{philotimos} Cyrus is successful, as indicated by his subsequent political activity, the \textit{Memorabilia} begins with the recognition that, at least in the judgment of Athens, Socrates’ education of the \textit{philotimoi} Critias and Alcibiades had manifestly failed.

\textsuperscript{340} Unless otherwise noted, translations of the \textit{Memorabilia} are from Xenophon, \textit{Memorabilia}, trans. Amy L. Bonnette (Ithaca, 1994).

\textsuperscript{341} There is also evidence, in Diogenes Laertius (2.39) and Isocrates (\textit{Busiris} 4-5), that the accusations of Polycrates against Socrates advanced sometime after 394 centered on linking Socrates to Alcibiades’ activities. An older view held that Plato was also responding to Polycrates’ Socrates-Alcibiades accusation, for example, in the \textit{Gorgias}; A. H. Chroust, ‘Xenophon, Polycrates, and the ‘indictment of Socrates’, \textit{Classica et mediaevalia} 16 (1955), 42. This was called into question by E. R. Dodds, \textit{Gorgias} (Oxford, 1959), 28; Charles H. Kahn, ‘Aeschines on Socratic eros’, in \textit{The Socratic movement}, ed. Paul A. Vander Waerdt (Ithaca, 1994), 106, concludes that the reaction of Plato and Aeschines to Polycrates’ accusations was ‘indifference’, adding that only Xenophon ‘is actively concerned to respond to Polycrates’, which is in line with the argument of this section.
Certainly Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* goes on to mount a defense of Socrates on the charge of corrupting, or failing to properly educate, young men like Critias and Alcibiades, yet the defense is striking in how it avoids one central component of the accusation against Socrates: that he was in part responsible for the subsequent (harmful) political actions of such men. As we have just seen, Critias and Alcibiades are held up as exemplary cases of how Socrates failed to properly educate the youth, and their distinctive feature is their being *philotimos*, a quality which leads them to desire to be central to political decision-making and to become highly renowned. One would therefore expect a robust defense of Socrates on the grounds that he did not inflame, or even suppressed or canalized, the spirited passions which are at the root of Critias' and Alcibiades' natures. That is not, however, what we find in the bulk of the *Memorabilia*. Instead, Xenophon’s defense of Socrates focuses on how he modeled temperance in respect of appetitive desires and could thereby inculcate temperance in others in respect of those desires. Xenophon warily avoids addressing the core of the accusation against Socrates; for as we have seen in the case of Cyrus, not only is it eminently possible for a *philotimos* to be temperate in respect of appetitive desires, temperance regarding appetitive desires is also a prerequisite for vigorous spirited passion. The person motivated by spirited desires is characterized by the canalizing of his psychological energy toward the pursuit of goods like honor, victory, and political rule rather than the goods desired by appetite. The core of the
accusation against Socrates and Xenophon’s defense of Socrates are ships passing in the night.\textsuperscript{342}

That Xenophon is avoiding a central accusation against Socrates can be seen in his failure to defend Socrates specifically in respect of Alcibiades. On this point, close attention to the text is needed. After introducing Critias and Alcibiades as exemplary cases of Socrates’ failure (I.1.12-16, 24-26), Xenophon has an extensive discussion (29-38) which goes a long way towards showing Socrates attempted to improve Critias: he is shown criticizing Critias in respect of his sexual desires (29-39) and critiquing the rule of the oligarchic Thirty, of which Critias was a part (32). Both of these actions elicit resentment and anger from Critias, who is described as attacking Socrates, and trying to curtail his activity, through various legal, public, and personal means (31-38), including ordering him to refrain from conversing with the young. Socrates had been plausibly described by Xenophon as ‘most continent in of all human beings in matters of sex and appetite’ (I.2.1) and, as a poor man himself, certainly not guilty of making ‘his companions lovers of wealth’ (I.2.5). While he never claimed to teach virtue or the qualities of the gentleman (I.2.2-3), by \textit{embodying} those qualities himself those around him might gain

\textsuperscript{342} Danzig, \textit{Apologizing for Socrates}, 161-70, focusing on the defense of Socrates on charges of having erotic relations with his young interlocutors, also finds—in a manner similar to the argument here advanced—that the defense is less than effective. Xenophon shows Socrates criticizing others, including Xenophon himself, for erotic relations with boys, yet Xenophon also introduces evidence—above all, Socrates’ own physical contact with the young Kritoboulos (167), which Danzig highlights as the only description of such \textit{physical} contact in Socratic writings—which undercuts that defense.
them by ‘imitating’ him (3). So since Socrates was a temperate man in respect of appetitive desires for sex and wealth, Xenophon can make a reasonable case that insofar as Critias exhibited contrary tendencies,\textsuperscript{343} regardless whether Socrates criticized him for those tendencies (though indeed he did), Socrates shouldn’t be held responsible for them. Socrates should be freed of the charge of being responsible for Critias’ harmful activities, most of which spring from an excess of appetite.\textsuperscript{344} So far so good. However, nothing similar is attempted in the parallel case of Alcibiades—quite the contrary.

While both Critias and Alcibiades caused harm to the city, according to Xenophon their flaws were different: while Critias was ‘most thievish, violent, and murderous’, Alcibiades was ‘most incontinent, insolent (\textit{hubristotatos}), and violent’. As we have seen, Critias’ harmful pursuit of wealth, along with his sexual insatiability, suggest a person dominated in large part by appetitive desires, but Alcibiades’ flaw, in contrast, include his being ‘most hubristic’. One would therefore expect, in line with the argument advanced above, that Xenophon would try to exculpate Socrates on the charge of enabling the specific flaws of Alcibiades, as is indeed done with Xenophon’s discussion of Critias.

\textsuperscript{343} At I.2.12 the accusation against Socrates specifies that Critias harmed the city specifically through being ‘thievish’ and ‘violent’. The first, represented by \textit{kleptistatos} or \textit{pleonektistatos} (manuscripts differ), indicates an excess of appetitive desire. Alcibiades’ flaws, discussed below, are described differently.

\textsuperscript{344} Cf. Fritz, ‘Conservative reaction and one man rule in ancient Greece’, 67, who argues that reaction to the ‘bloody excesses’ of Critias’ regime occasioned a strong reaction, including among anti-democratic theorists, against such ‘immoralism’. The argument I am advancing is that it is to excessive appetitive desires particularly that von Fritz’s ‘immoralism’ should be modified to express.
Instead, we find the section devoted to Alcibiades (I.2.40-46) showing him engaging in a Socratic-like *elenchus* in which he, as a young man of twenty, demonstrating that the great statesman Pericles can’t give a good account of what law is. As a defense of Socrates, this not only fails, it also reconfirms the accusations leveled against Socrates, namely, that he had taught ‘his companions political affairs before he taught them to be moderate’ (I.2.17). By political affairs, the context makes clear, is meant an ability to engage others in, and best them at, arguments. Indeed, Xenophon makes clear that as *philotimotatoi*, the most ambitious of all Athenians, Critias and Alcibiades had not sought out Socrates because of his poverty or temperance regarding pleasures, but because Socrates ‘in arguments dealt as he wished with all who conversed with him’ (I.2.14); they associated with Socrates because they thought by so doing they would ‘become most competent in speech and action’ (I.2.15) and as soon as they ‘believed themselves superior to their companions’ in these respects ‘they immediately bolted from Socrates and engaged in political affairs’ (I.2.16). Hence, it is no defense of Socrates on the charge that he corrupted Alcibiades to show the latter besting Pericles in arguments about the nature of law, particularly as one of the other charges against Socrates was that he taught the youth to disrespect their fathers because they came to think of themselves as wiser than their fathers (I.2.49).

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345 In Plato’s *Alcibiades*, in contrast, it is Socrates who seeks out Alcibiades, but when he does introduce himself he claims to be uniquely capable of helping Alcibiades attain his political ambitions.

346 Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1321 ff., in which Pheidippides, a student of Socrates, beats
Socrates elicited a particular spirited response from his students vis-à-vis Athenian democracy: contempt, *kataphronein*, which led them to act violently against the democracy (I.2.9). The critique of the democracy which gave rise to the spirited passional response of contempt is a critique of the core of Athenian democratic ideology: the institution of distributing offices by lot. The critique hinges on a theory of political expertise which is built through analogies to other forms of expertise like piloting a ship, building a structure, playing a flute, and so forth. In all such cases, no one would choose a pilot, builder or flutist by lot. So it is similarly ‘foolish for the rulers of the city to be established in office by lot’. In the three specific flaws attributed to each man, Critias and Alcibiades, at I.2.12, violence is the only term common to both lists, and picks up on the violence toward the democracy spawned by the contempt for distributing offices by lot. The contempt Socrates’ students apparently had for Athenian democratic practice extended even to the political figure whose position owed the least to lot: Pericles, the first among equals at Athens in Thucydides’ formulation. Alcibiades’ response to Pericles’ failure to argue adequately about the nature of law leads to a contemptuous dismissal. Pericles said he once practiced that sort of ‘sophisticated arguments’ as a youth, and Alcibiades responds, ‘Would that I had been your companion at that time, Pericles, when you were at

his father and justifies himself in so doing. Pericles was of course Alcibiades’ foster father.
your cleverest’ (I.2.46). Again, Xenophon’s portrayal of Alcibiades serves only to deepen
the plausibility of the charges against Socrates.347

The spirited passional response of contempt hinges on the attribution of honor and
dishonor. Socrates argued that only genuine worth—expertise—should be honored, that is,
that only due honor should be granted. According to Xenophon, he ‘caused not only
fathers but also other relatives to be in dishonor (atimiai) among his companions, saying
that it is not relatives who benefit those who are ill or on trial, but the physicians in the
one case and those who understand how to plead a case at trial in the other’ (I.2.51).
Socrates is presented as altering the honor relations within families and the political
community as an consequence of his principle that ‘the only ones deserving of honor are
those who know what they should and are able to explain it’ (I.2.52). As he was able to
show the young that he was ‘the wisest and most competent to make others wise’ it came
about that ‘in their eyes the rest were nothing compared to him’ (I.2.52), that is, they held
others in contempt.

347 This critique of democracy due to its distribution of offices by lot—that such a method is
deemed foolish by anyone who values expertise—is different from that advanced by
Xenophon himself in the Cyropaedia, the core of which is that the good are dispirited, and
the ambivalent unmotivated, if the political system doesn’t recognize merit. On which, see
§5.2.
§7.2.2 Socrates and Euthydemus: elenchus and athumia

Ultimately, Xenophon found a way out of the *aporia* of how to defend Socrates, aided by Plato. Xenophon found the tool he needed in *Republic* III, namely, that the effect of excess *mousikê*, specifically philosophic activity, will render a person *athumos*. It’s particularly clear that Xenophon is referencing the *Republic* III passage at *Memorabilia* III.12.6 when he imputes ‘dispiritedness’ (*athumia*) and ‘peevishness’ (*duskolia*) to persons who neglect bodily exercise, which are two qualities Plato identified as consequent to physical inactivity and thereby, on his account, a lack of development of the *thumoeides*, the spirited part of the psychological constitution. Xenophon uses *athumia* and its cognates a number of times in the *Memorabilia*, all of which are treated below, but the most important for the question of Socrates and his defense are those which emerge in Socrates’ discussion with Euthydemus in Book IV, in which the ambitious Euthydemus is reduced to a state of *athumia* after Socratic *elenchus*, holding himself in contempt and considering himself to be a slave. Xenophon had found his solution to the problem of how to defend Socrates. At last he argues in Book IV that rather than Socrates inflaming the spirited passions of his young interlocutors, puffing them up with pride in their argumentative abilities and eliciting contempt for their fellow citizens, he reduced his interlocutors to psychological rubble, full of self-contempt and a slave-like lack of spirit.348

348 Danzig, *Apologizing for Socrates*, 179-99, has recently advanced an extended discussion of the Euthydemus episode in the *Memorabilia* which shares my focus on the psychological effects of Socratic *elenchus*, especially Euthydemus’ becoming *athumos*. As is seen below, we diverge on several points, however, and the meaning of *athumia* itself is one such
Nothing in the early books of the *Memorabilia* has quite this startling conclusion, suggesting that Xenophon may have developed this portrayal of Socrates over time. In Book I, Critias and Alcibiades are said to have ‘bolted’ from Socrates when they believed themselves superior to their political rivals (I.2.16). Clearly, something about Socrates’ manner unsettled them and led them to depart as soon as possible. The problem is suggested by the following: while ‘able to overcome their ignoble desires by using [Socrates] as an ally’ so long as they were with him, when they were away from them...

