Xenophon’s *Kyrou Amathia*: Deceitful Narrative and The Birth of Tyranny

Dissertation

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Abstract

The figure of Cyrus in the *Cyropaideia* has been generally understood to be a positive figure and has been seen as providing a model for leadership in either the domestic or political spheres. In recent years scholars have begun to question the assumption that Cyrus is a positive figure; in this dissertation, I provide two new frameworks for advancing an interpretation of the figure of Cyrus that sees him as a vicious figure and a model for avoidance, not imitation. I first argue that Cyrus fails to qualify as a good leader according to Socrates by applying the definitions of good leadership presented by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Secondly, I argue that the narrator of the *Cyropaideia*, never before discussed as a figure in his own right, is an unreliable narrator whose biases have converged with those of Cyrus to present the positive image of Cyrus that has so pervasively dominated the readership of the text. I then take these two conclusions and use them to produce a new reading of several sections of the text. Focusing on Cyrus' interactions with close family members—his grandfather and his uncle—I argue that Cyrus' behavior can be consistently categorized as selfish, vicious, and utilitarian. His treatment of his family declines into open viciousness as he ultimately betrays his family. In the conclusion, I turn to Xenophon's motivations in writing the *Cyropaideia* in this esoteric way and argue that he is attempting to unconventionally solve the problem of competent, charming, capable and vicious young men, like Cyrus, who plague society.
Dedication

Dedicated to Doug and Julie, my parents, and Sara
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my adviser, Anthony Kaldellis, for his invaluable support as I wrote my dissertation. I would also like to thank my committee members, Tom Hawkins and Richard Fletcher, for their helpful comments and advice as readers.

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Abbreviations

Age.  Agesilaos

Ana.  Anabasis

CL.  Constitution of the Lacedaemonians

Cyr.  Cyropaideia

Hel.  Hellenica

Hie.  Hieron

Mem.  Memorabilia

Oik.  Oikonomikos
Chapter One: Introduction

πῶς γὰρ Κῦρος ἐξ ἰδιώτου τῆς Ασίας ὅλης ἐβασίλευσε;¹
—Diodorus Siculus

When Cyrus prepares for the final confrontation with the Assyrians, the narrator, over several sections, describes the armor donned by Cyrus, his officers, and his foreign general, the armor all of different quality. The narrator does not draw the reader’s attention to the differences of quality, leaving it to the reader to appreciate the potential significance.² Abradatas, Cyrus’ foreign general, a universally respected man, dresses himself in armor his wife had made for him: “a golden helmet, armlets, broad bracelets for the wrists, a purple tunic that reached down to his feet and whose lower parts had deep folds, and a plume dyed dark red.”³ Cyrus’ other officers appear to be dressed like this man of gold—but only from a distance: they are dressed “with purple tunics, brass breastplates, brass helmets, white crests, swords, and one spear of cornel wood for each... [their armor] had been painted with a golden color.”⁴ Their armor resembles Abradatas’, but is in fact gilt brass. Abradatas is a golden man, but Cyrus’ officers are gilt men: their golden exteriors hide their brass cores. Provocatively, Cyrus’ armor is neither like

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¹ Diodorus Siculus (1935), 13.22.2.3. Diodorus is responding to Herodotus’ version of Cyrus’ life, yet the amazement contained in his question is equally relevant to Xenophon’s Cyrus.
² Abradatas’ armor is described at C.4.2-3; Cyrus’ armor, and the armor of his lieutenants, is described at Z.1.2. The two passages are close in the text but not juxtaposed; in addition, the narrator does not refer back to the first passage in his discussion of the second.
³ Cyr., C.4.2-3.
Abradatas’ nor the other lieutenants’. The narrator says, “Cyrus’ arms were different only in that whereas the others had been painted with a golden color, Cyrus’ arms shone like a mirror.”

