

# INDIVIDUALS IN XENOPHON, *HELLENICA*<sup>1</sup>

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FEW Greeks can have been so well qualified as Xenophon to write a historical work on the last decade of the fifth century and the first four decades of the fourth century, which is the period covered by the *Hellenica*. The life that he led provided him with exceptional advantages for writing contemporary history. He was personally acquainted with many leading figures of his time; with a few of them he was on intimate terms. In dealing with a period of almost continuous warfare it was a potential asset to him to have had wide experience of active service and some of military command. He also had personal knowledge of civil war: when he was a young man, he certainly witnessed, and probably played a part in, the series of bitter struggles at Athens when the democracy was overthrown by the Thirty and was later restored. After leaving Athens when still in his twenties, he was, it appears, never again actively involved in political life, and he was less interested in politics than in war. He was, however, thoroughly familiar with the methods whereby Greek cities conducted their internal government and their external relations with one another. He also enjoyed the misfortune, so valuable to a historian, of having been exiled.<sup>2</sup> Banishment, as Plutarch points out,<sup>3</sup> was the lot of many Greek historians; it was almost a professional qualification.<sup>4</sup> Xenophon was absent from his native city for at least thirty-five years and lived for most of this period in the Peloponnese. Although he might have made better use of the opportunities for historical

<sup>1</sup> The substance of a lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday the 12th of January, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, in a famous passage (5. 26. 5), claims that his exile gave him special qualifications to write his *History*.

<sup>3</sup> *Mor. (De exilio)*, 605 c, where he lists Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus, Timaeus and Androtion as historians who wrote in exile. Herodotus, Theopompus and Polybius also suffered banishment.

<sup>4</sup> T. S. Brown, *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, lix (1954), 841-3.

research afforded by his long exile, it did confer some obvious advantages, one of them being that the *Hellenica* is not written wholly from the viewpoint of a single city.

Evidence that Xenophon was well endowed with literary qualities is as abundant in the *Hellenica* as it is in his other works. His narrative is almost everywhere lucid and graphic, and he has a flair for dramatic presentation of violent action, based upon acute observation of the distinctive features in any episode. He is adept at recreating the atmosphere of a tense situation.<sup>1</sup> He is also capable of writing good speeches and even better dialogue. His love of *oratio recta*, which is a distinctive feature of all his major works, contributes to the literary attractiveness of the *Hellenica*. So strong is its influence that in a very large number of passages reporting what was said by someone or in a conversation between two persons, though he begins his report in *oratio obliqua*, he promptly switches into *oratio recta*, usually inserting *ἔφη*.<sup>2</sup> This habit helps to produce an impression of directness analogous to that of Herodotus.

Plentiful and varied experience of warfare, an adequate knowledge of politics, and a talent for writing clear and attractive prose provide an excellent foundation upon which to build a historical work. In antiquity the *Hellenica* was much admired, and critics tended to rank Xenophon as a historian beside Herodotus and Thucydides.<sup>3</sup> This high assessment is, however, based very largely upon literary merits<sup>4</sup>; it is undeserved, indeed

<sup>1</sup> In addition to famous scenes such as 2. 2. 3-4 (news of the disaster at Aegospotami is received at Athens), 4. 5. 11-17 (the destruction of a Spartan *mora* by Iphicrates) and 6. 4. 35-37 (the murder of Alexander of Pherae), there are many admirably vivid accounts of minor events. Examples are 4. 8. 32-39 (the defeat and death of Anaxibius), 5. 1. 7-9 and 19-23 (naval attacks on the Athenians from the Spartan base at Aegina).

<sup>2</sup> There are instances throughout the *Hellenica* from the beginning (1. 1. 14) to the end (7. 4. 40, cf. 5. 1-2). It is noteworthy that negotiations conducted by Tissaphernes (3. 4. 5) and later by Tithraustes (*ibid.* 25-26) with Agesilaus are reported in dialogue form, although in both cases the principal negotiators remained many miles apart.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*, 4; Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.*, 38-40, cf. Diod., 1. 37. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Dion. Hal., *De compositione verborum*, 10 and *Epist. ad Pomp.*, 4; Diog. Laert., 2. 6. 57.

almost ludicrous, if other qualities desirable in a historian, such as accuracy, impartiality, methodical arrangement and an understanding of causation, are taken into account. There is widespread agreement among modern scholars that the *Hellenica* is, on balance at least, a failure.<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention to attempt a comprehensive survey of its merits and defects but to examine a single element of the work, its treatment of leading individuals. This element is an important one, especially as Xenophon is intensely interested in personality and is fond of introducing personal touches better suited to biography than to history.<sup>2</sup> He has often been criticized for allowing his own feelings to colour his presentation of individuals, particularly those with whom he had personal contacts; and he is undoubtedly guilty of bias in some instances. My purpose here is to try to show that there is an even graver defect in his treatment of individuals, namely that in assessing their importance and their qualities his criteria are basically unsound.

Among the uses to which the practice of including speeches in historical works might be put by ancient historians one was to throw light upon the speaker. It will be convenient first to examine briefly how in the *Hellenica* Xenophon uses speeches for this purpose. In his report of a peace conference held at Sparta in 371 he includes a speech by Callias, one of the Athenian envoys, who is introduced as "the kind of man who derives as much pleasure from being praised by himself as by others" (6. 3. 3). In this speech (ibid. 4-6) Callias glorifies himself and his family, and he pleads for peace between Athens and Sparta on the grounds, which must have seemed somewhat absurd even to a Greek audience, that the mythical ancestors of both sides had been on friendly terms. Only one sentence makes any explicit reference to the contemporary situation which gave rise to the conference (ibid. 5). The speech provides a delightfully malicious

<sup>1</sup> M. I. Finley, *Greek Historians* (1959), p. 14, refuses to include any passages from the *Hellenica* in his selection of extracts on the grounds that "it is very unreliable, tendentious, dishonest, dreary to read, and rarely illuminating on broader issues". This harsh verdict, if somewhat exaggerated, is not altogether unmerited.