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point. Danzig consistently describes it as ‘depression’ (e.g. at 186, 187, and *passim*). However, adopting the intertextual approach utilized in the present study, Xenophon’s concept of *athumia* needs to be represented in stronger terms. In the *Cyropaedia*, as a result of a kind of *elenchus* the Armenian king states that he deserves to be put to death, which occasions extreme reactions of grief from his family and leads to his son Tigranes’ discussion of *athumia* as a state resulting from having one’s *psyche* ‘struck down’ or utterly ‘subjugated’; see §5.3.1. In the *Hiero*, the state of admitting one should be put to death and *athumia* are also paired; see §6.2. Thus, I have tended to represent *athumia* as a form of ‘extreme despair’ (unless the particular context dictates a weaker translation), a state typically arising in Xenophon’s usage from an awareness of an impending harm and a lack of hope that it can be avoided, or an awareness of the complete impossibility of bringing one’s most deeply desired plans to effect. Danzig, in much weaker terms, represents Euthydemus as having ‘doubts’ about his ‘character’ and ‘personality’ (189, 194) and may be led off the mark due to the influence of modern psychological studies on depression (e.g. at 189, n. 65; 191, n. 70).

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Robin Waterfield, ‘Xenophon’s Socratic mission’, in *Xenophon and his world*, ed. Christopher Tuplin (Stuttgart, 2004), 108-9, details the numerous features shared in common by Socrates’ *elenchus* with Euthydemus in *Memorabilia* IV and those of Plato’s Socrates in the dialogues ending in an *aporia*. This can be taken as evidence that Book IV was composed later, after Xenophon had considered those Platonic dialogues. In due course, we will see further evidence—arising from close attention to Xenophon’s language for the spirited passions—which also indicates a later composition influenced by Plato’s work.
found other company which led them to become ‘arrogant’ (*huperêphanos*; I.2.25). It makes sense, therefore, that while the bad company made these two men arrogant, Socrates’ company could be seen as making them the reverse, that is, dispirited. But Xenophon does not state in his discussion of Critias and Alcibiades that this was Socrates’ characteristic effect. It is not till Book IV and his interchange with Euthydemus that we see it at work.

In the early books, the effect of *elenchus* is not dispiriting but enraging and shaming. Critias and Alcibiades are said to become ‘enraged (*êchthonto*) by being refuted (*elenchenoi*) regarding their errors’ (I.2.47). The next occurrence of the verb *elenchein* in which the response of the interlocutor is recounted is, surprisingly, in the chapter on Socrates’ son Lamprocles and wife Xanthippe (II.2). In all other cases in the work, the verb is only applied to Socrates’ activity, but in this chapter Xanthippe is said to practice *elenchus* in conversation with her son (II.2.9). The effect, however, is to make Lamprocles angry with her (II.2.9; *chalepaineis*), the emotion which prompts Socrates to question his

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350 Both are influenced by their company in different ways: Critias goes to Thessaly and learnt ‘lawlessness’, while Alcibiades, ‘hunted’ by august women on account of his beauty, ‘pampered’ by flatterers, and ‘honored by the demos’. The implication is all are bad in a related way, as they have the effect of making each man ‘neglect himself’. Critias and Alcibiades became ‘inflated because of their birth, conceited due to being rich, puffed-up by power, and fussied-over by many human beings; and, having been corrupted by all these things, they were also away from Socrates for a long time.’ These deleterious effects of their company closely parallel Plato’s description of Alcibiades in the *Alcibiades*.

351 At I.4.1, Socrates is described as ‘refuting (*êlenchen*) those who thought they know everything, in order to chasten (*kolastériou*) them’, but we are not told their response.

352 Except for III.8.1., at which Aristippus attempts to deploy *elenchus* against Socrates, as the latter had against him earlier in the work.
son about his reaction to his mother (II.2.1; chalepainonta). What sparked this reaction? The clue lies in Lamprocles’ defense to Socrates attempt to persuade him that he had caused troubles to his mother as he was growing, so how is the trouble she is now causing Lamprocles differen. Lamprocles responds that he never did anything to Xanthippe that made her ‘ashamed’ (êischunthê; II.2.8). The effect of elenchus is to shame the interlocutor, which explains the reactive responses of anger.

The description of the effect of Socratic elenchus on Euthydemus reveals a shift in Xenophon’s presentation of Socrates’ activity such that Socrates’ characteristic effect on young men who are eager to partake of political rule is to sap their self-confidence, to render them ‘dispirited’ (athumos). That this effect applies to more than Euthydemus is clear from the close of the dialogue, which discusses the ‘many who were put in this state by Socrates’ (IV.2.40). Euthydemus is introduced in terms similar to other ambitious youths, including Critias and Alcibiades, with whom Socrates interacts. He is distinguished in that he had gathered many writings about political rule, but his desire is recognizable. As Socrates suggests it, Euthydemus desires ‘the virtue through which human beings become fit for political affairs’, to which the youth responds ‘I want this virtue exceedingly’ (IV.2.11). This is called by Socrates ‘the noblest virtue and greatest art, for it belongs to kings and is called kingly’ (IV.2.11). Then he submits Euthydemus to elenchus, revealing Euthydemus does not know what justice is, after having established
that to know justice is a prerequisite for attaining the kingly art.\textsuperscript{353} Finally, at the close of the conversation, before Euthydemus admits his being dispirited, Socrates argues that a slave is one who does ‘not know what the noble and good and just things are’ (IV.2.22).

Danzig also emphasizes the psychological effects of the \textit{elenchus}, but with a different focus from that proposed here: he argues Socrates ‘turns the conversation in a personal direction’ rather than discussing more abstract subjects, in contrast to the Socrates seen in many of the Platonic dialogues.\textsuperscript{354} But that is to go too far in emphasizing the personal and psychological responses over the conceptual \textit{aporia} which prompts those responses. Euthydemus takes Socrates’ accusation that he is a kind of slave to follow from the former’s inability to say what justice, the good, or the noble are. So it is not simply ‘the personal’ which Socrates calls into question, but Euthydemus’ knowledge of certain concepts relevant to his stated educational aim. Euthydemus had said he was studying philosophy in order to ‘be educated to the highest degree in what befits a man yearning for gentlemanliness (\textit{kalokagathias}; IV.2.23)’. Not only had Euthydemus not set out to learn justice, he had not set out to learn what the noble or the good is, as distinct concepts. He had set out to learn what \textit{gentlemanliness} consisted in, the concept he believed to capture the quality of a good ruler, and the first occasion he describes himself as growing dispirited is when he realizes his philosophical pursuits will not culminate in his learning

\textsuperscript{353} A similar technique is pursued by Socrates in the \textit{Alcibiades}, taking Alcibiades’ political ambitions as the starting point but then subjecting them to an \textit{elenchus} which reveals Alcibiades’ inability to articulate what justice is; see §3.2.

\textsuperscript{354} Danzig, \textit{Apologizing for Socrates}, 186.
what *kaloskagathia* is (IV.2.23). Socrates plays on the etymological roots of the term and made the issue about defining the noble and the good; and he established justice as a prerequisite for the ‘kingly art’ related to *kaloskagathia*. These argumentative techniques are of course also seen in Socratic *elenchus* in Plato’s works. Socrates has led Euthydemus to an *aporia* and is not shown leading him out of it, and this doesn’t sit well with Xenophon’s assertion earlier in the work that Socrates helped his friends out of the *aporias* in which they found themselves (II.7.1). What seems, however, like a contradiction in Xenophon’s description of Socrates becomes more plausible if Book IV is seen as a later composition more deeply indebted to Plato’s presentation of Socrates in his ‘aporetic’ dialogues.

Socrates continues to show that Euthydemus doesn’t understand what happiness is, nor what democracy is, nor even who the poor are; the result of this relentless critique is to reduce Euthydemus to a final psychological state of extreme *athumia*. The final steps in the argument which lead him to this state involve the quality of being *phaulos*, and convincing evidence has been advanced by Edmund Berry that this term was drawn by Xenophon and Plato from the *Alcibiades* of Aeschines of Sphettus.355 In all three Socratic discussions, Themistocles is central and the question is whether he became great,

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spoudaios, by nature (phusei) or learning (mathései). In Aeschines’ *Alcibiades*, Socrates gets Alcibiades to admit that Themistocles was once *phaulos*, base, like a common slave. Themistocles became great through taking charge of himself, *epimeleia heatou*, and by acquiring *epistêmê*. The result of these points is that Alcibiades’ argument, that greatness is achieved as a result of nature, is eviscerated. As recounted by Aeschines’ Socrates, Alcibiades responds, ‘weeping, [he] laid his head upon my knees in despair (*athumêsanta*)’ (fr. 9, Dittmar). 356 Neither Berry nor, mor recently, Charles Kahn notice that *athumia* is the other linguistic feature common to Aeschines’ and Xenophon’s descriptions—in addition to the focus on Themistocles, and the recognition that he was once *phaulos* and that the youthful interlocutors, whether Alcibiades or Euthydemus, are presently *phaulos*. As we have seen, this is not a feature of the description in Plato’s *Alcibiades*, however, so it is probable that the psychological description of such youths as in extreme despair, *athumia*, is drawn by Xenophon from Aeschines rather than Plato.

In the *Memorabilia*, Euthydemus had himself agreed that someone who doesn’t know what the good is *tôn andrapodôn phauloterōs* (IV.2.31), so when he admits to not knowing the good he admits to being *phaulos*. It is this admission which prompts his psychological reaction and Euthydemus departs in a state of being ‘very dispirited (*panu athumós*)’, having contempt (*kataphronēsas*) for himself and holding that he was really a slave (*andrapodon*)’ (IV.2.39). The state of being *athumia*, dispirited, is that of the slave.