Who and what is Cyrus? Is he a man of gold, a man of brass or something else? His armor shines like a mirror: it confounds ready analysis. One may see the true color of a mirror in the sunlight, but to do so requires a close (and painful) stare. We shall take that look.

Modern scholarship has generally understood Cyrus to be a man of gold. With several important exceptions, scholars have generally understood Xenophon’s intention in depicting Cyrus to be the creation of a role model, an ideal leader, a man deserving the imitation of other men in public life, in private life, or both. Since the late 1980’s there has been a revival of Cyropaideia scholarship: several monographs and many articles have been published in this time, more recently joined by an online conference (2012) intended to produce a commentary on Book A. Modern Cyropaideia scholarship is divided into two camps: those who accept the overt assertion of the text, that Cyrus is an ideal monarch recommended for imitation, and those who are skeptical of the desirability of Cyrus as leader, who find inconsistencies or ironies in the text that undermine the text’s exoteric message.

5  *Cyr.*, Z.1.2.

6  Whidden (2008) says of the Cyropaideia in general that “Xenophon invites his readers to dialectically discern for themselves from his narrative what Cyrus and Cyrus alone knew so as to make human beings from dozens of nationalities and across three continents submit to his rule” (225-6). The Cyropaideia demands interpretive participation from its readers.

7  As Mitchell (2005) puts it, “It is a critical commonplace that Herodotus’ Cyrus is a tragic figure, while Xenophon’s is not” (302). As Sandridge puts it, “We will examine his fondness for others, his affection, his ways of showing favor, his gentleness, his sense of fairness, his sympathy, his pity, his nurturing attention, his ability to play ‘matchmaker,’ his practice of giving gifts” (21).

8  The project was organized by David Carlisle, Allen Romano, and Norman Sandridge and maintained through the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies. Discussions are ongoing and can be found at www.cyropaedia.org.

9  As Luccioni (1948) puts it, “La Cyropédie est le rêve d’un philosophe qui cherche le gouvernement
problems in the text generally claim that Xenophon is an advocate of monarchy, an anti-
democrat, and prefers some form of hierarchical inequality and imperialism. Included in
this group are Bodil Due’s *The Cyropaedia: Xenophon’s Aims and Methods*, Deborah
Gera’s *Xenophon’s Cyropaedia: Style, Genre, and Literary Technique*, and Vivienne
Gray’s *Xenophon’s Mirror of Princes; Reading the Reflections*. Those who question this
understanding of the text have generally argued that Xenophon’s problematic
presentation of Cyrus is meant to question the compatibility of philosophical—or
*kaloskagathos*—and political lifestyles, and to question the virtue, or the benefit, of the
imperial monarchism Cyrus represents. The leading example of this school is Christopher
Nodon’s *Xenophon’s Prince: Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia*. James Tatum’s
*Xenophon’s Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus*’s hybrid approach is unique, in
that he exposes injustice and corruption in Cyrus’ methods yet consistently claims that
Cyrus is a positive role model.

The stated goal of Bodil Due in writing her monograph was, through “literary
analysis,” to highlight Xenophon’s authorial skill in order to recommend the text for
“reinstatement among scholars and readers.”10 Her focus, which anticipates that of many
of the scholars who follow her, is the character of Cyrus. Her analysis is guided by her
belief that Cyrus is an ideal and positive role model, but as a role model for individual
and private behavior, not as a political figure.11 This last point distinguishes her from

idéal, parce qu’il est dégoûté de la réalité, qui lui offre seulement le spectacle de l’incertitude et du
désordre. Mais c’est aussi le rêve d’un historien qui, tourné en constatant les faiblesses de Grecs, est
néanmoins persuadé qu’un bel avenir est réservé à l’hellénisme, si les Grecs, se dégageant d’un réseau
de rivalités stériles, fondent un ordre durable en Asie, par la création d’un grand État où régneront
l’ordre et la tranquillité” (203).
10 Due (1989), 9; 9.
11 Due (1989), 25; 147.
most of *Cyropaideia* scholarship. Due argues that Cyrus is presented as a model for the behavior of individuals: his various virtuous qualities are meant to act as inspiration for the readers in their personal lives. According to Due, Cyrus’ excellence is a combination of innate and acquired virtues: she says that “Xenophon appears to say that all should be educated and aspire towards virtue, but only few will attain the goal and then only through toil...”

