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XENOPHON REDIVIVUS: A REVIEW ARTICLE

Michael A. Flower (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, XX + 520 pp., ISBN 978-11-070-5006-8, £83.99 (hb.) / ISBN 978-11-076-5215-6, £27.99 (pb.).

The (continuing) wave carrying the venerable series of ancient *Cambridge Companions to…* is showing no sign of abating. The tide is still high, bringing new titles, with *Xenophon* already published and *Thucydides* on the horizon (as one may discern from the bibliography of the book under review). After *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*[1] and the present volume, one may soon expect other multi-authored studies on this writer, in partiuclar looking forward to *The Oxford Handbook to Xenophon* and possibly *Brill's Companion to Xenophon* (the latter following on from the 2012 volume edited by F. Hobden and C. Tuplin[2]).

The first (as the Editor of the book under review rightly reminds us) *Companion to Xenophon* – a volume pleasantly produced and packed with insightful contributions by a team of acknowledged experts in the field – will undoubtedly be welcomed by many as "a must-read" classic. The Editor's noble ambition was to offer comprehensive treatment of Xenophon and his legacy, so the essays have been grouped, reasonably, under five analytical categories : (I) "Contexts", (II) "Individual Works", (III) "Techniques", (IV) "Major Subjects" (here, however, the theme of war in Xenophons' works is curiously omitted), (V) "Reception and Influence". Each of these parts contains four or five essays, and taken together, they all aim to touch upon almost every aspect of Xenophon's literary output – an ambitious and valiant task, and, let us repeat, a successful venture.

The reader's odyssey with the Cambridge Xenophon starts from the Editor's "Introduction" (pp. 1–12), which I found useful and inspiring, partly dealing with the issues discussed at length by T. Rood (ch. 25, pp. 435–448) and E. Hall ("Epilogue", pp. 449–458). Stressing Xenophon's literary versatility, Professor Flower reminds us (p. 2) of the "changing fortunes" (the title of Rood's study) of this great literary "experimentator" – a fascinating tale in itself, especially in the second half of the 20th century (an industrial age, when gentlemen did not spend time on hunting, philosophising, wine drinking and *dolce far niente*), when the adventures of an old-fashioned Greek failed to attract the reader's attention, so Xenophon simply fell from grace, and the shadow already cast on him by Thucydides on the one hand and Plato on the other became the longest ever (cf. excellent remarks by Hall, p. 458). But we are reminded that a great scholarly *anabasis* to Xenophon has taken place over the last twenty years or more (p. 3; see Rood, p. 447, on Xenophon's "rehabilitation"), and this was realised in all aspects: so we are witnessing a second, more sophisticated Xenophontic "Renaissance" now, and you may choose as you wish: Xenophon "the Philosopher" (mainly in ethics, and political studies as reflecting on politics was in antiquity a part of philosophy), Xenophon "The Master of Prose", Xenophon "Witness to-, and the Man of His Times", and so on. On p. 5 Flower suggests that Xenophon's vision of politics between states ("international" or "foreign" policy) differred from that of Thucydides the realist: this is disputable and doubtful. Moreover there is also nothing revealing in the claim that comes as the most important lesson the

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[1] *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*, ed. by R.B. Strassler, a New Translation by J. Marincola, Introduction by D. Thomas, New York 2009.

[2] F. Hobden, C. Tuplin (edd.), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Inquiry*, Leiden–Boston 2012 (Mnemosyne Suppl. 348).

volume advocates, namely the conviction that one must read Xenophon "across genres" (p. 6), avoiding reading them in isolation. Perhaps a far more fundamental question Flower is asking (p. 10) is why Xenophon wrote at all, and his answer is that he did so "for practical ethics", which in turn is the occasion to formulate a programmatic comment on the whole Cambridge Xenophon project, viz. that the ideas of the Athenian writer still have the potential to engage and influence a wider audience; their enduring allure is the truth of the messages they contain.