<sup>2</sup> I. Bruns, *Literarisches Porträt* (1896, reprinted 1961), pp. 39-45.

exposure of a pompous and conceited man, and it is skilfully and wittily written. Its historical value, however, is almost negligible. Although Callias belonged to a prominent and wealthy family, his own political and military career was humble and undistinguished; he makes only two fleeting appearances elsewhere in the *Hellenica* (4. 5. 13-14; 5. 4. 22).

Xenophon occasionally shows a capacity for using speeches for the serious portrayal of important individuals. His account of the Thirty at Athens includes long speeches by Critias (2. 3. 24-34) and Theramenes (*ibid.* 35-49) when the former impeached the latter before the Boule. These speeches, which form an effective antilogy, focus attention on the cynicism of Critias, who coldly argues that bloodshed is inevitable when governments are changed, and on the self-possession of Theramenes, who calmly defends his own adoption of a middle course in politics, though conscious that nothing can save him from execution. The attacks made by each speaker upon the other are also instructive in spite of their palpable bias. Unfortunately Xenophon seldom chooses to adopt this method of throwing light upon leading figures<sup>1</sup>; it is more normally his practice to use speeches attributed to nonentities as the vehicle of his personal opinions. Examples are a speech by Euryptolemus, an obscure cousin of Alcibiades, at the trial of the Athenian generals in command at Arginusae (1. 7. 16-33) and two speeches by Procles of Phlius, an even more shadowy figure, on relations between Athens and Sparta after Leuctra (6. 5. 38-48; 7. 1. 2-11).<sup>2</sup> Among the most interesting speeches in the *Hellenica* is one presenting a picture not so much of the speaker but of someone else. It is the report to the Spartans by Polydamas of Pharsalus on his negotiations with Jason of Pherae, who was subjecting him to a sort of political blackmail (6. 1. 4-16). The portrayal of Jason by Xenophon will be discussed below (pp. 253-4), but here attention may be drawn to the fact that he makes the speech of Polydamas contribute substantially to it.

<sup>1</sup> An effectively revealing speech of a totally different kind is that of the Spartan Teleutias to his sailors at Aegina (5. 1. 14-17).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Delebecque, *Essai sur la vie de Xénophon* (1957), pp. 17, 210, 313-15, 457.

Much more distinctive and instructive than his use of speeches is a feature of his attitude towards leading individuals which is prominent throughout the *Hellenica*. He evidently built up in his mind an image of an ideal military commander endowed with certain qualities which seemed to him to be particularly desirable and admirable. He tends to apply this image as a yardstick in presenting military leaders about whom he wrote. The extent of its influence was not appreciated by modern scholars until a few years ago when an excellent study of the evidence was published which has established its importance beyond dispute.<sup>1</sup> It is my belief that from this evidence some conclusions may be drawn which may be deemed to throw light upon the historical value of the *Hellenica*.

The characteristics envisaged by Xenophon in his ideal military commander may be outlined as follows. He must win and maintain the loyalty of his men by devoting himself to their welfare. He must make every effort to ensure that they are well paid, well fed and well cared for. If there is a shortage of food, he must himself be content with a ration as small as theirs or even smaller. He must seek to alleviate their hardships, and where hardship is inevitable, he must share it with them. Similarly, he must share all the dangers to which they are exposed. He must be affable and approachable, always ready to lend a sympathetic ear to their complaints and petitions. He must set an example to them by his own self-control and physical fitness. He must see that they are well trained so that they may prove as effective in battle as they can be made to be. The best method of achieving this aim is to hold exercises designed to harden their physique and to improve their discipline and proficiency; prizes should be offered as incentives in these training exercises. He must also be a sufficiently persuasive speaker to be capable of bolstering their morale in dangerous situations and of conducting delicate negotiations in their interests. Finally, he must be a

<sup>1</sup> H. R. Breitenbach, *Historiographische Anschauungsformen Xenophons* (1950), especially pp. 60-101. Most of the evidence is derived from the *Hellenica*, though he also deals with other works. In the following pages I am much indebted to his survey, but I disagree with him on some points, as will be seen below.

skilful tactician, ingenious enough to devise stratagems whereby he may outwit the enemy on the field of battle.

Leading figures in the *Hellenica* to whom Xenophon attributes several or many characteristics of his ideal commander are Hermocrates, Agesilaus, Teleutias, Iphicrates and Jason. A case could be made out for adding Thrasybulus and Dercylidas to the list. It will suffice to consider briefly how Xenophon presents Hermocrates, Teleutias and Jason: these three are chosen because their careers and personalities were widely different and because his treatment of each seems especially instructive.

He describes most vividly (1. 1. 27-31) the scene when news reached the Syracusan squadron in Asia that its commanders, who included Hermocrates, had been banished by popular vote. At a mass meeting he and his colleagues protested that their banishment was unjust and illegal; but they urged their officers and men, who clamoured that they should remain in command, not to defy the orders of the Syracusan state but to serve it as loyally as in the past. The generals did, however, consent to continue in office until their successors arrived. Xenophon lays emphasis upon the regret felt by the subordinates of Hermocrates when his devoted and sympathetic leadership was lost to them. He also mentions that it was the practice of Hermocrates to call the ablest of these associates together twice each day to meetings at which he informed them of his intentions and gave them instruction. These gatherings must have been valuable, and Xenophon is doubtless justified in declaring that the reputation of Hermocrates was enhanced by this paternal attitude towards those serving under his command.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, while it must be remembered that most of his career falls outside the period covered by the *Hellenica*, the presentation of him is surely one-sided: it dwells in rather extravagant terms upon a single element, and perhaps not even a vital element, in his qualities as a statesman and soldier.