Thus, According to Due, the virtues that are core to Cyrus’ character—philanthropia, engkrateia, philomathia, and philotimia—must be aspired towards by all, but can only be achieved by those constitutionally capable of achieving them. Yet her acceptance of the narrator’s attribution of certain virtues to Cyrus forces her to attempt to reconcile the virtues attributed to Cyrus with Cyrus’ actions, which weakens her arguments. Among the virtues that she singles out is Cyrus’ philanthropia, which she defines as “kindness of heart.”

What she identifies as unique about Cyrus’ philanthropia is that Cyrus believes that only the virtuous should be treated with this kindness and that it is unjust to treat the unjust generously.

Due develops this theory by focusing on a passage that depicts Cyrus’ treatment of the citizens of Sardeis. After capturing the city, Cyrus demands almost all of the citizens’ possessions: in this instance, Due says that “Cyrus is depicted as possessing these [philanthropic] qualities,” even though the term itself is not used.

Due perhaps focuses on this instance because it is a problematic manifestation of this virtue which is in need of explanation: leaving a conquered town with the bare essentials, instead of taking everything, can perhaps be called a kindness, but it is not conventional philanthropia. By accepting the narrator’s assertion that this is...

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12 Due (1989), 184.
13 Due (1989), 163.
14 Due (1989), 167.
15 Due (1989), 167.
philanthropic, Due is thus forced to reconcile Cyrus’ utilitarian treatment of the people of Sardeis with philanthropy. She does so by arguing that Cyrus’ “attitude to plundering originates, in a broader sense, from his conception of the importance of self-control and self-restraint...The immoral thing is not so much the taking or plundering in itself, but the fact that it means losing control...” 16 In order to justify Cyrus’ act as philanthropic, Due must move away from the supposed beneficiaries of Cyrus’ philanthropy to focus instead on the utilitarian benefit that Cyrus accrues—ensuring his own soldiers remain in control of their passions—in order to explain how this action was ‘good.’ This argument is unconvincing, yet it is characteristic of Due’s approach. We might prefer, if the narrator apply the term ‘philanthropic’ to one of Cyrus’ dubiously just actions, that Due question whether the narrator is right to term it philanthropic at all.

Due’s insistence on Cyrus as an individual and apolitical role model leads to a number of problems in her analysis of Cyrus’ actions and character. Cyrus’ actions in the text are not all compatible with Due’s presentation of Cyrus as a perfect role model. Problematically, she does not attempt to reconcile these contradictions to her argument; rather, she dismisses them by claiming that they are contradictions produced by Xenophon’s disinterest in politics and reality. For example, she is not able to explain Cyrus’ failure to (successfully) teach virtue to his sons—she asks, “How could such a paragon of virtue have begotten such villains in the first place...?”—but she argues that this contradiction is unimportant because “Reality is not Xenophon’s concern here. His main concern is to aggrandize his hero and that is why he chooses to let the degeneration

16 Due (1989), 169.
start...immediately after Cyrus’ death.”17 Quickly after this argument, she dismisses the obvious constitutional problems created after Cyrus makes himself king in Babylon—“In Babylon he is supreme ruler, in Persia he has to cooperate with the Persian authorities”—by saying that this confusion “originates from [Xenophon’s] lack of interest. His main concern is the individual, not the system.”18 Due has recourse to this dismissive strategy on multiple occasions.19