Flower's emphasis on the eternal values of Xenophon's "teaching" leads our attention to the last part of the *Companion* – Xenophon's *Nachleben*, the subject of four essays which are also interesting in that each of the scholars approaches the theme of the reception of Xenophon's writings in Western culture from a somewhat different angle. Alongside the informative studies of Rood and Hall, there are articles by E. Bowie and N. Humble. Bowie (ch. 20, pp. 403–415) confines his analysis to the times of Greece under the Roman Empire, focusing essentially on three examples of Xenophon's prominence: Dio Chrysostomus' speech 18, Chariton's charming novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, and the writings by Arrian of Nicomedia. Bowie begins with a long quotation from Dio's diatribe, then he analyses the novel, ending with Arrian, that famous "new" Xenophon (on Arrian and Xenophon see also Luraghi, p. 99). Bowie's reconstruction of Arrian's way of imitating Xenophon is disputable in its details, particulary his argument that Arrian's famous statement at *Anab*. I 12, 5 proves the relatively late date of the work's composition – since this statement may rather be taken as Arrian's later addition. It is also difficult to concur with Bowie's claim that Arrian's *Cynegeticus* "updates" Xenophon' manual: Arrian's aim was, rather, to replace it totally. Nor is also entirely right to say (p. 414) that Arrian "has had no recent monograph": in addition to Stadter's book[3] there is an equally important Duke University dissertation by E.L. Wheeler[4] as well as H. Tonnet's book[5] (remarkably, none of them figure in the bibliography). In N. Humble's chapter (21, pp. 416–434) the usefulness of Xenophon for European rulers (princes, kings, statesmen) in the early modern era is espoused. Paying closer attention to the popularity mainly of the *Cyropaedia* (but the *Hiero* and the *Oeconomicus* too), the chapter may be read together with M. Tamiolaki's study (ch. 9, pp. 174–194). The merit of Humble's learned piece is a point which all the scholars of Xenophon are perfectly aware of but which, nevertheless, is always worth repeating and emphasising, namely how influential Xenophon's advice was in the period from Poggio and Valla, through Pontano and Machiavelli, to Erasmus. There is also an open question whether even modern "managers" could benefit significantly from reading Xenophon (pp. 432 f.; cf. Flower, p. 5; see Buxton, pp. 330–332); indeed, you might imagine "the suits" as – between finalising business deals or eating lunch – frequently delving on their iPads or Kindles into an e-pub of ancient wisdom as guide for the advanced: the *Oeconomicus*. Why not?

But to return to the beginning of the book: the first part of the essays deals with "Contexts" – in order to describe the background against which Xenophon wrote, both historical and intellectual. Here J.W.I. Lee offers (pp. 15–36) a mini-biography of Xenophon, plausibly placing it in the wider history of the Greek world between 430–350 BC (on which cf. also Luraghi's remarks, p. 84). The narrative is good, and what merits attention is Lee's final fair confession of how personal his own perception of Xenophon is. In his chapter (2, pp. 37–56), L.A. Dorion reads Xenophon as a philosopher by adducing those plassages from which one may realise what he knew of both earlier (the Presocratics) and contemporary philosophers (the Sophists), as well as what was later known of him in philosophical circles, e.g. his influence on Zeno of Citium and his popularity in Stoic thought, including Arrian (here again one reads an erroneous claim about the updating of Xenophon's *Cynegeticus* by Arrian, p. 55). Especially revealing here is the subsection on

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[3] P.A. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia*, Chapel Hill 1980.

[4] E.L. Wheeler, *Favius Arrianus: A Political and Military Biography*, Duke University 1977.

[5] H. Tonnet, *Recherches sur Arrien, sa personnalité et ses écrits atticistes*, vols. I–II, Amsterdam 1988.

Aristotle's possible knowledge of Xenophon's works (pp. 49–53): the author argues that at least the *Memorabilia* were known to Aristotle. S.B. Ferrario's contribution is on "Xenophon and Greek Political Thought" (ch. 3., pp. 57–83) and it may be counted as one of the best sections in the whole volume. The essay is rich and thoughtful. Having noted the difference between ancient and modern concepts of "the political" (the former being just an equivalent of "human relationships", p. 57), the author goes on to characterise Xenophon's attitude as well as his focus on particular aspects of *tà politiká*, such as his favourite theme of successful leadership (cf. pp. 74–79). Democracy occupies an important place for Xenophon too, in the *Memorabilia* as well as the *Hellenica* and the *Ways and Means*. Addressing the everlasting dilemma as to whether Xenophon was "an anti-democrat" (p. 70), Ferrario does not give a simple "Yes" to it, as has been done previously. Her interpretation points to a more nuanced reading of Xenophon's thought, although there is no doubt that the question of the moral quality of leaders (that is to say, their character; see too the studies by Maricola, pp. 108–113, Tamiolaki, pp. 189–193, and especially Buxton, pp. 323–337) was far more important to Xenophon than a controversy over which "constitution" is the best. Less clear in this part of the volume is the presence of the contribution written by N. Luraghi – his chapter seems to have been misplaced in this section, instead of being included in the part dealing with "Major Subjects", next to Flower's study on "Xenophon as a Historian" (pp. 301–322). Luraghi sees Xenophon's historical production in the world of (as he recalls) the *Trikaranos*, or the "Three-Headed Monster" (as runs the title of a pamphlet ascribed to Anaximenes of Lampsacus), a reality dominated by the struggle of the then most influential *poleis*. The author elucidates in this way both how political rivalry and competition for hegemony in fourth-century Greece influenced themes of historiography and what Xenophon's own contribution was in this respect.