Teleutias, who was the brother of Agesilaus, was evidently a dashing leader with an attractive personality, a combination most

<sup>1</sup> 1. 1. 31 (first sentence) seems to make this claim but is not altogether logical. It is not made clear why his private consultations with his friends should have influenced his reputation in the council of allied commanders (ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ).

unusual in a Spartan. He conducted a bold and spectacular raid on the Peiraeus, admirably described by Xenophon, which caused a panic at Athens and won large quantities of booty (5. 1. 19-24). Apart from this exploit his achievements while commanding small Peloponnesian fleets in the Aegean were almost negligible. He has little claim to be ranked as a man of outstanding distinction, but he is highly praised by Xenophon in two passages portraying his relations with the troops under his command. The first describes the manifestations of loyalty and affection when he leaves Aegina after his term of office has expired. Here Xenophon comments that such displays of devotion are better evidence of merit than exploits involving heavy expenditure and exposure to dangers (5. 1. 3-4). The second passage creates a similar impression by a different method (5. 1. 13-18). When Teleutias is sent to resume command of the same force at Aegina, he greets his men with a speech of encouragement<sup>1</sup>: he offers to undergo privations even worse than theirs, he promises to be as approachable as he has been in the past, and he urges them to provide their own subsistence by plunder won from the enemy. They respond enthusiastically to his words, and he orders them to man their ships for the attack on the Peiraeus mentioned above. Teleutias must have been personally known to Xenophon, who might be expected to be prejudiced in favour of a brother of Agesilaus. Personal considerations may have influenced in some degree his eulogistic treatment of a secondary figure,<sup>2</sup> but another factor, which is perhaps more important, is that the most conspicuous characteristics of Teleutias coincide with those of his ideal commander. He saw in him a man after his own heart.<sup>3</sup> When reporting how Teleutias lost his life at the siege of Olynthus Xenophon does at last become critical of him (5. 2. 37-3. 7). The tone of admiration so prominent in the passage on his naval commands is again found in the narrative

<sup>1</sup> See above p. 249, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Delebecque, *op. cit.* pp. 283-4, believes that Xenophon wrote this part of the *Hellenica* soon after the death of Teleutias whose virtues he stressed in order to console Agesilaus for the loss of his brother. This ingenious suggestion does not appear to be supported by any evidence.

<sup>3</sup> J. Luccioni, *Les idées politiques et sociales de Xénophon* (1948), p. 184.

describing the earlier stages of his mission to Olynthus, though in fact he does not seem to have made much progress towards the completion of his task. Eventually he became enraged by the success of the Olynthian cavalry and rashly committed his forces to an engagement in which they were handicapped through having to operate too close to the city walls. He was himself killed and his army routed. Xenophon makes the sensible comment that it was a fatal error when attacking an enemy to be guided by *ὀργή* and not *γνώμη*. This passage shows that he did not consider even his ideal commanders to be beyond reproach; he displays an equally creditable absence of bias towards another of them, Iphicrates, whom he charges with mishandling an expedition to the Peloponnese (6. 5. 49-52).

Jason stands somewhat apart from the rest of the leaders listed above. To Xenophon, who is most unlikely to have had any personal contact with him, he is an absorbing but mysterious figure. He is also presented to a large extent in an abnormal way, as has already been noted,<sup>1</sup> namely through the speech of Polydamas at Sparta.<sup>2</sup> He is, however, credited in this speech, and to a lesser degree in the narrative, with many characteristics of an ideal commander as conceived by Xenophon. He was conspicuous for his physical energy and toughness, and he was constantly training his mercenaries so that they should become hardened troops of the highest quality; he was also generous in rewarding them for good service and in caring for their welfare (6. 1. 5-6, 15; 6. 4. 28). The circumstances of his assassination suggest that he was more approachable than most tyrants (6. 4. 31); and he showed a capacity to resist the temptations of the flesh (6. 1. 16), a quality rare among Thessalians who were notoriously self-indulgent. That he possessed diplomatic gifts is illustrated by the accounts both of his interview with Polydamas and of his negotiations with the Thebans and the Spartans immediately after the battle of Leuctra (6. 4. 22-25). It may indeed

<sup>1</sup> See above p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon may well have met and questioned Polydamas, cf. M. Sordi, *La lega tessala* (1958), pp. 162-3, who discusses the question of the sources from which his account of Jason may have been derived. On the personality of Jason see Westlake, *Thessaly in the Fourth Century B.C.* (1935), pp. 122-5.

be felt that, because Xenophon dwells on his intelligent use of bluff and propaganda and on his imaginative schemes for the realization of far-reaching ambitions, the treatment of him is altogether more penetrating, and shows more awareness of what qualities go to make up a great leader, than that of others to whom the characteristics of an ideal commander are attributed. There is, however, every reason to include him in the list.

A few leaders are represented by Xenophon as conspicuously lacking in the characteristics of his ideal commander. A flagrant case is that of Mnasippus, a Spartan admiral sent with an expeditionary force to attack Corcyra (6. 2. 4-8, 15-26). When the Corcyreans were on the point of surrender, he discharged some of his mercenaries and withheld the pay of others, though he was said to have suffered from no shortage of funds. The discipline of his troops soon deteriorated, and when some of his officers protested, he lost his temper and struck them. The outcome of his misguided leadership was that he was defeated and killed and that the expedition failed ignominiously. Another Spartan, overwhelmed by disaster because, it is suggested, he scandalously neglected his duties while holding a military command, is Thibron (4. 8. 17-19); but Xenophon seems to have had a grudge against him and may have presented him unfavourably (cf. 3. 1. 4-8; 4. 8. 22) for that reason.<sup>1</sup>

Because this image of an ideal commander evidently had a deep and lasting influence upon Xenophon, the problem of its origin is of considerable importance. At first glance he might seem to have taken Agesilaus, or rather his own conception of Agesilaus, as his model and to have sought in other leaders the characteristics which he admired in Agesilaus. It is, however, at least arguable that the image of an ideal commander was already crystallized in his mind before he wrote about Agesilaus and that it helped to determine his presentation of him. Indeed it is not always easy to reconcile the admirable qualities attributed to Agesilaus with the crude and unimaginative policy of repression which he undoubtedly pursued, though this question cannot be discussed here. It is preferable, in seeking the prototype of the ideal commander, to look further back to a portrait which Xeno-

<sup>1</sup> Delebecque, *op. cit.* p. 134.

phon certainly formed in his own mind before he first came into contact with Agesilaus—the portrait of himself as drawn in the *Anabasis*.<sup>1</sup> He is in fact his own ideal commander. The qualities of this ideal figure are precisely the qualities which he claims in the *Anabasis* to have displayed while holding a military command, as a selection of relevant passages will show. It will also be seen how the limitations of his own experience as a military leader unfitted him to assess the leadership of others.