Due’s analysis of the presentation of Cyrus, whom she understands to be an apolitical individual role model, leads to her underwhelmed conclusion. Due argues that “Xenophon does not present his reader with a fully developed or consistent philosophy,” because “first and foremost he was interested in how human beings got on with each other, how they treated others and were treated in return.”20 Xenophon’s position was that moral decline leads to political decline: “Without the highest possible moral standards in the leader—and a leader there must be in a state, as well as in an army or a family—there is no hope of success or stability and thus no hope of improving the sad and confused conditions of human life. That is, in my opinion, the message of the Cyropaedia.”21 One is tempted to attribute Due’s disappointing conclusion, that Xenophon is philosophically inconsistent, more to her tendency to dismiss as unimportant what she perceives to be contradictions rather than to Xenophon’s shortcomings as a philosopher. In the end, Due’s focus on the literary and individual does expose certain political consequences, but she

17 Due (1989), 24; 24.
18 Due (1989), 25; 25. It is difficult to reconcile this statement with Cyr., A.2, which is an in-depth investigation of the paleo-Persian constitutional system and with the eighth book, which is an in-depth and drawn out discussion of the constitution of Neo-Persia.
19 Due (1989), 120; 192.
20 Due (1989), 228; 229.
21 Due (1989), 237.
insists throughout that the political is secondary to the individual.

James Tatum’s *Xenophon’s Imperial Fiction*, published simultaneously with Due’s, presents a strikingly different analysis. He approaches the text in explicitly political terms and considers it a primer for the acquisition of political power. He argues that the text “is not a story about things that happened, but an account of things that could happen […] In this epistemology of power, the focus is never on what Cyrus achieved but on how he achieved it.”

Thus Tatum presents aspects of both the ideal and skeptical schools of thought on the *Cyropaideia*: Cyrus the role model achieves an excellent empire through the constant utilitarian use and abuse of all those around him. Tatum returns to this paradoxical issue time and again in his analysis of Cyrus’ behavior. He states blandly that Cyrus’ mother and grandfather are “The first victims of the new prince” but that his manipulations and utilitarian behavior “are the earliest signs of a young prince who seems to have known almost by instinct how to excel in the art of ruling others.”

He makes many similar points—this paradox is as the heart of his understanding of the text—arguing, for example, that Cyrus’ usurpation of Cyaxares’ army was just because of Cyaxares’ incompetence, and that Cyrus’ approval of the Armenian’s execution of the Sophist, a

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22 Tatum (1989), 69; 69.
23 Tatum (1989), 68; 71.
25 Tatum (1989), 97; 98.
Socrates-surrogate, is acceptable because the Armenians are useful allies.\textsuperscript{26} This utilitarian position also informs Tatum’s own interpretation of other characters in the text. For example, he treats Cyrus’ uncle, Cyaxares, roughly in his analysis of his character. In Tatum’s portrayal of the Median king, Cyaxares “is difficult not because of his intelligence or cunning, but because of the role he plays in the royal families of Media and Persia.”\textsuperscript{27} He is “One of the least talented persons Cyrus ever meets;” he is “vain, hedonistic, quick-tempered, impatient, incapable of thinking through diplomatic or military strategy;” he does “not have a thought in his head;” he is “a hedonist in his strategic thinking.”\textsuperscript{28} Tatum finds this problematic because Cyaxares has a “capacity for mischief:” “he is nominally Cyrus’s elder and his fellow commander, he can interfere in Cyrus’s designs in ways no one else can.”\textsuperscript{29} Thus Cyaxares must be removed from power—rightly—in order for Cyrus to rise to the height of his potential. The question that Tatum does not consider is that of justice: even if Cyrus can usurp Cyaxares’ army and go on to conquer the world, is it the right thing to do? The ends, Cyrus’ “serene rise to power,”\textsuperscript{30} justify the methods he uses to achieve this happy result without objection.\textsuperscript{31} Thus Tatum weakens his argument by not attempting to reconcile this paradox with Socratic philosophy or to justify it within the context of the \textit{Cyropaideia} beyond his assertion that Cyrus’ success at empire-building justifies his methods.\textsuperscript{32} At the end, Tatum