Moving to Part II provides an encounter with "Individual Works", beginning with Marincola's study on the *Anabasis* and the *Hellenica* (which links this chapter thematically both with that of Luraghi as with that of Flower in Part IV, pp. 301–322). The author emphasises (p. 106) that the two works "represent new developments in Greek historiography", and, more importantly, that "Xenophon bends the genre to his own needs and interests" (*ibid.*), a procedure leading to "[a]n openness to the generic innovation present in Xenophon's historical works" (p. 107). In addition, there is a valuable explanation of the motivations for Xenophon to write history at all. The two Socratic writings (*logoi*) are the subject of D. Johnson's analysis ("Xenophon's *Apology* and *Memorabilia*", pp. 119–131). G. Danzig's comprehensive chapter on "Xenophon's *Symposium*", pp. 132–151) is packed with many insightful remarks, including his analysis of "an elaborate ring composition" of the dialogue (p. 135). In her extensive essay on the *Oeconomicus* (pp. 152–173) F. Hobden discusses various problems, first the date of the work's composition, then the meaning and place of "economics" in Greek discourse, ending with the dilemma of "Isomachus' Wife" (pp. 168–173). M. Tamiolaki's interesting contention in her chapter on the *Cyropaedia* (pp. 174–194) is that it is a more historical work than is usually assumed (p. 182): while acknowledging the timeless problem of genre which in this case constitutes "a puzzling issue", she proposes looking at Cyrus' life-long odyssey towards *iustum imperium* in terms of Xenophon's intertextual engagement with traditional historical issues (here, e.g., a comparison of similar motifs in Thucydides' *epitaphios logos*, II 36, 4, with the prologue to the *Cyropaedia*, I 1, 6, is revealing; cf. also Flower, p. 302). Finally, there is J. Dillery's chapter on "the Small Works" (pp. 195–219) in which the three technical handbooks, the two treatises on Sparta, the *Hiero* and the *Ways and Means* are all included. However, gathering together works which are very different in character is a little strange (as an encomium, the *Agesilaus* has little in common with, say, the *Ways and Means*, and their unmasked didacticism is of quite different nature; the *Hiero*, in turn, is much closer to the *Cyropaedia*), and the criterion that their common feature is their supposedly "small" volume seems to be artificial at best. On the other hand, such a decision is understandable, for it reveals, as Dillery himself admits in his discussion of 'pamphlet' and 'royal literature', the modern difficulties in classifying Xenophon's *œuvre*. *On Hunting* may be singled out as a typical example of such difficulties – a technical manual *and* a study in ethics in one.

Xenophon "the writer"/"the artist" is the subject of Part III, and deservedly so, as his fame as a master of prose goes back to antiquity (cf. Bowie's essay). Opening, V. Gray deals with "Xenophon's Language and Expression" (pp. 223–240) which embraces "vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure" (p. 224). C. Pelling's "Xenophon's Authorial Voice" (pp. 241–262) traces "the textual I-Xenophon" utterances (p. 261) in individual works, distinguishing between the "authorial voice" in the texts and "the flesh-and-blood author" (pp. 260 f.). In the last two studies in this Part, T. Rood devotes his chapter to a careful analysis of Xenophon's narrative style in which he distinguishes three tracts: "immediacy", "inscrutability" and "variety" (the last visible especially, according to Rood, pp. 268–272, in the *Hellenica*), while the multidimensional character of Xenophon's speeches is discussed thoroughly by E. Baragwanath (pp. 279–297).