His care for the wellbeing of his troops and his willingness to share their hardships and dangers are themes mentioned frequently in the *Anabasis*. When the Greeks were struggling to forestall the enemy in occupying the summit of a steep hill, a hoplite complained of having to carry a heavy shield while Xenophon was riding on horseback. Xenophon promptly dismounted and took over the shield, though he was also burdened by the weight of a cavalry breastplate (3. 4. 47-49). In Armenia he set a salutary example to his troops by his toughness when there had been a heavy fall of snow (4. 4. 11-12); and he made every effort to help those suffering from exhaustion (4. 5. 7-9). He claims to have been accessible at all times: all his soldiers knew, he declares, that they need have no hesitation in approaching him, even when he was eating or sleeping, if they had anything of value to tell him (4. 3. 10). He quotes a remark made about him by a Thracian prince that he was *φιλοστρατιώτης* to such an extent as to damage his own interests (7. 6. 4 and 39). The *Anabasis* contains many speeches, most of them by Xenophon. In one of the last of these, when he has become unpopular and is even in danger of being put to death, he dwells upon his unselfish devotion to his troops in the past and argues that it entitles him to better treatment now: “you used to call me father and promise that you would always remember me as a benefactor” (7. 6. 35-38). Speeches delivered in the early stages of his command were designed mainly to bolster the morale of the Greeks.<sup>2</sup> He also claims to have shown diplomatic skill, after

<sup>1</sup> Whether he actually wrote the *Anabasis* before or after the parts of the *Hellenica* dealing with Agesilaus is a disputed question which is not relevant here.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 3. 2. 8-39, where he combines encouragement with practical advice. 6. 3. 12-14 (17), which belongs to a much later stage, is similar.

the worst dangers were past, in conducting negotiations on their behalf.<sup>1</sup> Finally, he credits himself with an inexhaustible capacity for devising military stratagems whereby he extricated them from difficult situations. For example, in two consecutive episodes, shortly before they sighted the Euxine, serious obstacles are shown to have been overcome by means of tactical plans proposed by himself (4. 6. 7-27 and 7. 1-14).

While he undoubtedly exaggerates his own contribution to the achievement of the Ten Thousand, he had good reason to look back with satisfaction to the period during which he found himself so unexpectedly undertaking the responsibilities of military command. It is, however, evident that the leadership demanded of him by the circumstances of his command was of an exceptional kind. The problems confronting the leaders of the Ten Thousand were abnormal, indeed unique; they differed fundamentally from those of conventional Greek warfare. Although there was plenty of hard fighting, it was mainly of an unusual sort against outlandish tribesmen, who in many instances tried to bar the passage of the army at defensible points on mountain passes or river crossings. Often difficult country, severe weather and shortages of food and other commodities were hazards more formidable than enemy attacks. Because the Ten Thousand were a variegated force of mercenaries drawn from a large number of cities<sup>2</sup> and served together for nearly two years in areas remote from their homes, it was exceptionally important for their officers to win their confidence and loyalty.

It may be that Xenophon and his colleagues, being forced to improvise, showed tactical inventiveness from which valuable lessons could and should have been learned.<sup>3</sup> They were, however, to a very large extent denied the opportunity to prove themselves as strategists; it was impossible for them to show whether they possessed qualities of generalship and statesmanship such as are associated with leaders of the highest class. It was surely to a large degree because the personal experience of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 5. 5. 13-23, which is a mixture of conciliation and threats.

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Parke, *Greek Mercenary Soldiers* (1933), pp. 28-29, collects informations about the origin of named individuals.

<sup>3</sup> G. T. Griffith, *Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World* (1935), p. 5.

Xenophon in military command suffered from these limitations that his criteria in assessing the qualities of others, as seen in the *Hellenica*, are misconceived ; that he admires the wrong leaders or admires the right leaders for the wrong reasons. Gifts of intellect and imagination carry little weight ; a capacity for strategic planning on a large scale, for creating and directing the military policy of a powerful state, is hardly considered at all. There were a few major figures in the period covered by the *Hellenica* who had some conception of high-level strategy, but they receive scarcely any credit for it, as will be seen below. Xenophon tends to envisage military history from the viewpoint of a battalion commander, and he assesses military leaders by this standard. Gibbon in a celebrated sentence of his *Autobiography* remarks that "the captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman empire". To Xenophon experience of military command was to a large extent a positive handicap.

Two leaders to whom Xenophon does not attribute the characteristics of his ideal commander have very strong claims to be considered the greatest figures in the half century covered by the *Hellenica*. They are Lysander and Epaminondas.<sup>1</sup> The presentation of these two leaders by Xenophon, who does less than justice to the achievements of either, throws further light upon his assessment of individuals and serves to confirm the conclusions drawn from his preoccupation with his image of an ideal commander. His treatment of Epaminondas, which will be examined first, is astonishing and illustrates how unpredictable he can be.

Epaminondas is mentioned for the first time in the *Hellenica* as the leader of an unimportant expedition to Achaea in 366 (7. 1. 41), when he already had far greater accomplishments to his credit. He had made an outstanding contribution to the

<sup>1</sup> Breitenbach, *op. cit.* pp. 89-91, includes in a section entitled "die richtige strategische Planung" an examination of the measures and motives attributed to Epaminondas during the campaign leading to the battle of Mantinea (cf. *op. cit.* pp. 120-1). He thus seems to rank Epaminondas as one of the ideal commanders. I disagree with this view because, as pointed out below, the Mantinea campaign was on a totally different plane, and demanded different qualities of leadership, from such operations as the raid by Teleutias on the Peiraeus (*op. cit.* p. 92).

rise of Thebes ; he had won his crushing victory over the Spartans at Leuctra ; he had liberated Messenia and destroyed the long-established Spartan domination of the Peloponnese. These events, except for the liberation of Messenia, are fully described by Xenophon but without any reference to the part played in them by Epaminondas. The reason for this strange suppression of the protagonist is abundantly clear. The successes of Thebes against Sparta were unwelcome to Xenophon, who must have found the evident superiority of Epaminondas to Agesilaus especially painful. There is, however, no evidence whatever that Xenophon was influenced by personal animosity : he treats Pelopidas in a similar way, mentioning him only as the leader of an embassy to the Persian court (7. 1. 33-40).