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Tatum (1989), 117-118; 144-5. Cyrus’ reaction to the execution of ’Socrates’ goes almost too far for Tatum (1989), who calls Cyrus’ reaction “astonishing” (144).
\item \textsuperscript{27} Tatum (1989), 117.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Tatum (1989), 117; 117; 122; 125.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Tatum (1989), 119; 118.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Tatum (1989), 71.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Tatum (1989), 71.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Nadon (2001) notes that “While admitting that some of the more disreputable aspects of Cyrus’s behavior might provide instruction about certain unavoidable if unpleasant political necessities, Tatum (1989) denies their essential contribution to the narrative. What is most important is that by the end of the book, Cyrus comes out altogether clean” (8).
\end{itemize}
hints at a degree of disillusionment in his conclusion when he argues that Cyrus’ failure
to reproduce his empire in the next generation, which he primarily attributes to the
perfidy of Cyrus’ sons—“Cyrus’s sons [who] could not learn from him”—cause
“Xenophon’s imperial fiction [to turn] into Lukács’s novel of disillusionment.”33 Despite
Tatum’s disillusionment, he does not reconsider the validity of his general analysis of the
text.

Deborah Gera follows Due’s approach to the text, generally depicting Cyrus as an
ideal king with ideal methods. She focuses extensively on a discussion of Xenophon’s
literary models to a degree that neither Tatum nor Due do. She breaks the Cyropaideia
down into thematic sections: in addition to her analysis of how the text presents these
themes, she discusses Xenophon’s sources in great detail. For example, after discussing
the characteristics the symposia in the text have in common, Gera proposes a number of
models for these scenes. She suggests Plato’s Symposium, Homer, Xenophanes, and
Phocylides, among others, as possible models, concluding that “Most of the sympotic
themes of the Cyropaedia can, then, be found in Greek literature from Homer onwards.
The influence of certain authors (Homer, several sympotic poets, Ion of Chios), or at least
a certain similarity of tone and content between their banquets and those of the
Cyropaedia, is apparent.”34 She next notes several differences between Cyrus’ symposia
and these ’typical’ symposia—pointing out that there are no uninvited guests, no jokes or
dances, no speeches on set themes, and most importantly, no intoxication,—she
concludes that “The symposia of the Cyropaedia are, then, particularly puritanical and

33 Tatum (1989), 233; 237.
34 Gera (1993), 139; 141; 142; 143; 147. Gera does deny that she wants “to postulate a series or chain of
literary banquets which ultimately led to Xenophon’s symposia in the Cyropaedia” (147).
What Gera’s approach lacks, as this conclusion about the symposia shows, is a discussion of the consequences of her arguments: after she identifies a striking difference—here, that Cyrus’ symposia are noticeably frigid when compared to, in particular, symposia enjoyed by both Xenophon’s and Plato’s Socrates —she moves past this important discovery without further analysis. She rightly notes that Cyrus’ symposia are curiously atypical, but she does not question why his symposia are strikingly different. She does not acknowledge the implication that, perhaps, Cyrus’ atypical symposia might signify that he is in some way atypical or perhaps even un-Socratic. Although her general depiction of Cyrus, like Due’s, is of an ideal king and positive role model, she, like Tatum, begins to express some hesitation at the very end.