"Major Subjects" that interest the scholars who contribute to Part IV include items like M. Flower's "Xenophon as a Historian" (pp. 301 f.), leadership in Xenophon (R.F. Buxton, pp. 323–337), then Xenophon's attitude towards the states that are dear, to some extent, to his heart: Athens (C. Tuplin, pp. 338–359), Persia (K. Vlassopoulos, pp. 360–375), and Sparta (P. Christesen, pp. 376–399). Flower is especially valuable when it comes to the topic of the omissions in the *Hellenica*; his position regarding Xenophon's bias is in fact nuanced. And particularly astute here is his reminder that we should not apply modern criteria of what an ancient historian should include and what not since Xenophon did not compose for posterity but "for contemporary readers who knew the basic outline of events well enough" (p. 306). Equally worthwhile is Flower's subsection "Why Things Happen", a profound analysis of Xenophon's manner of explanation of historical process. As regards the intriguing question of what Xenophon's attitude toward his native Athens was (which should be read alongside Christesen's chapter), Professor Tuplin's final conclusion is (p. 358) that, overall, "he remained a loyal Athenian" – a verdict which agrees with E. Badian's 2004 proposal[6]. It appears that Xenophon was like Alcibiades in Thucydides: he did not dislike Athens, but was no admirer of democracy. Another dilemma and enigma, unresolved so far, is Xenophon's Persia: here Vlassopoulos tends to reiterate how complicated things are in this regard, and how the picture of the Persian Empire in Xenophon depends on what aspect is discussed and which work of Xenophon is examined.

There is always some uneasiness in the case of these companions: rooted in the fact that every modern reader carries in mind her/his own author (cf. Lee, p. 35), so we may inevitably wonder: why such a topic and not another; why these themes when similar ones were not raised; why were some points overemphasised while others received marginal notes; and so on. But selectivity, as it happens in other cases too, is of course a *condicio sine qua non* in such venerable undertakings; so, understandably enough, this should not be taken as complaint on my part. One minor perplexity, however, needs to be raised: the bibliography.

I have some trouble with the politics of compiling bibliographies which the Cambridge Companion series adopts. Bibliographies in the series are simply a consolidation of the secondary works cited in individual chapters, as is also the case here. When reading the chapters separately, all seems to be fine – we know the choice of secondary books is subjective and reflects the author's line of argument. Yet, when all the cited secondary literature is amassed in one place, in one continuous register, a somewhat strange impression emerges: are many of these contributions in such a bibliography really so important for Xenophon's studies as to figure prominently in this place? Of course, we bear in mind that the aim here is not to give a comprehensive list of modern works and selectivity is inevitable, yet this does not remove an impression of arbitrarity. This is particularly true in the cases where Xenophon is not the main subject. One may thus wonder why Bonsal, Boswel, Callender, Fantazzi, Hutson, Sommerville, M.G. Spencer, or Wiffen are given priority in occupying the list, rather than, e.g., Eduard Delebecque's Budé editions (with commentaries)

[6] E. Badian, *Xenophon the Athenian*, in: C. Tuplin (ed.), *Xenophon and His World: Papers from a Conference Held in Liverpool in July 1999*, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 33–53.

of the *Cynegeticus* and the *De re equestri*, which are missing from the list? Naturally, for studying Xenophon they certainly cannot be omitted, as many would agree, yet since Delebecque's editions are not mentioned by any of the contributors, they just failed to appear in the closing list – a major fault, I think. On this occasion, I was also surprised by the absence of Ludwig Breitenbach's 1869 Teubner edition of the *Cyropaedia* containing a still valuable commentary: was the reason for this that it was "für den Schulgebrauch"? In Part V there is no mention of Xenophon's fate in the Eastern Roman Empire during the Middle Ages (e.g., A. Kaldellis' works on the classical Greek historians in Byzantium[7] are omitted); no reference is made to A. Keaveney's paper on the trial of Orontas[8]; the important contribution by P. Stadter[9] is not cited by anyone, either. Amongst other minor faults of the bibliography: on p. 469 Dorion's paper "Xenophon's Socrates" is listed twice, while on p. 476 Godfrey Hutchinson (the author of *Xenophon and the Art of Command*) is erroneously conflated with Gregory (G.O.) Hutchinson, the current Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, whose name, additionally, is misprinted as "Hutchison".

Yet, despite these minor reservations, considering the book as a whole, its merits are indisputable. One can only feel great admiration and congratulate the Cambridge University Press on the enterprise.

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[7] See A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Role in the Making of the Corpus of Classical Greek Historiography: A Preliminary Investigation*, JHS CXXXII 2012, pp. 71–85; idem, *Byzantine Readings of Ancient Historians: Texts in Translation, with Introductions and Notes*, London–New York 2015.

[8] A. Keaveney, *The Trial of Orontas: Xenophon, Anabasis I, 6*, AC LXXXI 2012, pp. 31–41.

[9] P. Stadter, *"Staying Up Late": Plutarch's Reading of Xenophon*, in: Hobden, Tuplin, *op. cit*. (n. 1), pp. 43–62.