His attitude towards Epaminondas undergoes a sudden and remarkable change in the closing pages of the *Hellenica* where he records the fourth and last of the Theban expeditions to the Peloponnese culminating in the battle of Mantinea (7. 5. 4-25). His narrative gives the impression that his sense of justice has belatedly impelled him to make amends for his refusal hitherto to acknowledge the military genius of Epaminondas. It includes a careful and skilled analysis of the motives underlying the decisions of Epaminondas at each stage of the campaign. This analysis explains why he delayed at Nemea (7. 5. 6) ; why he encamped inside the fortifications of Tegea and remained for a time on the defensive (8) ; why he eventually attempted a surprise attack on Sparta (9)<sup>1</sup> ; why he chose to deliver this attack at one particular point (11) ; why he withdrew from Sparta (14) ; why he decided to fight a pitched battle before leading his army home (18) ; why at Mantinea he gave the enemy the impression that he had no intention of committing his forces to action immediately (21-22) ; why in the battle itself he launched a spear-head assault with the strongest part of his army (23) ; why he massed cavalry and infantry together in a single formation and posted a force on high ground on one wing (24). It is important to observe, because it is unusual in the *Hellenica*, that he is here presented as a leader whose decisions were dependent upon logical

<sup>1</sup> According to Xenophon it was due only *θεία τινὶ μοίρα* (10) that he did not find the city totally undefended (cf. *τὸ θεῖον* in 12).

reasoning, upon the intelligent use of all available information. The verbs *λογίζομαι* and *νομίζω* occur frequently,<sup>1</sup> and he is praised for his *πρόνοια* (8). In no other passage of the *Hellenica* is so much insight shown into the essence of military leadership at the highest level. Some of the decisions taken by Epaminondas are purely tactical, but Xenophon is not here drawing attention to minor stratagems used to outwit an enemy in unimportant operations, as he often does when writing of Agesilaus (cf. 4. 5. 3) and other ideal commanders.<sup>2</sup> He is helping his readers to understand the planning and direction of a campaign which, judged by Greek standards, was on a very large scale indeed. Nor is he merely reporting what he has learned from someone closely associated with Epaminondas, since it is most unlikely that he consulted any Thebans about this campaign.<sup>3</sup> He is using his own knowledge of warfare to reconstruct the intellectual processes on which the strategy of Epaminondas was based. It is regrettable that he did not choose to adopt this technique elsewhere.

The presentation of Epaminondas in the *Hellenica* has, apart from the suppression of his earlier achievements, another serious defect. Xenophon nowhere credits him with any qualities other than those of a military leader. He fails to appreciate, or refuses to appreciate, that Epaminondas was also a statesman with enlightened views which were by no means confined to the advancement of Theban imperialism and were at times in conflict with it.<sup>4</sup> There are, it is true, modern scholars to whom Epaminondas was a soldier and only a soldier.<sup>5</sup> To this assessment, which I believe to be basically mistaken,<sup>6</sup> the treatment of him in the *Hellenica* has doubtless contributed.

<sup>1</sup> Breitenbach, *op. cit.* pp. 90-91 ; H. Montgomery, *Gedanke und Tat* (1965), pp. 110-12.

<sup>2</sup> At only one point in the narrative of the Mantinea campaign has the image of the ideal commander left a clear mark, namely where the troops of Epaminondas are stated to have been eager for battle because he had trained them so well (7. 5. 19-20).

<sup>3</sup> Much of his information may have been derived from his son Diodorus who was serving with the Athenian cavalry (Delebecque, *op. cit.* p. 441).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. N. G. L. Hammond, *History of Greece* (1959), p. 510.

<sup>5</sup> M. Fortina, *Epaminonda* (1958), pp. 108-13.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. my review of Fortina, *op. cit.* in *C.R.*, x (1960), 160-1.

The presentation of Lysander is more characteristic of Xenophon, and therefore even more instructive, than that of Epaminondas. Another reason for examining it is that it belongs to the first three books of the *Hellenica*, where Xenophon is widely believed to be at his best and where the influence of his prejudices is undoubtedly less marked than in other parts of the work. His treatment of Lysander sheds a considerable amount of light upon his qualities as a historian.

It was under the leadership of Lysander that the Spartans achieved the total victory which, contrary to the expectation of most Greeks immediately after the Athenian disaster in Sicily,<sup>1</sup> had eluded them for years. One important reason for their repeated failures to take advantage of Athenian weakness was that their admirals commanding the allied forces in Asia had to undertake responsibilities for which very few Spartan leaders were adequately equipped. Because these *nauarchoi* served only for one year, they had no opportunity to acquire the experience necessary to enable them to discharge their duties competently. They had to direct naval operations on a large scale; they had to organize a coalition of allies; above all, they had to negotiate with the Persians, from whom financial subsidies must be secured if the Peloponnesian fleet was to be maintained in an efficient condition for any length of time. In all these spheres, Lysander, when actually or virtually in command in Asia, was far more successful than any of the other Spartan leaders. Xenophon, though nowhere disparaging his achievements, is evidently reluctant to acknowledge that his outstanding ability turned the scale.