356 The translation is that of Kahn, ‘Aeschines on Socratic eros’, 91.
The slave feels himself to be contemptible and to in fact be a slave. While Euthydemus is reduced to being athumos, however, he is not publicly shamed in the manner, for example, that Plato’s Socrates shames Thrasymachus in Republic I. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that Socrates conducts his elenchus with Euthydemus in private in order to ‘save him public embarrassment, and thus make the refutation easier for him to accept’.357

Despite the elenchus being conducted in private, however, Euthydemus is still reduced to a state of extreme despair, athumia, and self-contempt (the private setting merely preserves him from public shaming). Danzig, even on his weaker rendition of athumia as ‘depression’, is puzzled by Euthydemus’ next action: ‘Why did he return?’358 It’s a genuine puzzle, particularly in light of the stronger rendition of athumia suggested by my intertextual approach, but Danzig’s solution—Euthydemus’ ‘practical considerations’ and Xenophon’s own ‘practical perspective on life’—is inadequate.359 Even less satisfactory is the claim that Socrates’ ‘erotic attractiveness’ to his interlocutors—prompted by, for them, the ‘peculiar pleasure of realizing, and perhaps mitigating, one’s

358 Danzig, Apologizing for Socrates, 192.
359 Danzig, Apologizing for Socrates, 192-3: ‘[Euthydemus] returns to Socrates out of practical considerations: he realizes that if he did not spend time with Socrates he would never become a man of any consequence. In accordance with Xenophon’s practical perspective on life, Euthydemus associates with Socrates because of the benefit that he expects to obtain.’ This solution takes for granted that Socrates’ claims to benefit his politically-aspiring interlocutors is seen by them, even after the elenchus, as plausible; Alcibiades and Critias had similar political aspirations and did not return so readily (and over time not at all, in Critias’ case, or rarely, in Alcibiades’).
shameful lack of self-knowledge’—causes their return.\textsuperscript{360} Close attention to Xenophon’s argument and language both immediately preceding and following the Euthydemos dialogue reveals Xenophon’s reasons. The return of Euthydemos and other interlocutors rest neither on their ‘practical’ expectation of political benefits, nor their erotic attraction to Socrates, but to their spirited psychological endowments, endowments which Xenophon will describe using a term, \textit{thumoeides}, which he draws from Plato.

From the start of \textit{Memorabilia} IV there is a sharpening of the language of \textit{thumos}-type terms in the book, and a heavy usage of them, which supports claims that Book IV was composed later than the rest of the \textit{Memorabilia},\textsuperscript{361} and under Platonic influence. The terms are also crucial for understanding why Euthydemos and other interlocutors return to Socrates after being rendered \textit{athumos} by his \textit{elenchus}. Xenophon introduces the Platonic term \textit{thumoeides} (IV.1.3), which as \textit{to thumoeides} had appeared in Plato’s \textit{Republic}. There is also a greater emphasis on natural endowments. Socrates treats individuals differently based on their native capacities, but in contrast to his advice to the general Dionysodorus, discussed below, to make use of the different desires of human beings, Socrates here argues that spirited natures in particular are the fundament for good and useful persons.


\textsuperscript{361} As argued by Macleod, ed. \textit{Xenophon: Apology and Memorabilia I}, though he does not point to \textit{thumos}-type words as evidence for his claim about the later composition of Book IV.
As is frequent in Xenophon’s work, a comparison to the training of horses and dogs is made. Xenophon says that Socrates approached individuals differently depending on their own self-conception and focuses on those who think they are ‘by nature good’ and thus ‘contemptuous of learning’. Socrates pointed out to such individuals that the horses with the best natures, ‘high-spirited and impetuous (thumoeideis te kai sphodrous), if broken in (damastheien) from a young age become most useful and best, but if unbroken become hardest to restrain and quite common’. Similarly, dogs who have a good nature, ‘who love labor and are ready to attack their prey, those that have been nobly reared become best for the hunts and most useful, while without rearing they become useless and mad and most intractable’ (IV.1.3). Socrates then draws the parallel to human beings, that those with the best natures, ‘who are most robust in their souls (errômenestatous...tais psuchais) and most able to accomplish whatever they attempt, if they are educated and learn what they should do, become best and most beneficial’. Those who lack such education ‘frequently attempt wicked actions’, indeed, precisely because they are ‘grand and impetuous’ (megaleious...kai sphodrous) they are hard to restrain and do many harmful deeds (IV.1.4).

The conclusion of Socrates’ dialogue with Euthydemus highlights that it is a normal technique for Socrates to reduce his interlocutors in this way. But the response of his interlocutors to this critique differs according to their natural endowments. Of those on whom Socrates worked this effect, many do not return to him, and ‘he held these to be
the more slack (*blakoterous*—‘stolid, stupid’) (IV.2.40). In Xenophon’s *De re equestri*, *blax* is opposed to *thumoeides* in horses (9.12). Other fourth century usage seems to indicates something more like slow-witted, but it may be distinctive to Xenophon that the ‘stolid’ aspect is in play, a certain lack of spirit which prevents those who have been subjected to Socrates’ dispiriting method from rebounding and realizing they must return to Socrates to learn what they have been revealed not to know. Counter-intuitively, therefore, the upshot of the conclusion to the *Euthydemus* dialogue is that, on the charge that Socrates inflamed the high-spirited ambitions of men like Alcibiades, it was not from an excess of high-spirit but a lack which led a person like Alcibiades to depart from Socrates rather than continue to be subjected to forms of his *elenchus*.

To conclude this section, the upshot of focusing on Xenophon’s careful response to the charge that Socrates corrupted *philotimoi* like Alcibiades and Critias—particularly the former, whose vice is *hubris*—is severalfold. It provides further evidence, of course, that Xenophon was very interested in the spirited passions like *philotimia* and *hubris*. But it also provides evidence, as we have seen, for Xenophon’s dialogue with Plato, suggesting the former composed Book IV at a later time when he had adopted more of Plato’s conceptual vocabulary. Finally, it gives us reason to think that Xenophon had a better cause to engage with Polycrates’ accusation than that advanced by Kahn—who thinks Xenophon, whom he calls ‘the last and least Socratic’, takes interest in Polycrates’ accusation only because ‘it gives him a literary pretext for organizing and publishing his
recollections’—which is purely speculative. More satisfying is the upshot of the argument here advanced: Xenophon was interested in responding to Polycrates’ accusation because it implicated concepts central to his political thought: political ambition, high-spirited pride, exemplary figures motivated by those passions, and the potentially dispiriting impact of activities like Socratic *elenchus*. One the one hand, Xenophon did not deny that Alcibiades *did* become more self-assured by virtue of his association with Socrates, as seen in Alcibiades’ exchange with Pericles. On the other, he prominently features in his recollections of Socrates an extended description, through Socrates’ dialogue with Euthydemus and the reflections on *thumoeides* which preface and conclude that dialogue, an example of the dispiriting effects of Socratic *elenchus*. Of course Plato’s Socrates also dispirits interlocutors, but Xenophon gives this effect greater prominence and comment, creating the impression that accusations against Socrates that he inflamed the pride and self-confidence of men like Alcibiades should be viewed with skepticism.

§7.2.3 Other aspects of the spirited passions

Xenophon’s Socrates and the Socratic Xenophon merge in several respects, and it is difficult to tell which is influencing the other. We witness Xenophon’s Socrates articulating principles which Xenophon advances elsewhere in his corpus. There is a

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difference of emphasis on several, however, and Socrates himself is described in part by means of Xenophon’s characteristic approaches to the spirited passions.

For example, Socrates is shown as being particularly concerned with turning his companions away from ‘boasting’ (alazoneias): ‘For he was always saying that there is no more noble path to a good reputation (eudoxian) than by becoming good at the thing for which one wishes to have a good reputation’ (I.7.1). As we have seen in the Cyropaedia—for example, in Cyrus’ dialogue with Cambyses—this is one of the hallmarks of Xenophon’s thought: the surest way to gain a reputation for something is genuinely to possess that quality. Xenophon’s Socrates has the same message. For example, Glaucon, while only twenty years old, attempts to make a public speech ‘out of a desire to preside over the city’ (III.6.1). Socrates agrees that ‘if indeed anything else among human beings is noble, this is’. As a consequence of this, Glaucon ‘will be famous first in the city, then in Greece, and perhaps, like Themistocles, even among the barbarians. And wherever you are, you will be gazed at from all sides’ (III.6.2). The language here is very similar to that used by Plato in the Alcibiades. As in that dialogue with Alcibiades, Socrates here proceeds to show Glaucon that he is not knowledgeable about any of the city’s affairs, however. Thus, he should be on guard ‘lest out of a desire to have a good reputation you come into the opposite’ (III.6.16), that is, have his claim to political competence publicly revealed as baseless. Instead of seeking political office now, he

363 See §4.4.
should seek to gain the relevant knowledge such an office would demand. As we have seen, the consequence of Socratic *elenchus* is, at least initially, the dispiriting of politically aspiring youth so as to effect their avoidance of political activity.

Charmides has the opposite problem to Glaucon: he is more competent in political affairs than those ruling but ‘hesitant to approach the demos and to attend to the city’s affairs’. He is approached by Socrates and asked ‘what sort’ of person would be unwilling to compete even though he were competent. Charmides replies that he would consider such a person ‘soft and cowardly’ (*malakon...kai deilon*; III.7.1). *Malakia*, as we have seen, is crucial to *Republic* III, and it therefore makes sense that Socrates is there described advocating for the cultivation of the body, though the benefits of that cultivation are largely psychological, as indeed in the account of the *thumoeides* in the *Republic*:

‘Forgetfulness (*lêthê*), dispiritedness (*athumia*), peevishness (*duskolia*), and madness (*mania*) frequently attack the thought of many due to the bad condition of their body, so as to drive out even the sciences’ (III.12.6).

Xenophon’s language of the spirited passions similarly colors his deployment of Prodicus’ story of Heracles’ choice between virtue and vice. The story is preceded by statements which have parallels elsewhere in Xenophon’s corpus, that those who labor (*ponôn*) to have good friends, or the ability to subdue enemies, or the strength of body and mind which leads to managing one’s house well and helping friends and the fatherland, take pleasure in life because ‘they admire (*agamenous*) themselves and are praised and
emulated (epainoumenous de kai zēloumenous) by others’ (II.1.19). In both gymnastic training and education, ‘easy and immediate pleasures’ have no effect ‘but acts of attention (epimelias) exercised with endurance (karterias) enable one to attain noble and good works’ (II.1.20). In the story of Heracles’ choice itself, the difference between the two women hinges on the appearance versus the reality behind the honor they receive from others. Vice is presented as being particularly concerned with her image, that is, concerned about her standing in the eyes of others: ‘She looked down at herself frequently, looked around to see if anyone else was looking at her, and frequently looked at her own shadow’ (II.1.22). But Virtue’s claim is that, by being truly good, Heracles will be ‘far more honored and more distinguished’ for actually having done good things. If he thinks he should be admired by all Greece for his virtue, then he ‘must attempt to be the cause of good for Greece’ (II.1.28), that is, gain due honor. Virtue castigates Vice, exclaiming she is a ‘Wretch!’ and claims she has been ‘dishonored among human beings’ and that she has ‘not heard that most pleasant of all sounds, praise of yourself’ because she has ‘never seen any noble work’ of her own (II.1.31). Read with a focus on honor, Hercules’ choice is between vain-glory and due honor.

The role which the desire for honor can play in motivating subordinates, a central theme in the Cyropaedia and the Oeconomicus, is also articulated by Xenophon’s Socrates. Xenophon claims Socrates served to ‘benefit those who yearned for noble things by making them attentive to what they yearned for’. One such person was Dionysodorus, who wished
to become a general in the city, to ‘obtain this honor (*tîmê*) in the city’ (III.1.1).