It is true that Lysander was fortunate in his first contacts with the Persians. When he took up his command in Asia, Cyrus, who was genuinely eager to help the Peloponnesians, had arrived at Sardis and taken over responsibility for relations with them from Tissaphernes, who had pursued a policy of trying to weaken both sides. Xenophon records an anecdote which illustrates the diplomatic skill whereby Lysander obtained from Cyrus an increase in the daily wage of the Peloponnesian crews (1. 5. 6-7). This anecdote, however, seems to be included mainly because of its dramatic

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. 8. 2. 1-2; 24. 5; cf. 2. 65. 12.

qualities, which are fully exploited. Lysander won and retained the confidence of Cyrus, with whom he established a close friendship (2. 1. 13-15) with the result that, while he was in Asia, the flow of Persian subsidies was uninterrupted and not ungenerous. For this achievement, which was of immense value to the Peloponnesians, he receives hardly any credit from Xenophon, who devotes far more attention to his antagonistic attitude towards Callicratidas, his successor as *nauarchos* (1. 6. 1-11). His efforts to create difficulties for Callicratidas may have been wholly the outcome of personal animosity, as Xenophon assumes, but he may well have felt that the boldness of his successor, combined as it was with inexperience in naval leadership and in diplomacy, might prove disastrous to Spartan interests and must be curbed as much as possible.<sup>1</sup> If he held this view, the Peloponnesian defeat at Arginusae abundantly confirmed his misgivings. Xenophon shows warm admiration for Callicratidas, whose forthrightness, chivalry and impatience of subservience to Persia he found far more attractive than the shrewd realism of Lysander. He does, however, acknowledge that the allied cities in Asia requested the Spartans to send out Lysander to take command there because of the high reputation which he had won during his previous term of office (2. 1. 6). Though debarred by law from serving again as *nauarchos*, he was appointed *epistoleus*, and this appointment gave him in practice the powers of supreme commander because the new *nauarchos*, in theory his superior, was a nonentity.

Spartan commanders in Asia were confronted with the difficult problems of organization. They had to try to weld into an effective fighting force a navy composed of contingents drawn from many states and differing widely from one another in technical efficiency. Another problem was to make the best possible use of the many Asiatic Greek cities now on the Peloponnesian side, which were often in need of protection and could well prove a liability. It was essential to ensure that as much assistance as possible should be extracted from them in the war against the

<sup>1</sup> D. Lotze, *Lysander und der peloponnesische Krieg* (1964), pp. 24, 26 and 70, who finds some support for this conclusion in the views attributed to the friends of Lysander in 1. 6. 4.

Athenians.<sup>1</sup> The success of Lysander in these tasks, while actually or virtually responsible for conducting the war in Asia, receives no recognition in the *Hellenica*. Nor is he given much credit for his two major victories in battle, at Notium and Aegospotami, which are to a large extent attributed to the errors of his opponents. At Notium the engagement was precipitated by the foolish bravado of Antiochus, who disobeyed the orders of Alcibiades to take no offensive action; but Lysander evidently took full advantage of the opportunity offered to him (1. 5. 11-14). Similarly at Aegospotami the Athenian generals were at fault in refusing to recognize the danger of their exposed position despite the warning by Alcibiades. On the other hand, the plan of Lysander, namely to decline battle on four successive days and then to make a surprise attack when many of the Athenian ships were unmanned, was cleverly conceived and effectively executed. It was a stratagem of a kind that appealed to Xenophon, who shows some admiration for it, but his narrative gives the impression that the decisive factor was Athenian incompetence (2. 1. 20-29). When describing how the Peloponnesians massacred their prisoners after the battle, he does not expressly vindicate or condemn Lysander. He explains that this mass execution was a reprisal for atrocities committed or threatened by the Athenians and that Lysander referred the decision to a meeting of allies; but he also makes clear that Lysander initiated the discussion on the fate of the prisoners and that he personally cross-examined and put to death one of the Athenian generals who had had some captives drowned (2. 1. 31-32). While the account of this episode may be entirely accurate, its tone is unsympathetic towards Lysander.

During the final months of the war, when Lysander had established a blockade of the Peiraeus and was apparently at Samos,<sup>2</sup> Theramenes came to consult him about peace terms and remained

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch (*Lys.*, 5. 5-8) and Diodorus (13. 70. 4) provide evidence that soon after his arrival in Asia Lysander altered the political structure of many Ionian cities with the object of bringing them under the effective control of his own supporters (cf. H. Schaefer, *Würzb. Jahrb.*, iv (1949-50), 301-3). Xenophon does not mention these measures.

<sup>2</sup> Lotze, *op. cit.* 41, who accepts the account of Plutarch (*Lys.*, 14. 2).

with him for over three months (2. 2. 16-18). Why this visit lasted so long is not satisfactorily explained by Xenophon or any other authority. Theramenes wished to waste time while starvation made the Athenians more amenable to harsh terms (ibid. 16), but he could not have prolonged his visit without the consent of Lysander. On his return to Athens he reported that Lysander had detained him till then and had eventually told him to go to Sparta because only the ephors had the authority to give him an answer (ibid. 17). Lysander could undoubtedly have made up his mind at once on this constitutional point if he had wished. He must have acted in collusion with his visitor, believing that his own interests would best be served by causing Theramenes to stay away from Athens for a considerable time<sup>1</sup>; both must have wished to give the Athenian oligarchs the opportunity to strengthen their position while the suffering caused by the blockade, for which the democrats were held responsible, became more and more intense. Xenophon, though perhaps handicapped by lack of information from the Spartan side, fails to give Lysander credit for what was surely an astute move.

After the surrender of Athens and later of Samos, Lysander returned home to Sparta with all his spoils and the unspent balance from the funds assigned to him by Cyrus, which amounted to a very large sum. Xenophon mentions that he handed all this treasure over to the state but makes no comment (2. 3. 8-9). Although he is stated to have established a decarchy at Samos (2. 3. 7), there is no reference to his policy of imposing this system of government on many cities<sup>2</sup> or to the immense personal authority that it brought him. Readers of the *Hellenica* would not suspect that at this moment he enjoyed a reputation at least as high as that of any other figure in Spartan history or that, as is attested from other sources,<sup>3</sup> many states granted him official honours of a kind never before paid to a living Greek.

The remainder of his career is to some extent an anti-climax.

<sup>1</sup> Lotze, *op. cit.* p. 44, is probably right in thinking that Lysander did not disclose to the ephors the presence of Theramenes at his headquarters.

<sup>2</sup> In a much later passage of the *Hellenica* (3. 4. 2) there is a reference back to the establishment of decarchies by Lysander (cf. 3. 5. 13).

<sup>3</sup> Lotze, *op. cit.* pp. 52-58, has collected the evidence.