Socrates’ argument is that election to an office does not make one anything unless one possesses the relevant learning. The analogy is to a doctor or, as in this case, a general: ‘one who does not understand is neither a general nor a doctor, not even if he has been elected by all human beings’ (III.1.4). A general is to be experienced in tactics, which include knowing to set the best of his men in the front and rear of the army and the worst are in the middle ‘so that they will be led by the ones and pushed by the others’ (III.1.8).

If the army were pursuing wealth, then those ‘most in love with money’ would be placed in the front. But if an army faces risks, ‘those most in love with honor’ are ordered in the front. Socrates’ interlocutor agrees that such men, ‘the ones who want to take risks for the sake of praise’, are easy to find because ‘they are highly visible everywhere’ (III.2.10).

Also similar to the *Cyropaedia* is Socrates’ invocation of sharpening or whetting the souls of those who will fight, which occurs in a discussion with a newly elected cavalry commander. One of the tasks of the commander is to ‘sharpen the souls (*thêgein tas psuchas*) of your horsemen and arouse their anger (*exorgein*) against the enemy, things that make them more stouthearted (*alkimôterous*; III.3.7).’

Spirited passions can also motivate in situations other than war. In discussion with Nicomachides, Socrates recounts the story of Antisthenes, who is said to be a ‘lover of victory’ (*philonikos*) or a ‘lover of contention’, ‘a suitable attribute’ for a general but also

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364 This is an instance in which the use of *timê* as ‘office’ is particularly clear.
one who would organize a chorus, a task at which he has also had success. But the argument proceeds to conclude that it is not necessary for such a person to be knowledgeable about ‘contests of war’ or ‘choral contests’ but that he ‘discovers and selects those who are best...[so] it is plausible that he will bear away the victory’. The conclusion is that ‘whatever someone presides over, if he knows what is needed and is able to procure it, he will be a good presiding officer, whether it is a chorus or a household or an army that he presides over’ (III.4.3-6). The conversation then turns to domestic matters, and Nicomachides expresses surprise that Socrates holds that ‘good household managers would be good generals’. Socrates argues that their tasks are similar, preparing the ruled to obey, ordering those who are good at a task to do it, punishing the bad and honoring the good, bringing in allies, guarding property, prevailing over enemies. In conclusion he urges Nicomachides to ‘not hold in contempt (kataphronei) men who are skilled in household management (tôn oikonomikôn andrôn)’ for private and public affairs differ only in the number of human beings involved; what is essential to both is the knowledge (epistamenoi) of how to employ (chrêsthai) human beings (III.4.12).

Spirited passions can also motivate polities as a whole. Athenians, for example, are described as being especially motivated by the desire for honor. Athens has been successful in competitions involving choruses not because its actors ‘surpass others in goodness of voice, nor in size and strength of body’ but because ‘they surpass them in love

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365 A ‘choregos’ was more the producer than the director of the chorus: he funded and organized it but didn’t ‘lead’ it like a conductor.
of honor (philotimiai), the thing that especially spurs one toward what is noble (kala) and honored (entima; III.3.13). Indeed, they agree the cavalry will excel others ‘if the horsemen held that in doing these things they would obtain praise and honor’ (III.3.14). Later, in discussion with the younger Pericles, after the defeat of the Athenians, ‘the high spirit (phronêma) of the Thebans regarding the Athenians has been exalted’ (III.5.4). These setbacks will make the Athenians easier to rule, however: ‘For confidence implants neglect, easygoingness, and disobedience, while fear makes people more attentive, more obedient, and more orderly’ (III.5.5). These (surprisingly) positive effects of fear parallel those argued by Tigranes in the Cyropaedia, the same Tigranes who had been closely attended by a sophistês, so this passage in the Memorabilia serves as additional evidence that that figure should be understood as intentionally invoking Socrates.\footnote{See §5.3.1.}

In addition to the parallels between the Socrates of the Memorabilia and the teacher of Tigranes in the Cyropaedia, Socrates’ interest in kalokagathia is adverted in the Memorabilia as it is in both the Oeconomicus and the Symposium. Socrates is said to have ‘taught most eagerly of all whatever he himself knew of the things it is fitting for a man who is a gentleman to know. And whatever he himself lacked experience in, he led them to those who understood it’ (IV.7.1). We are nowhere shown him teaching what gentlemanliness is, however, in the Memorabilia. We are, however, shown Socrates engaged in discussions about the ethical quality of the gentleman, kalokagathia, in the
Oeconomicus and the Symposium. Indeed, the former is wholly devoted to this subject, and Socrates’ speeches in the latter are dominated by it. Together, both the conceptual and linguistic parallels, and also the summary statements like that above which are only substantiated in another Xenophontic work, suggest that these texts should be studied in an intertextual manner.

§7.3 Symposium

Xenophon’s Symposium may have been written, in large part, before Plato’s Symposium, and may have inspired Plato to write his own; the exception to this picture is section 8, which is thought to be a later revision by Xenophon precisely in response to Plato’s Symposium.367 Taking this approach, the dialogue between Xenophon and Plato hinges on the role of honor in motivating citizens to act politically, with the pivot point being their divergence on the role of pederasty and adult homosexuality in creating relationships in which honor and shame could be sought and dispensed to positive civic effect. Whereas the dialogues in Plato’s Symposium focus on eros, in the organizing principle of Xenophon’s Symposium is that each speaker will recount the epistêmê he has of which is most proud, mega phronein.

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The focus of Xenophon’s *Symposium* is the spirited quality of pride or holding oneself in high self-estimation, whereas the focus of Plato’s is the erotic desire which is commonly denoted as appetitive. As we have seen, there are theoretical links between the erotic and the spirited in Plato’s *Symposium*, with pederasty being the site for such a linkage, in the speeches of Phaedrus and Pausanias and, in Aristophanes’ speech, joined by heterosexual and lesbian unions. But whereas for Xenophon it is a kind of *epistêmê* which creates pride, in Plato’s work it is a kind of erotic relation and, indeed, union which creates the *phronêmata megala* which are politically aspirational and rebellious.\(^{368}\)

Xenophon perceived this challenge and sought to counter it in *Symposium* 8 by reinscribing more conventional political norms onto Athenian pederastic practice. Surprisingly, however, while Xenophon explicitly disagrees with Phaedrus’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*, he ends up reaffirming a central feature of Aristophanes’ speech in that work: that homosexual males were particularly drawn to, and prominent in, political life. Coupled with Xenophon’s deployment in the *Cyropaedia* of theories of how rebellious spirited aspirations could be eliminated through an act of physical cutting— in that work, castration, in Plato’s *Symposium*, the splitting of the original human wholes—he was clearly drawn to Aristophanes’ speech in several respects.\(^{369}\)

\(^{368}\) See §4.4.

\(^{369}\) Cyrus utilizes eunuchs as *phulakês* of his person because uniquely among men they possess some spirited motivations, including *philotimia*, while lacking those which are rebellious; see §6.4.1.
Section 8 of Xenophon’s *Symposium* is Socrates’ long monologue on eros. In the monologue the man of politics is motivated by a desire for public recognition and honor. In order to prepare himself for political activity, he must concern himself with how ‘to do good to friends and harm to enemies’. At the end of the dialogue Socrates appeals to the ethical quality of *andragathia*. The latter term denotes the qualities of the specifically political man who goes before the public and attempts to win them over so as to gain public honor. Xenophon’s shift from *kalokagathia* to *andragathia* is indicative of his shift from discussion of the gentleman aristocrat—who performs his civic duties, like Ischomachos is said to do in the *Oeconomicus*, but does not court public office—to the man who is drawn to the political life and seeks to participate in *ta politika*.

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370 This motivation does not operate on all political actors, however, as we shall see. Some actors are not motivated to engage in politics by a desire for public honor but by a desire to win honor from a particular person who is a *philotimos*. In this dialogue, for example, Callias’ motivation to engage in politics is framed as a means to his real desire, the attention of the *philotimos* Autolycos.

371 *Andragathia* seems to have been introduced as a democratic term of praise in the intention of rivaling the aristocratic praise-worthy quality of being *kalos kagathos*. In the archaeological record, *andragathia* first emerges on honorary inscriptions in the final 12 years of the fifth century; Julia Shear, *Polis and revolution: responding to oligarchy in classical Athens* (Cambridge, 2011), 145. However, Xenophon seems to have begun utilizing the term later in his literary output. *Andragathia* appears in the *Cyropaedia* and there denotes a more widely held civic virtue than the aristocratic quality of *kaloskagathia*.

372 *Pace* Bowen, *Xenophon: Symposium*, 124, who translates *andragathia* as ‘bravery’ and goes on to say it ‘is little removed from *kalokagathia*’.

373 The issue of which types of men enter the world of *ta politika* is at issue in Plato’s *Symposium* at 192a, discussed above.
The main distinction between the gentleman aristocrat and the man of politics is that the latter must be closely attuned to the people. He comes to the city as a boy to an older man. Callias has been turned from the erastès to the erômenos. Indeed, his transformation is much more complete and dramatic: he is presented not as an honorable young man but as a prostitute who needs to be pimped. It is for this that Callias turns to Socrates by the end of Xenophon’s Symposium. Others had turned to the sophists, and Callias himself had in an earlier time (1.5), in order to learn the skills of winning over the multitude.

The theme of Symposium 8 is as follows: Callias wishes to win the favor of Autolycos, so Socrates argues that in order for Callias to be successful he must gain the quality of andragathia in the political arena, because Autolycos is a philotimos who can be expected to desire political office. Andragathia is first defined, in the dialogue, as the quality cultivated by Autolycos which enabled him to help his friends and to augment his city by routing its enemies (8.38). Socrates argues that Callias can win over Autolycos by proving himself to be a person who will be the best coworker or helper (sunergon) in doing those things. If Callias were so to prove himself, he would be treated well by being honored (timais) greatly by Autolycos.

Xenophon is also in dialogue with Plato’s Phaedrus in his Symposium 8, as he begins his description of the boy Callias has selected, Autolycos in terms which closely mirror those of Socrates in Plato’s Phaedrus. There, as we have seen, the trouble with
pederasty was that it was not properly civic in that it conduced not to the formation of robust citizens but to slavish dependants. Xenophon describes Autolycos as ‘someone who doesn’t lounge in luxury (habrotêti) or surrender to a soft life (malakiai), but displays to public view vigor (rhômên), toughness (karterian), courage (andreian) and self-control (sôphrosunên)’ (8.7).374

In order to gain honor from Autolycos, and thereby win his affections, Callias must examine (skepteon, athrêteon, ereunêteon) several highly successful political actors and one highly successful polity. He is to investigate what Themistocles ‘understood’ (epistamenos) in order to liberate Greece, what Pericles ‘knew’ (eidôs) to make him the best counselor to his fatherland, and what Solon ‘philosophized’ (philosophêsas) that made him his city’s best lawgiver.375 The superlative polity to be studied is Sparta: he is to investigate in what the Spartans ‘train’ (askountes) to be reputed the best leaders (8.39). Callias should investigate and cultivate the qualities which would make him a great leader in the city in order to be successful in courting Autolycos.

Autolycos’ desire to cultivate the quality of andragathia, by which he is able to help his friends and augment his city by harming its enemies, arises from his being a philotimos, a quality which, in this case, leads him to ‘put up with huge strain and pain in

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374 Unless otherwise noted, translations of the Symposium are those of Bowen, Xenophon: Symposium.

375 Xenophon’s language here is a good example of his less technical philosophic terminology compared with Plato. The passage also demonstrates his characteristic focus on political exemplars as starting points for pursuing more abstract principles.
order to be declared victor’ in the pancration (8.37). Socrates in fact formulates Autolycos’ potential further ambitions—to move from victory in the pancration to the broader achievements of helping his friends and his city—in the form of a conditional: if
Autolycos wishes to do these things, then he will greatly honor a man who can help him achieve them by having studied the great politicians Themistocles, Pericles, and Solon and the great polity Sparta. Callias is told, by Socrates, that if he will devote himself to such study he will succeed. Soon, Socrates tells Callias, the city will ‘entrust itself in your hands’ (8.40).

The results of Autolycos’ potentially broader ambitions, as a philotimos, are contrasted by Socrates with the results he has just achieved by victory in the pancration. Both are formulated in terms of public reputation and esteem. Socrates says that if Autolycos’ intention is merely to be victorious in the pancration, he will by that victory only have ‘adorned’ (kosmêsein) himself and his father (8.37). The term in this context suggests the cosmetic refinement which is to be contrasted to a more substantive quality. Socrates offers a more substantive outcome for Autolycos’ desire as a philotimos to be victorious in competition: he can ‘become known by sight and name both in Greece and abroad’ (8.38). He can gain such renown if he devotes himself to cultivating the andragathia which will enable him to help his friends and augment his city by harming

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376 Indeed, the very reason this assembly has come about is to celebrate Autolycos’ victory. Xenophon’s Symposium is occasioned by the celebration of a young philotimos.
377 The same contrast occurred in the Oeconomicus, at 4.3-4, when Ischomachos critiqued his wife’s use of cosmetics and urged her to cultivate true health and vigor of body.
its enemies. The *philotimos* desires public recognition as a result of victory in a contest, and Socrates attempts to turn the young *philotimos* Autolycos to the broader forms of recognition which come from political action. Similarly, Socrates attempts to turn Callias towards political action. He does not do so on the same grounds as he sought to sway Autolycos—that success in politics will afford greater public recognition—but on the grounds which would persuade *Callias*: namely, his erotic pursuit of Autolycos can best be successful if he devotes himself to politics. To repeat, Autolycos is exhorted to the political life as a fulfillment of his nature as a *philotimos*. Callias is exhorted to the political life as a means to fulfilling his erotic desire for Autolycos.\(^{378}\)

In both his attempted persuasion of Autolycos and of Callias, Socrates holds out the political life, and the virtue of that life, *andragathia*, as choiceworthy in light of each man’s desires. We recall that this elaborate exhortation is built on the conditional that Autolycos will want to gain greater forms of public recognition. It’s nowhere confirmed in the dialogue that Autolycos does have such broader ambitions, though the probability of Socrates’ conditional clearly rests on in the expectation that, in describing Autolycos as a *philotimos*, such broader ambitions are to be expected. The end of this conversation serves to confirm such expectations are well-grounded: Autolycos gazes contemplatively at

\(^{378}\) That this desire—or at least the public pursuit of the *eromenos*—was inappropriate for a man of Callias’ age lends irony to Socrates’ assertion of Athenian pederastic norms at 8.34. Socrates is reaffirming Athenian pederastic norms in the home of a flagrant violator of them. Callias was nearly 30 and most likely already a father, according to Bowen, *Xenophon: Symposium*, 13.
Callias after Socrates’ speech and Callias responds to this gaze by asking, ‘Socrates, will you then be my pimp to the city so that I can go into politics and always have her favor’ (8.42). The implication is that Socrates’ expectations of Autolycos are well-grounded, or at least that Callias thinks they are well-grounded. Callias has been persuaded to pursue the political life, in his attempted pursuit of Autolycos.

Socrates ends his exhortation by declaring: ‘I never fail to share my city’s passion (sunerastês) for men of a natural quality who are also aiming ambitiously (philotimôs) at excellence’ (8.41). Socrates is literally a ‘joint lover’ with the city for the political philotimos. Socrates and the city are each presented as an erastês, the older lover desirous of a younger erômenos, beloved. The erômenos here envisioned is not the physically beautiful, however, but the philotimos desirous of political excellence. Socrates agrees to ‘pimp’ Callias to the city, on the condition that the city, as he says, ‘see you cultivating excellence for real and not just seeming to’ for ‘a bogus image is soon exposed under test, but if a man’s andragathia is true, and if no harm is done him by a god, then his actions always make his good repute (eukleia, glory) brighter (lamproteran)’ (8.43).

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Plato’s Symposium is a set of speeches on each speaker’s understanding of eros. Xenophon’s Symposium is a set of speeches on what each speaker prides himself or makes him ‘think big’ (mega phronein). In terms of the content of the dialogue there is also evidence that Xenophon’s work is meant as a response to Plato’s. Most of the dialogue
consists of a set of discussions by the interlocutors on what each ‘prides’ himself, gives him reason to be proud or to ‘think big’ (*mega phronein*) about himself.\(^{379}\) As was seen above, civic pride is a subtle theme in Plato’s *Symposium*.\(^{380}\) There, the phrasing is *phronêmata megala*, ‘to think big thoughts’ or to possess the quality of prideful aspiration. At issue are the civic role of pederasty and the motivations inculcated thereby to public-spirited action.

The disagreement between Xenophon’s Socrates and Plato’s Phaedrus—Xenophon wrongly attributes the speech to Pausanias (8.32)\(^{381}\)—is centered on the kinds of motivation driving agents in the polity to undertake spirited actions. Xenophon’s Socrates argues that ‘all brave deeds nowadays are done by those who don’t mind taking on hard work and risk, for the sake of praise’ in contrast to ‘people with a habit of opting for comfort instead of glory’ (8.32). He attributes to Pausanias this latter view, who ‘speaking in defense of those who wallow in intemperance, observed that out of lovers and their loved ones a most valiant army could be made’ (8.32). Praise stimulates persons to undertake difficult and dangerous tasks. Or, to be more precise, the *prospect* of praise stimulates such exertion.

In Aristophanes’ speech is the claim that the men who go into politics are those who were descended from a primal all-male unitary being, that is, those people who when

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\(^{379}\) This phrase is repeated at the start of each speech. On the significance of this phrase, see Cairns, ‘Hybris, dishonour, and thinking big’.

\(^{380}\) See §3.4.

\(^{381}\) As noted by Bowen, *Xenophon: Symposium*. 

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split become pairs of male homosexuals. In Xenophon’s *Symposium* we see the adult Callias aspiring to become a political man out of his erotic attachment to the young Autolycos. Thus, we see in *Symposium* 8 a confirmation of Aristophanes’ claim. No wonder it jars with the flagrantly heterosexual conclusion of the dialogue which immediately follows. As discussed above, there is dispute whether Xenophon’s *Symposium* was written wholly or in part after Plato’s. Much of the scholarship on this disagreement has focused on its implications for our attempt to define Athenian pederastic norms, but as revealed in this section the focus of Xenophon’s discussion is less on the sexual or non-sexual nature of the relationship than on the effect of that relationship: whether the lovers are motivated to publically-beneficial actions as a result of their relationship.

In the manuscript tradition, Xenophon’s *Symposium* is usually paired with the *Oeconomicus*. The contrast between the two works is between a gentleman and Socrates in a serious conversation about the works of a gentleman and a set of gentlemen and Socrates in a conversation at leisure. Both dialogues, however, focus on *kalokagathia*, the ethical code of the gentleman. However, in *Oeconomicus* 11, Socrates recounts the accusations which depicted him as the antithesis of the gentleman: he is an idle talker, a

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382 An incongruity noticed, but left unexplained, by Bowen, *Xenophon: Symposium*, 19 n. 82.
383 See Clifford Hindley, ‘Xenophon on male love’, *The Classical Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1999), for a recent intervention in those disputes and for overview of the relevant literature; at 97-9 he addresses *Symposium* 8 directly.
speculator on natural science, and impoverished. In sharp contrast, in the *Symposium*
Socrates is said to be a *kalos k’agathos*.

§7.4 CONCLUSION

It has been argued that all Xenophon’s Socratic writings are apologetic in the sense
of correcting the record concerning Socrates, his life, and his teaching. What we
discover in Xenophon’s Socratic apologetics, however, is primarily Xenophon’s ideal
Socrates, a figure whose characteristic interests are largely those of Xenophon himself. As
we have seen, an inordinate proportion of his Socratic writings are devoted, either directly
or tangentially, to the subject of *kaloskagathia*, the ethical code of the gentleman. The
ethical code of the gentleman, as presented by Xenophon’s Socrates, includes works
redounding to the public good, as was seen in the case of Ischomachos in the *Oeconomicus*.
As revealed in that work, the code does not necessarily demand political leadership. Only
at the end of Xenophon’s *Symposium* are the political figures Themistocles, Pericles, and
Solon introduced, and Socrates himself is described there as *kalos k’agathos* despite his
eschewal of conventional political activity.

For Xenophon there are political and psychological consequences to Socrates’
philosophic activity, particularly his practice of *elenchus*. Whether practiced by himself,

385 Bowen, Xenophon: Symposium, 7; Danzig, Apologizing for Socrates.
on Euthydemus, or by Simonides, on Hiero, *elenchus* has the effect of reducing the formerly confident interlocutor to a state of extreme dispirit, *athumia*. That dispiriting in those two cases is primarily a propaedeutic enabling a change in mind which allows for subsequent instruction. But it can also have the effect of dissuading the interlocutor from political activity which might be harmful to the polity, on account of the dangerous combination of the interlocutor’s ambition and ignorance, as is seen in the case of Glaucon in the *Memorabilia*. This effect should be seen, it is argued above, as a component of Xenophon’s defense of Socrates on the charge of inflaming the harmful ambitions of men like Critias and, particularly, Alcibiades.

However, while the *philotimia* of some aspiring political figures is presented in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* as problematic, within the broader ambit of Xenophon’s political thought *philotimia* and the spirited motivations to which it gives rise are highly valued and, indeed, central to the well-functioning of political life. In the *Hiero*, the desire for honor, under Simonides’ questioning, prompts Hiero to an auto-critique which suggests the deep incompatibility of his desire for honor and his holding of tyranny. In the *Oeconomicus*, the desire for honor motivates the young Kritoboulos to seek out Socrates and learn from the latter’s dialogue with Ischomachus how to be a *kalos k’agathos*; and, as revealed in that dialogue, it proves that the ability to motivate subordinates through the allocation of honor is the primary means by which a *kalos k’agathos* exercises the arts of rule which makes him a good leader of his *oikos* and public benefactor to his *polis*. Indeed,
Xenophon in this respect shares Plato’s open-mindedness in respect of the ability of
women to participate in practices of rule, as Ischomachus’ wife is depicted as exercising
‘queenly’ arts of motivating her subordinates through the allocation of honor. Finally,
Socrates himself is portrayed, in the Symposium, as being with the city a sunerastés, co-
lover, of philotimos-type persons aspiring to public-spirited political action and thereby
the civic virtue of andragathia. Xenophon’s Socrates, therefore, is depicted as not only
manipulating the spirited passions of his interlocutors, as through his elenchus, but also
as articulating Xenophon’s most characteristic teachings regarding the role of philotimia
in motivating citizens and, indeed, the potential of those citizens who desire honor to effect
public-spirited action.
CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

§8.1 THE PARADigm OF THE SPIRITED PASSIONS

In the course of this work, several features of what I call the paradigm of the spirited passion have emerged. On crucial points Plato and Xenophon are in agreement and Xenophon seems to have followed Plato in a number of conceptualizations essential to the paradigm. Xenophon illustrates the role of the spirited passions in a wider variety of political and social contexts, however: the polis, the Greek household estate, the aristocratic symposium, foreign military and imperial enterprises, as well as philosophical dialogue.