A widely accepted belief that his power was suddenly overthrown in 403 is not supported by any cogent evidence, and his system of decarchies seems to have been maintained until 397.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, impossible for him, in spite of his immense prestige throughout the Greek world, to maintain the influence on Spartan policy which he had exerted while victory over the Athenians was an overriding consideration. His authority was undermined by the difficulty of winning support from successive boards of ephors and by the jealousy habitually evoked at Sparta by triumphs abroad. During the decade after the fall of Athens there were three episodes, described in the *Hellenica*, in which he played an important part; in two of these, and perhaps also in the third, he was unable to achieve his object as a result of rivalry with one of the Spartan kings. Because his attainments in this period were relatively modest, there is perhaps less reason to criticize Xenophon for failing to do justice to his talents. The tone is largely unchanged: it is the tone of Xenophon when writing about persons or subjects of little interest to him or of little importance in his estimation.

The part played by Lysander in the establishment of the Thirty at Athens, which is known to have been considerable, is virtually ignored in the *Hellenica* (2. 3. 2-3). Later, when they asked Sparta for a harmost and a mercenary garrison in order to intimidate their opponents, they made their request through Lysander, who secured that it was granted (2. 3. 13-14). After the democratic rising under Thrasybulus the oligarchs again turned to Lysander for aid; he supported their appeal with enthusiasm and arranged to have himself sent to Athens as harmost with his brother as admiral. Xenophon attributes to him the belief, which proved unfounded, that the democrats at the Peiraeus could quickly be reduced by blockade (2. 4. 28). The prospect that "he would win glory and also make Athens his personal possession" then aroused the jealousy of his enemy, the king Pausanias, who, supported by a majority of the ephors, was appointed commander of an army sent to Attica. Pausanias took over the direction of operations there and eventually negotiated a settlement whereby the civil war was ended (2. 4.

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Smith, *C.P.*, xliii (1948), 145-56.

29-39). This policy of reconciling opposing factions evidently commended itself to Xenophon, whereas that of Lysander, who wished to keep the oligarchs in power by crushing the democratic movement, was abhorrent to him and its failure gave him considerable satisfaction.

Some years later Lysander again found his plans thwarted in consequence of a conflict with a Spartan king. After supporting the disputed claims of Agesilaus to the kingship (3. 3. 3), he persuaded him to offer to lead an expeditionary force to Asia, where the Persians were reported to be making military preparations on a large scale. He believed, according to Xenophon, that the Greeks would prove much superior at sea and was confident about prospects on land because of the safe return of the Ten Thousand from the heart of Asia (3. 4. 1-2). The first of these predictions was belied by the defeat off Cnidus two years later, but at least he is given the credit of having based his sponsorship of the expedition upon an assessment of strategic factors. Xenophon adds, however, another reason, which is more personal and less creditable, why Lysander was eager to accompany Agesilaus: he wished to secure the re-establishment of his decarchies in Asiatic cities, which the ephors had recently abolished (3. 4. 2). The intention of directing the campaign in Asia himself and using Agesilaus as a puppet is not expressly ascribed to him, but the narrative at least suggests the possibility that such was his aim. He can hardly have failed to foresee what happened when the expeditionary force was at Ephesus, namely that the Asiatic Greeks, to whom he was well known, paid court to him to such an extent that he appeared to be king and Agesilaus a private individual (3. 4. 7). While the Spartiates accompanying the expedition loudly denounced what they held to be an illegal act of usurpation, Agesilaus made no comment but rejected all petitions submitted to him by protégés of Lysander. Though protesting at this humiliation, Lysander chose to express the view that the conduct of Agesilaus was more reasonable than his own. He asked to be entrusted with duties elsewhere and was sent to the Hellespont (3. 4. 8-10).

This clash between leading personalities offers opportunities for dramatic presentation of which Xenophon takes full advantage,

and his account illustrates his skill in writing dialogue. He does not, however, give any clear indication of his own views on the behaviour of the two leaders, and the reason may be that he felt some embarrassment because Agesilaus exposed himself to charges of ingratitude towards a friend to whom he was deeply indebted.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, there is some implied admiration for the astuteness and firmness with which Agesilaus frustrated a threat to his legitimate authority while avoiding an open conflict. Less interest is shown in the part played by Lysander. He seems to have behaved with dignity and restraint, but he had no alternative; he must have realized that he had misjudged Agesilaus and that he had no constitutional means of challenging the authority of a king. Xenophon fails entirely to appreciate one aspect of the episode: if Lysander had become virtually commander-in-chief, the planning and direction of the campaign in Asia would undoubtedly have been more imaginative and probably more effective.<sup>2</sup>

Xenophon gives a perfunctory and unusually colourless account of the episode in which Lysander lost his life. His narrative describing the similar circumstances leading to the death of Teleutias at Olynthus some years later is much livelier, and he adds a comment of his own, as has already been noted.<sup>3</sup> At the outbreak of the Corinthian war the Spartans planned to crush the Thebans by a two-pronged invasion of Boeotia. Lysander was sent to mobilize contingents from Phocis and other northern allies and to march them to Haliartus, where Pausanias, advancing from the south with a Peloponnesian army, was to arrive on the same day (3. 5. 6). On reaching the vicinity of Haliartus Lysander was not content to wait inactive for the Peloponnesians under

<sup>1</sup> Breitenbach, *op. cit.* p. 40, points out that Xenophon omits the episode in his encomiastic *Agesilaus*.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, who seems to be mainly dependent on the *Hellenica* for his knowledge of this episode, judges it, as is his custom, from the viewpoint of a moralist. In the *Lysander* (23. 7) he censures Agesilaus for having treated a benefactor so harshly, though acknowledging that he was justified in refusing to be virtually ousted from the position of supreme commander; in the *Agesilaus* (8. 5-7, cf. 7. 4) he attributes the breach between the two leaders to excessive ambition on the part of both.

<sup>3</sup> See above pp. 252-3.

Pausanias, who had not yet appeared ; he approached the walls and tried to persuade the Haliartians to revolt from Thebes. When this move was foiled, he launched an assault upon the fortifications, but his troops were attacked by a Theban force hastening to the rescue, and he was himself among the killed (3. 5. 17-19).