Many of the paradigm’s main features should no doubt simply be understood as originating with Socrates and shared with other Socratics. Aeschines had characterized the effect of Socratic elenchus on an ambitious youth like Alcibiades in terms of athumia and, as we have seen, thumos-type terms and concepts abound in the works of both Plato and Xenophon—so they very likely were a prominent subject by Socratic discourse. But the paradigm which has emerged in the present study is complex and relies heavily on formulations in Plato’s Republic and Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, neither of which are seen as simply Socratic but as works which express the distinctive approach of their authors,
separable from their Socratic influence. Thus, we can call this the Platonic-Xenophontic paradigm of the spirited passions. Some of the more significant features of that paradigm are given here in a summary manner which better sets in relief the comparative similarities and differences between Plato and Xenophon.

§8.1.1 Education and nature

The education of youth is the setting of nearly all the works studied here, with the exception of Xenophon’s *Hiero*. As discussed above, in the classical period Homer’s texts were foundational to the education of youth. Plato’s *Republic* is particularly rich in Homeric allusions and Xenophon’s language often betrays Homeric archaisms. Xenophon’s intention seems to be to evoke the reader’s memory of Homer so as to forge a positive association between Homer’s texts and Xenophon’s own in respect of certain spirited passions.

Socrates’ interlocutors in both Plato and Xenophon are almost exclusively the aristocratic youth of Athens, the *kaloi k’agathoi*. But only Xenophon depicts those youth as being motivated to attend to Socrates’ teachings out of a desire to learn what *kalokagathia*, aristocratic gentlemanliness, was.\(^{386}\) Indeed, Xenophon’s Socrates claims to

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\(^{386}\) Both the *Oeconomicus* and the *Memorabilia* depict youth attending to Socrates for that reason. See ch. 6, §3, and ch. 7, §2.
know, or to be able to find out from gentlemen like Ischomachus, what kalokagathia is, in contrast to the Platonic Socrates, who only claims to have knowledge of ta erôtika, erotics.

For both Plato and Xenophon, however, education in part consists in balancing the vigor of the spirited passions with other qualities which render those passions less harmful and more beneficial to the youth possessing them. In Republic III, the spirited part of the soul, and the motivations to which it gives rise, is balanced by an education in mousikê which stimulates the intellective part of the soul, and the motivations to which it gives rise, and great emphasis is placed on the necessity of such a balance.\textsuperscript{387} Xenophon is concerned less by the negative psychological qualities to which an excess of spirited passion can give rise but by its practical dangers in politics and military action. His Cyrus is never warned against having a great deal of spirited passion unmediated by other psychological qualities but rather castigated for putting himself in danger of death or defeat out of a hasty or unreflective spirited impulse.\textsuperscript{388}

In addition to linking the spirited passions to a particular part of the soul, Plato introduces the notion of different types of natural endowments in respect of spirited (and other) passions.\textsuperscript{389} Xenophon will make this a central feature of his model political agent,

\textsuperscript{387} Ch. 2, §2.2.
\textsuperscript{388} E.g. see ch. 4, §2.3.
\textsuperscript{389} Ch. 2, §2.3.
Cyrus, who has a *phasis* which is *philotimos*, desirous of honor.\textsuperscript{390} The concept of different natures, some more spirited than others, is central to this paradigm.

Both Plato and Xenophon emphasize the need for some degree of natural spirited passion,\textsuperscript{391} and some degree of stimulation and education of the spirited passions as an adult, in the character types of political agents—including Plato’s philosopher-kings and -queens. Xenophon’s Socrates goes further and considers a spirited disposition to be a necessity for repeatedly undergoing the dispiriting effects of Socratic *elenchus*.\textsuperscript{392} For both Plato and Xenophon, it is an essential component of a good educational regimen that it take account of the natural endowments of the pupil. According to the scheme of the *Republic*, in which balance between spirited and intellective qualities is essential to a well-ordered soul, an education in a degree of *mousikê* or *gymnastikê* which would be inappropriate to one person would be perfectly suited to another, depending on the two parts of their soul relative to the other. But while the emphasis of the *Republic* in the middle books is on the forms of intellective training which shape the spirited Guardians into complete philosopher-kings and -queens, the focus of the *Cyropaedia* is almost entirely on the forms of education which further stimulate, and render more stable, the spirited qualities of a purely political agent.

\textsuperscript{390} Ch. 4, §2.1.


\textsuperscript{392} Ch. 7, §2.2; such effects are also suggested in Plato’s *Alcibiades*, see ch. 3, §2.
Plato in *Republic* V famously, and radically, eliminates the role of the conventional Greek family in raising and educating youth. Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia*, in contrast, makes Cyrus’ education under his father central to Cyrus’ full development as a political agent motivated by the spirited passions. Indeed, his fathers’ teachings are crucial to moderating the excess tendencies of Cyrus’ natural spirited virtues which, if untutored, could turn to vices. In contrast, excesses of spirited passion in Plato’s *Republic* are to be moderated by a public and civic educational regimen. However, Cyrus is a special instance in the Xenophontic corpus: Cyrus is a future king being educated by a reigning king, and Xenophon elsewhere says very little (even in the *Oeconomicus*, devoted to management of the household) about the instruction youth should have from their parents. Both Plato and Xenophon are firm, if critical, admirers of the Spartan pedagogical regime and its emphasis on public and civic, as opposed to private and familial, forms of education, and both model their educational regimens to a noteworthy degree on Sparta’s.

§8.1.2 *Physiology and drives*

This classical Greek paradigm of political motivation is articulated in part through conceptualizations of human biology and physiology—hence the importance of natural

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393 Ch. 4, §4.2.
philosophy to understanding this paradigm. Passions, including spirited passions, are seen to arise from and be influenced by the bodily constitution and its state. Thus, the strength of the various passions are understood to be subject to manipulation through actions on the body and its constitution by means of the consumption of certain types and quantities of food, the undertaking of certain forms of vigorous exercise, and engagement in certain kinds of erotic relations.

This paradigm can be termed a ‘moral-physiology’ or ‘psycho-somatology’ of political motivation. It places emphasis on the psychological states and dispositions conducive to or underlying the qualities of effective political leaders. It is not that such psychological states guarantee the formation of qualities of political leadership but that they are preconditions to any such formation. Particularly when conceptualizing the ‘spirited’ set of desires, physiological dispositions (and predispositions) and the links between physiological and psychological states are an enduring feature of this tradition. The language of the ‘humors’—melancholic, choleric, and so on—will continually recur, and it is one aim of this study to give the appearance of such, to us, archaic physiological terminology its proper context. Other types of physiological language is also utilized in this tradition as well, for example, in Homer or in Plato’s *Timaeus* (in which physiology is conceptualized in part through analogy to cosmology).

The Greeks understood all passions to be underpinned or supported by a class of more basic psycho-somatic drives. Specific types of physical activity, including exercise or
lack thereof, the type and quantity of food consumed, even the type of music listened to was understood to stimulate a set of psycho-somatic drives. Certain activities would strengthen certain drives and weaken others, thus shifting the overall psychological constitution. The drives would feed into and strengthen higher-order qualities like the various forms of appetite or—the form we are interested in—the spirited passions.

The psycho-somatic drives underpinning the spirited passions were understood to be stimulated by physical and martial exercise, particularly a more vigorous sort which included interaction with other human beings in a form of struggle. The struggle engaged in was heightened by the implication of competitive instincts in the two parties. The process of competing was understood to stimulate the drive responsible for the wish to compete again and more intensely. In Plato’s Republic, for example, certain kinds of physical exercise—gymnastic—are prescribed to develop the spirited part of the soul and the natures of potential Guardians. In Xenophon’s Cyropaedia certain physical exercises—especially hunting wild animals and fighting human beings, both at close range—develop the spirited passions. The Laws maintains those injunctions and specifically calls for exercise in heavy armor and wrestling which mimics fighting at close range in order to stimulate the spirited passions needed by the citizens.

394 Ch. 2, §§2.2-3.
395 See ch. 4, §2.
§8.1.3 Sexuality and erotic passions

In this paradigm, the good citizen is the psychically spirited citizen. In many parts of Greece, homosexuality was central to citizen pedagogy through the practice of pederasty, and one of the central questions in this paradigm was whether pederasty was conducive to the formation of the spirited passions necessary for good citizenship. A speech recounted by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* argues that the traditional *erastēs-erōmenos* does precisely the reverse: the *erastēs* has an interest in keeping the *erōmenos* lacking in the spirited passions because their presence would make the *erōmenos* more independent and less subject to the erotic whims of the *erastēs*. Furthermore, the economy of emulation breaks down in traditional pederasty: rather than the *erōmenos* admiring his *erastēs*, he feels pity for him for the madness of his erotic passion, which leads the *erastēs* to do anything, however debased, in his pursuit of erotic pleasure.

Greek customs regarding pederasty are the subject of portions of Plato’s *Symposium* which present a sharply different set of models for the interrelation of erotic relations and the development of spirited passions. This is particularly true of the

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396 The contemporary terms of debate on how the Greeks conceived relations of homosexuality and politics are largely set by Dover, *Greek homosexuality* and by Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. A recent contribution is that of James Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek love: a radical reappraisal of homosexuality in Ancient Greece* (London, 2007).

397 See ch. 3, §3.
speeches of Phaedrus and Aristophanes. As discussed in the introduction and applied to other parts of Plato’s work, a methodological divergence from the standard approach to the study of Plato’s thought is pursued here. Rather than attempting to determine Plato’s ideal theory, say, of pederasty (or arguing that he has such an ideal theory) the focus is here placed on the theoretical models themselves. This approach opens the way for the study of these models in their own right and as they link conceptually to other models in Plato’s work and the Greek corpus more broadly, including the work of Xenophon. On this approach, it’s not consequential that Phaedrus rather than Socrates advances a model of the erastês-erômenos relationship in which a beneficial form of emulation stimulates each partner to outrival the other in the spirited passions, including philotimia, and motivates them together to outrival other pederastic couples in doing spirited political deeds (like fight vigorously in warfare). In this interpretation, Socrates is not given privileged status as a maker of conceptual models.

Similarly, Aristophanes in the Symposium advances a model for how spirited political agents are created through erotic partnerships, but unlike Phaedrus earlier in the dialogue, Aristophanes denies that only male-male partnerships create such agents. He describes a period in human history during which human beings were spherical and self-sufficient, a state which made them awesome in strength and robustness and

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398 See ch. 3, §4.
399 For Phaedrus’ masculinist model of how male-male erotic partnerships uniquely create highly spirited political actors, see the next section.
possessed of the spirited ‘great and proud thoughts’ (*phronêmata megala*) which lead to rebellions against higher powers. It was precisely out of fear of such a rebellion that Zeus, according to Aristophanes, split these primordial human beings in half. His purpose in doing this was to weaken the humans through condemning them to search perpetually for their missing halves. In Aristophanes’ model, the original wholes, while erotically self-sufficient, did have distinct genders. They were either male, female, or androgenous. When split, the original males each became a homosexual couple, the original females each became a homosexual couple, and the androgyynes became a heterosexual couple. While open to all sexual pairings, Aristophanes’ model maintains the central point of Phaedrus’ model: intense erotic pairings create particularly spirited political agents with inclinations to upset existing hierarchies of political domination.

Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* constructs a similar model in which an extremely spirited psychological state—in his terminology, the disposition ‘to think big’ (*mega phronein*)—equips a person for rebellious action. That state is linked to the exercise of sexual powers, while the elimination of those sexual powers through castration is believed to eliminate the psychological capacity and motivation to rebel.\(^{400}\) Xenophon’s Cyrus, when he succeeds in conquering Babylon and establishing himself as ruler over most of the known world, finds the only way to protect himself from rebellious subjects is to surround himself with eunuchs who, because castrated, lose the extreme form of spirited

\(^{400}\) Ch. 5, §4.1.
motivation which leads to rebellion. But, in a departure from Greek discourse, Xenophon argues that some spirited passions remain to the eunuchs, most notably philotimia.

Cyrus himself, at the very close of the Cyropaedia, says he had avoided ‘thinking big’ (mega phronein) throughout his life. As he is modelled as a highly spirited character type throughout the work, this concluding statement is, on its face, a puzzle. It can only be understood in light of an understanding of mega phronein as an extreme degree of spirited passion which includes an element of specifically sexual assertion. In general, Xenophon’s conceptualization of the relation between the spirited passions and sexuality is one of opposition. Cyrus throughout the work is depicted as eschewing all forms of erotic relations until he has secured his greatest political achievements, and then he is only depicted as taking a wife (primarily for political reasons), never as using his political power to gain erotic pleasure.\footnote{Ch. 4, §2.2.} And in his youth, the Persian regime itself, which is modelled to stimulate and develop the spirited passions among the Persian citizenry, scrupulously keeps the young citizens from exposure to erotic activity.\footnote{Ch. 4, §3.} The solution to the puzzle of how Cyrus can be highly motivated by spirited passions—being, indeed, a philotimotatos—yet refrain from being mega phronein is found in the sexual connotations embedded in the concepts of mega phronein and hubris. They are closely linked—the passage on eunuchs at the end of the Cyropaedia (discussed above) states both are eliminated by castration—and combine an extreme form of spirited passion with a kind of
sexual agency.403 Because Cyrus never demonstrates a disposition of superiority or
dominance over others in respect of erotic or sexual relations he never slights others in
those respects and thereby avoids the faults of being mega phronein or hubristic.

Xenophon’s distinction between the high form of spirited passion captured by the
concept of a philotimotatos person and the extreme form of spirited passion represented by
mega phronein and hubris—an extreme which must find expression through erotic or
sexual assertion and insult—explains both his benevolent king, Cyrus, and his benevolent
tyrant, Hiero. Both are modelled as spirited character types who desire honor and
distinction to a high degree. But Xenophon’s lesson in the Hiero—expressed explicitly by
Simonides—is for the political tyrant to rest content with satisfying his spirited passions
through gaining political power and the honors which attends it while assiduously
avoiding hubristic assertions of superiority which infringe upon the sexual proprieties of
his subjects. In the Cyropaedia, the same lesson is depicted through the model of Cyrus
who is so thoroughly motivated by the spirited passion for purely political forms of timê
and eukleia that he doesn’t even countenance erotic activity with his subjects.

403 On which see Cairns, ‘Hybris, dishonour, and thinking big’, 22-25, in part a discussion
of the Cyropaedia castration/eunuch passage.
§8.1.4 Gender and masculinity

A construction of gender is a component of this paradigm, which posits spirited passions to be more prevalent among males than females and which attributes higher incidence of spirited passions to individuals possessed of higher degrees of andreia, manliness. In the Republic, an excessive education in mousikê, which stimulates the intellective part of the soul, if unbalanced by the physical training which stimulates the spirited part, results in a person marked by malakia. Often translated as ‘softness’, it has strong connotations of effeminacy. This vice—arising from excess—contrasts in Plato’s formulation with the virtue of andreia which springs from a rightly trained and tempered thumoeides.\textsuperscript{404}

Xenophon deploys a related construction of gender throughout the Cyropaedia, beginning at I.1.3-6, when Cyrus is said to be an anêr while those he rules are mere anthropoi. The people who Cyrus rules are mere anthropoi whereas he, the successful ruler, is called an andres, a person of the male sex with further connotations of being a real or full man, that is, possessing qualities of manliness, andreia. In this gendered language, the natural spirited virtues of a political agent closely track those possessed by persons traditionally designated andreios.\textsuperscript{405} When Cyrus fails to act as his spirited

\textsuperscript{404} Ch. 2, §§2.2-3.

\textsuperscript{405} The contrast between andres, who are motivated by spirited passions like the desires for honor or ruling office, and mere anthropoi, who are not so motivated and who, as a result, are content with subordinate or dominated positions, recurs in Xenophon’s works, see p. 230 for discussion and references to the Hiero and Oeconomicus.
natural virtue had earlier led him to—when his natural virtue is revealed to be unstable and he fears to approach the Median king for political favors—he calls himself a mere *anthropos* (I.4.12).406

In this paradigm, to lack a sufficient degree of spirited passion is to lack, by implication, a degree of manliness, but Plato and Xenophon both depart markedly from the norm of Greek usage by arguing that females, and even castrated males like eunuchs, can possess forms of spirited passion which suit them for political action. In Greek usage outside Plato and Xenophon, the lack of spirited passion, for males, suggested a form of effeminacy and a tendency toward slavishness, and the supposed lack of spirited passion in females was used as a tool in discourses of female inferiority. Plato and Xenophon do not call into question the conceptualization that a lack of spirited passion leads to political incapacity—in fact they reinforce that conceptualization—but they do make the argument that spirited passion and political capacity can be possessed by women, eunuchs, and other marginalized sexual and gender groups, like the adult homosexual.407 These arguments were, for their time, radical.

In Greek political discourse, the citizen was not to be *kinaidos*, the pathic or passive partner in the sexual act. The name itself denotes the high degree of shame—civic

406 For context see ch. 4, §2.3.

407 For Plato’s innovations in respect of women and the spirited passions among adult homosexuals in the *Symposium*, see ch. 3, §4. For Xenophon’s in respect of women, prominent in the *Oeconomicus*, ch. 6, §3; for eunuchs in the *Cyropaedia*, ch. 5, §4.1.
shame—attached to that role. The shamefulness of that role is intimately linked, in this
discourse, to the belief that the submissive sexual partner permanently forswears the
active sexual role. In that discourse, to shun the active sexual role is to forswear an
essential role of the citizen—the role of the citizen as vigilant, irascible, and reactive to
s在我们—and to deny retaliatory citizenship. The implication is that to accept such a
sexual conquest is to potentially, even probably, accept the role of political domination. To
be ‘tread upon’ sexually is to indicate one’s willingness to be ‘tread upon’ politically by
enemies foreign and domestic.

In the Symposium, in contrast, Phaedrus advances a model of essentially
masculine citizenship which is created through the bonding of pederastic couples. His
model is still masculinist in several respects. Males are said to be naturally of greater
vigor (errōmenos) and sense (noos), and it is claimed that pederastic relations create in the
partners the spirited ‘great and proud thoughts’ (phronêmata megala) which endanger and
dissolve tyrannies (as did the love of Harmodius and Aristogeiton). But pederastic
relations, even when both partners are adults, are advanced as an alternative model for
the creation of particularly robust and spirited citizens.

408 The shame attached to the kinaidos role is featured in the Platonic corpus in the
Alcibiades; see ch. 3, §2.
409 On the Greek idiom of being ‘tread upon’ when being dominated sexually or politically,
an idiom drawn from activities of roosters, see Eric Csapo, ‘Deep ambivalence: notes on a
Greek cockfight (part I)’, Phoenix 47 (1993). For a more recent but similar usage, consider
the iconic flags of the American Revolution emblazoned ‘Don’t tread on me’.
410 Ch. 3, §4.
§8.1.5 *History and biography*

The potential role of posthumous glory in motivating present political action, particularly by individuals motivated by political ambition, indicates the importance of history in this paradigm, history as a form of memorial of the past. History, whether in the form of written accounts or other testimonials to political action (like architectural projects or monuments commissioned to memorialize such action), is the medium which political agents expect will preserve the memory of their achievements. Such a memorializing function might well be served through a history like that of Thucydides for an historical figure like Pericles. Thucydides’ narrative records the actions and speech-acts whereby Pericles’ influence on Athenian and Greek affairs is demonstrated to the reader and memorialized. This kind of history serves the function of commemorating a statesman and his deeds, constituting an honor arena within the confines of the text in which Pericles’ political skill is set in comparison with that his contemporaries.

However, viewed not from the perspective of a figure like Pericles—who has achieved great political deeds and wishes to be remembered for them—but from the perspective of a potential political agent, an aspiring politician and statesman, another genre of Greek political historiography is useful: that of Xenophon as represented by his
Cyropaedia. This type of political history, in contrast to that of Thucydides, is biographical in focus and puts great emphasis on the phusis and paideia of the political agent it describes. The role of such works, giving account of a ‘life’ (bios) and putting particular emphasis on the role of education, as Xenophon’s biography of Cyrus does, is to give subsequent readers not only the means for judging the greatness of past political agents, as Thucydides’ history does, but also the means for potentially emulating them. Emulation can occur more completely if the upbringing, training, and psychological motivations of the political agents—not just their actions, often as mature individuals—are recounted. A mature political agent may well draw useful lessons for political action from Thucydides’ account of the prominent political agents he describes, but Xenophon’s Cyropaedia, which enters more deeply into the training and character of such a political agent, is a richer and more complete form of the history of the political exemplar.  

§8.2 Xenophon’s Contribution

Recognizing Xenophon’s turn to the idealized biography, as an exploration of political leadership and a way to advance his critique of and alternative to democratic

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411 On the type of history which utilizes exemplary political lives, see further Melissa Lane, ‘Constraint, freedom, and exemplar: history and theory without teleology’, in Political philosophy versus history?: contextualism and real politics in contemporary political thought, ed. Jonathan Floyd and Marc Stears (Cambridge, 2011).
ideology, demands a correction to claims that he merely carried on a Thucydidean
tradition of critiquing Athenian democracy through historiography. Josiah Ober has
argued that aside from Xenophon ‘other Athenian critical writers saw that the solution to
the political aporia defined by Ps.-Xenophon’s Political Regime of the Athenians was not to
be found in the evolving practices of Greek historiography and they turned to literary
genres less firmly grounded in accurate descriptions of the phenomenal world’. One
implication of the argument of the present work is that Xenophon himself also recognized
the limits of historiography as a form of anti-democratic critique and turned to—indeed, in
effect invented—the literary genre of the idealized biography as an improved platform for
such critique. Its target was not simply an Athenian audience, however, but more broadly
those who lived in Greek poleis.

The platform of the idealized biography, which the Socratics had pioneered in their
focus on Socrates as a philosophic type and Xenophon adapts to the political type of Cyrus,
allows for a dual focus on the individuality of the biographical subject and on the potential
of that subject for emulation. There is a possible contradiction, however, between the
singular uniqueness of a person like Socrates or Cyrus and the project of describing that
person in detail for emulative purposes. Cyrus’ uniqueness is evoked by Xenophon’s use of
‘wonder’ to describe such a person and his political achievement and the Socrates-like

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412 Ober, Political dissent, 121.
sophistês who educates his friend Tigranes is also described as eliciting wonder. The Cyropaedia, however, suggests a possibility of emulation from the very start: Cyrus’ methods of rule consist of a form of knowledge, epistêmê (I.1.3), and Xenophon Cyropaedia, taken as a whole, can be seen as an advancing an ‘epistemology of rule’ which can be applied in a variety of political contexts—not just the imperial—including that of the polis.

Xenophon indicates that at some level the possible contradiction between individuality and the possibility of emulation can be overcome by a work like the Cyropaedia. The possibility of articulating an epistêmê of rule had emerged from his own reflection on the case of Cyrus, as he relates at the start of the Cyropaedia. As discussed above, the obstacles to ruling over rebellious human beings, are so great that Xenophon argues it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to rule over human beings in an enduring fashion. But one case, an exemplary one to be sure, forces Xenophon to change his mind and conclude that such rule is possible. Referencing the tendencies of human beings to rebel, he states:

Now when we considered (enethumoumetha—to lay to heart, to be deeply concerned with) these things, we inclined to this judgment about them: It is easier, given his nature, for a human being to rule over all other kinds of animals than to rule human beings. But when we reflected (enenoêsamen) that there was Cyrus, a Persian, who acquired very many people, very many cities, and very many nations, all obedient to himself, we were thus compelled to change our mind (metanoein) to the view that ruling human

413 Discussed on pp. 120 (Cyrus), 154 (Cambyses regarding an exemplary ruler), and 197 (Tigranes’ sophistês).
414 To adopt a phrase of Tatum, Xenophon’s imperial fiction, 65.
415 For rebellion as the orienting problematic of the work, see ch. 5, §1.2.
beings does not belong among those tasks that were impossible, or even those that are difficult, if one does it with knowledge (*epistamenós*). (i.1.3)

The articulation of a ‘knowledge of ruling’ as the requirement for rule is expressed by Socrates (*Mem. III.9.10*). Xenophon’s emphasis, however, is on the *individual* Cyrus, in all his uniqueness, reflection upon whom can lead the contemplator to a change of mind, *metanoia*, regarding the existence of a knowledge of how to govern human beings.416

Xenophon’s emphasis on Cyrus’ natural endowment,417 as supplemented by his education, belies a complete dependence or optimism regarding a specialized knowledge for effective leadership, however. As we have seen, the uniqueness of Xenophon’s Cyrus in terms of his natural predisposition of character, and the natural virtues to which it gives rise, parallels Plato’s presentation of Socrates and the virtues of philosophers. Cyrus’ education in Persia and Media and his tutelage in dialogue with his father Cambyses and his friend Tigranes, a student of a Socrates-like *sophistês*, served to appropriately stimulate such a spirited character type while also molding his natural virtues into more stable and complete virtues compatible with political leadership.418 For Xenophon, it is a

416 In Thuc. III.36.4, the Athenians experience a *metanoia* the morning after ordering the punitive expedition on revolting Mitylene; for discussion see Foucault, *The hermeneutics of the subject*, 214-5, who argues Thucydides’ usage, with its connotations of regret and remorse, expresses the ‘negative value’ of *metanoia* in the period. Foucault there also adduces the present *Cyropaedia* passage in support of a point that *metanoia* can result from being persuaded by another. If Foucault is right about the strong negative connotations of *metanoia*—presumably meaning the state which *precedes* the turn of mind—then Xenophon is making a statement about the serious change the example of Cyrus, itself a form of persuasion, is meant to occasion.

417 See ch. 4, esp. §§2-3.

418 An argument which diverged both from the camp, represented by Nadon, *Xenophon’s*
combination of natural endowments and a proper education, both as a young person and later in dialogue with elders and peers, which leads to a person like Cyrus who puts an episême of rule into effect and thereby vindicates what in Socrates’ mouth was merely an assertion. The invocation of wonder always suggests the individuality, and thus rarity, of that achievement, but so long as the Cyropaedia exists to depict the person of Cyrus then a change of mind is possible in Xenophon’s reader regarding the possibility of governing rebellious human beings. The reader’s metanoia, as occasioned by observing Cyrus’ life, thus parallels the metanoia Xenophon experienced himself, he claims, in reflecting upon Cyrus.

The possibility of effecting this sort of change of mind in Xenophon’s reader parallels what has been called the ‘protreptic’ change undergone by men like Glaucon and Adeimantus, as depicted in Plato’s Republic, through their conversation with—and, I would add, experience of—Socrates:

Protreptic discourse is not educational discourse as a whole and does not by itself bring about education in virtue. Rather, protreptic address the initial or preparatory stages of education. It aims to get education in virtue under way, to get the reader or auditor turned and moving in the right direction, and to make the acquisition of virtue an urgent priority.419

prince, who think Cyrus’ youthful education was corruptive and from the position, articulated by Stadter, ‘Fictional narrative in the Cyropaideia’, that Cyrus never changes in the course of the work.

419 Harvey Yunis, ‘The protreptic rhetoric of the Republic’, in The Cambridge companion to Plato’s Republic, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari (Cambridge and New York, 2007), 4, with discussion of clearer fourth-century protreptic discourses—those which explicitly address and exhort the reader, like Isocrates’ letter to Philip—and the caveat that in the Republic ‘the protreptic function is implicit, because the author never addresses the reader in his own
Such a change of mind effects a sharp turn from one direction to another rather than the completion of the education. While Plato never refers to his *Republic* as a form of protreptic, Xenophon does state at the start of the *Cyropaedia* that reflection upon Cyrus effects a *metanoia* regarding the possibility of a knowledge of ruling. The emphasis on a turning of direction, rather than a completion of one’s education in such an *epistêmê*, is appropriate because Xenophon does not claim the *Cyropaedia* contains a complete account of how to rule. And, as our investigation of his other works has revealed, there are components of his theory of leadership which the *Cyropaedia* lacks and are supplemented by consideration of those works. We focused on the *Hiero* and the *Oeconomicus*, in which a state of equality (the desirable alternative to a tyranny) or of alternating positions of ruling and being ruled (as in the household) are shown to be desirable from the standpoint of *philotimia* and the distribution of *timê*.

The *Cyropaedia* is not Xenophon’s treatise on a complete art of governing: its purpose is more narrow and urgent. It is, from the start, intended to effect the reader’s initial turn of mind. The work depicts Cyrus’ many virtues, not just a technical knowledge of ruling, and should be seen as an invitation to Xenophon’s readers to develop similar political virtues, that is, a change of life. As the work itself depicts the beneficial effects of competitive rivalry, so can one expect Xenophon desiring such responses from his readers

voice and never says what his purpose is’.
in emulation of his Cyrus. The expectation of such emulation in response to idealized biography is one of Xenophon’s contributions to Greek political thought and culture.

Another of Xenophon’s contributions is more subtle and emerges from our focus on instances in his works of spirited passion being depressed, a person or persons becoming athumos either in response to a particular experience or as a settled disposition. Xenophon, like his fellow Socratic Aeschines, shows that such a depressive effect was a consequence of the early stages of Socrates’ elenchus for some of his interlocutors. In Aeschines Alcibiades, the youth is reduced to profuse weeping, his head on Socrates’ lap. Euthydemus’ response to Socrates’ elenchus, in Xenophon’s Memorabilia, is to declare he holds himself in extreme self-contempt as if he were the most wretched slave. And some version of that response, less extreme, is seen in Plato’s own Alcibiades. Taken together with Xenophon’s other depictions of states of athumia, however, this effect has certain negative implications. Xenophon himself says at the close of the Euthydemus dialogue that while Euthydemus was sufficiently spirited to return to Socrates after such a humiliating, depressive experience, others were not and thus never returned. This suggests that Socrates’ (presumably) beneficial elenchus depended for its effectiveness on a certain robust character type in his interlocutor and thus could not be beneficial to all.

There is also a darker implication of the dispiriting effects of elenchus which is suggested by attention to Xenophon’s various discussions of the dialogic technique. In the Cyropaedia episode of Cyrus’ dialogue with the Armenian king, and in the case of the poet
Simonides’ dialogue with the tyrant Hiero, the latter interlocutors are reduced to a state of \textit{athumia} in which they declare their deservedness of being put to death for their faults.

While some might see this as a justified response by a tyrant to a rigorous self-examination of his way of life, the Armenian king, it should be remembered, had committed the fault of rebelling against the Median emperor, an act which the Armenian said was prompted by his desire for political freedom. It is quite striking that the Armenian’s own son Tigranes then shows Cyrus how to turn the Armenian king’s immediate dispirited response (to Cyrus’ \textit{elenchus}) into a \textit{permanent} disposition of psychological, and thereby political, subjection. The upshot is that Xenophon at some level considered Socratic-style \textit{elenchus} as a technique by which interlocutors could be controlled.

In sum, young persons, rebellious subjects, and tyrants can all be seen as in need of having their aspirational spirited passions moderated or suppressed, in this paradigm. So much is suggested, at least in the case of youths, by the passage in Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric}, discussed above.\textsuperscript{420} To focus in particular on youth, our extended discussion of Cyrus’ youthful predisposition to spirited excesses makes that point. But what may be described as a moderating effect by the person doing the dispiriting might well be seen by the person being dispirited as a form of suppression or even subjugation (setting aside the case of the tyrant). That is an additional point drawn from Cyrus’ interaction with the rebellious

\textsuperscript{420} See p. 49.
Armenian king, as indeed from Plato’s Alcibiades’ exasperated declaration that Socrates is being hubristic toward him by conducting elenchus as he does.

Thus, viewed from the perspective of the subaltern, the positive effects of the spirited passions, and thus the danger of dispiriting techniques, can be better appreciated. If one is the leader of a subjugated people, like the Armenian king, the strengthening of aspirational spirited passion is the first step on the road toward freedom. The sophisticated ambiguity of Xenophon’s theory on these matters, which I have tried to bring out, has the result of making it impossible to state that Xenophon is a unqualified conservative. This will come as a shock to those used to hearing him characterized as ‘a military monarchist’ or even a type which ‘closely resembles a familiar British figure—the retired general, staunch Tory and Anglican, firm defender of the Establishment in Church and State’.421 Precisely as a result of his intense concern with manifold ways the spirited passions impact political and social life, Xenophon has a sensitivity to the way those passions function even among the subordinate or dominated.

The subaltern perspective which I have drawn out from Xenophon’s work is one of the primary reasons why I argue this class of passions should be described as spirited and not as ‘irascible’. I differ here from the Latinate and more broadly post-classical philosophical tradition. There is some reason for the traditional appellation, not least that

Plato’s term for this class, arising from the *thumoeides* part of the psyche, puts *thumos* front and center as the focal case of spirited passion. Greeks would have recognized *thumos*, from Homer’s works onward, primarily as a kind of anger. But, as we have seen, it is the specific kind of anger which is concerned with one’s standing in the eyes of others and the broader set of spirited passions which share that concern should not be lost to sight. To make anger the focal case of this class arises from philosophical and political positions which held anger itself to be undesirable or dangerous, either unhealthy to one’s psychic health or threatening to reigning political and social norms. But in Xenophon’s thought on the spirited passions certain forms of righteous indignation are good (like that against a tyrant). And in some cases the very capacity to have righteous indignation depends on an aspirational self-estimation which techniques of shaming or threat can eviscerate. Xenophon’s focus on and sophisticated delineation of the various spirited passions and their interrelation puts on display both the beneficial effects of some spirited passions and the prerequisites needed for possessing them.


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