In his account of this engagement Xenophon expresses uncertainty whether Lysander was taken by surprise by the Theban attack or whether he expected it but stood his ground believing that he could resist it successfully (3. 5. 19). It is made clear that in either case his judgement was at fault. There are, however, two other questions of greater importance to which Xenophon makes no specific reference. In the first place, why did Lysander not await the arrival of the Peloponnesian army, which would undoubtedly have improved Spartan prospects of winning Haliartus either by intimidation or by force? The narrative seems to suggest that he was eager to restore his somewhat tarnished reputation by gaining a striking personal success and to prevent any credit going to his enemy Pausanias,<sup>1</sup> who was to assume command of both invading armies after they met at Haliartus (3. 5. 6). The second question is whether Lysander arrived too early or Pausanias too late. According to Xenophon one of the charges against Pausanias when later impeached *in absentia* was that " he arrived at Haliartus later than Lysander after having agreed to arrive on the same day " (3. 5. 25). This accusation presupposes that Lysander arrived on the agreed day, but Xenophon seems to imply that Pausanias, whom he presents favourably elsewhere, may have been unjustly condemned. At all events, Lysander is not expressly exonerated from the charge of having arrived too early, though Xenophon very probably possessed enough evidence to have absolved him if he had so

<sup>1</sup> E. Meyer, *G.d.A.*, v<sup>4</sup> (1958), 227, is surely right in concluding that such was his motive. S. Accame, *Ricerche intorno alla guerra corinzia* (1951), pp. 34-36, suggests a totally different interpretation, namely that the account of Xenophon is prejudiced in favour of Lysander and shields him against charges of rashness at Haliartus. This view seems to me to be mistaken ; that it could be held at all indicates negligence on the part of Xenophon in failing to give his readers adequate guidance.

wished.<sup>1</sup> This omission is typical of his attitude towards Lysander.

There is abundant evidence that the personality of Lysander was unattractive, even for a Spartan. In this respect he had more in common with Gylippus than with Brasidas. Nor was he conspicuous for the simple honesty and dedicated loyalty to the state which the Spartan way of life was designed to engender. Although Theopompus praises him for having resisted the snares of self-indulgence to which so many powerful men became victims,<sup>2</sup> he acquired a reputation for arrogance, oppressiveness, unscrupulousness, and duplicity. He was also believed to have on several occasions pursued his own interests in preference to those of Sparta. Plutarch liked to find more virtues than vices in the great men whose biographies he wrote, especially if they were Greeks ; but his *Lysander*, which is based on a wide variety of sources, is unusually critical and gives a largely unfavourable picture. Although Lysander is preferred to Sulla (they are paired in the *Parallel Lives*), some very disparaging phrases are used of him.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, if he lacked personal charm and if his policy of oppressive imperialism may have proved short-sighted and ill-advised, there is no shadow of doubt that he was a man of outstanding ability. He was the Spartan counterpart of Themistocles ; but, while Themistocles was exposed to the fickleness of the Athenian populace, he had to contend with the far greater obstacles confronting any Spartan leader—especially if he were not a king—who was sufficiently enterprising and original to reject the inhibiting, parochial outlook fostered by Spartan institutions. Although he never entirely overcame these

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch states that a message from Lysander to Pausanias was intercepted by the enemy (*Lys.*, 28. 3-4) and that Lysander at first decided to wait for Pausanias before approaching Haliartus but later changed his mind (*ibid.* 6). These statements, neither of them palpably untrustworthy, suggest that, according to the version followed by Plutarch, it would be unfair to Lysander to accuse him of a rash attempt to win credit for himself before his rival appeared.

<sup>2</sup> *F. Gr. Hist.* 115 F 20 (cf. F. 333). It would, however, be hazardous to infer from this fragment, which is mainly concerned with qualities shown in private life, that Theopompus must have drawn a wholly favourable picture of Lysander.

<sup>3</sup> Among the most striking are : πανούργος καὶ σοφιστής (7. 5), ὑπεροψία καὶ βαρύτης (19. 2), τῷ λόγῳ θρασύς καὶ καταπληκτικός (22. 1), χαλεπὸς ὦν ὀργήν (28. 1).

obstacles, he was certainly more successful in this respect than Pausanias (the victor of Plataea), whose character and ambitions have some affinities with his, and probably more successful than any other leader throughout Spartan history. Why then does the *Hellenica* fail to convey a more positive impression of his quality?

The personal prejudices of Xenophon, which are so marked in the middle and latter parts of the *Hellenica*, have also had some influence upon the opening books. They have doubtless contributed to some extent to his presentation of Lysander. He could not bring himself to take an entirely objective view of a man who had lent wholehearted support to the Thirty at Athens, who had tried to undermine the authority of the Spartan dual kingship,<sup>1</sup> and who, most important of all, had become estranged from Agesilaus. It is not, however, primarily his prejudices that cause his portrait of Lysander to be so inadequate; indeed he makes some effort to curb them. Its inadequacy is due in a far greater degree to a defect to which much attention has already been given: he fails to draw a distinction between the competent, popular, mediocre leader and the great man capable of making a deep impact upon the course of history, because his own sympathies lie with the former. His treatment of Alcibiades, against whom he had no reason whatever to be prejudiced, is very similar. Except for one passage looking back to earlier stages in the career of Alcibiades outside the period covered in the *Hellenica* (1. 4. 13-17), it betrays the same failure to recognize ability of outstanding quality. It is relevant to recall the familiar phrases used by Thucydides of some leading figures in his *History*: *κράτιστος δὴ αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τὰ δέοντα* of Themistocles (1. 138. 3); *ἐγνώσθη ἡ πρόνοια αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον* of Pericles (2. 65. 6); *ἐς τὰλλα ξύνεσιν οὐδενὸς λειπόμενος* of Hermocrates (6. 72. 2); *ἀρετῇ τε οὐδενὸς ὕστερος καὶ κράτιστος ἐνθυμηθῆναι γενόμενος καὶ ἂ γνοίη εἰπεῖν* of Antiphon (8. 68. 1). Although Thucydides perhaps overrated the importance of intellectual qualities in statesmen and generals, he fully understood the essence of greatness. Xenophon did not.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon does not refer to this, but he must have been aware of it.

<sup>2</sup> I am much indebted to Mr. D. M. Leahy for help and advice while I have been preparing this paper for publication.