In her conclusion, Gera discusses the relationship between Xenophon and Cyrus: she points out that “Throughout most of the *Cyropaedia* there is little doubt that Cyrus is [...] an ideal figure [...] whose model conduct is well worth emulating.” Yet “at times Xenophon has Cyrus behave in surprising or inconsistent fashion.” It is only once Cyrus starts to consolidate power in Babylon that Gera objects to what she is reading: she points out that “The Persian leader devises a stratagem which he uses against his *friends*, and he manipulates them into offering him what he considers is his *due*.” Moreover, she says that “All of Cyrus’ arguments may well be valid, but the Persian’s utilitarian and selfish outlook, his ’zynische Beschönigung’ of the issue, is hardly calculated to lay Greek scruples to rest.” Even though she notes an increasing number of problems with Cyrus’

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35 Gera (1993), 149; 149; 149; 150; 151.
36 Gera (1993), 280.
37 Gera (1993), 280.
38 Gera (1993), 287. Original emphasis.
portrayal, Gera reasserts that “It is usually Cyrus who acts as a spokesman for Xenophon’s didactic ideas in the *Cyropaedia.*”

Her conclusion, after her expression of unhappiness with Cyrus’ reforms, underwhelms. She states that “The discrepancies and difficulties are too numerous and obtrusive not to have been deliberately included by Xenophon […] The answer appears to be that Cyrus, after the conquest of his empire, has become a benevolent despot, and Xenophon wishes to show us that both—benevolence and despotism—are needed to run a large empire successfully.” He is perhaps less than an ideal king, but Gera defends this by claiming that “in order to become an efficient ruler of an empire, Cyrus has had to change, and changing means departing from some of his old, exemplary ways.” Thus Cyrus, in order to create his world-empire, needed to stabilize his kindness with tyranny; yet Gera does not connect this necessary despotism with another problem she identifies: she argues that Cyrus failed to create “institutions or inaugurate ways of life which would guarantee its continuation.” Even if Cyrus’ tyrannical methods were necessary for him to create his empire, they were unable to reproduce the means of social domination in the next generation. It is disappointing that she did not ask the question naturally resulting from this conclusion: since the collapse of the Persian government resulted in chaos and anarchy, was Cyrus’ empire desirable or ‘good?’

Christopher Nadon is the first scholar to question at length the tendency of reading Cyrus’ actions as those of an ideal king. Nadon’s innovation is that he primarily focuses on Cyrus as a political figure: he perceives the *Cyropaedia* as a discussion of the

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40 Gera (1993), 281.
41 Gera (1993), 295.
42 Gera (1993), 299.
43 Gera (1993), 298.
relative merits of the republican and autocratic systems. The focus of his discussion is whether Cyrus’ Persia is an ideal empire, not whether Cyrus is an ideal king: this is influenced by his desire to verify Machiavelli’s reading of the Cyropaideia as valid.⁴⁴

Central to Nadon’s portrait of Cyrus, as seen in his analysis of Cyrus’ behavior, is Nadon’s assertion that Cyrus cynically manipulates his followers. He states that “Deception, above all, the ability to (mis)represent the good of a part as constituting the good of the whole, is what enables Cyrus to hold together an army of disparate peoples in enemy territory.”⁴⁵ What differentiates his approach from Tatum’s is that he uses this position to argue that Cyrus’ empire is imperfect and tyrannical. He gradually traces the increasingly open development of Cyrus’ tyranny as he moves from subtly doing away with traditional Persian infantry (and values)⁴⁶ to his open domination of the elites, and the world, by means of his political reforms in Babylon.⁴⁷ Yet despite the control Cyrus achieves over his followers, Nadon argues that the structure of Cyrus’ world-empire is rotten and cannot but collapse.⁴⁸

Although the body of Nadon’s argument is incisive and persuasive, especially his discussion of the consequences of Cyrus’ military reforms,⁴⁹ his conclusions are unsatisfying: he writes that the “Cyropaedia presents a comparison of the relative

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⁴⁴ Nadon (2001), 12 ff.
⁴⁵ Nadon (2001), 105.
⁴⁶ Nadon (2001), 63-4. Nadon points out that Cyrus uses two incompatible arguments to persuade the commoners and the elites to agree to the arming of the commoners.
⁴⁷ Nadon (2001), 127. “And Cyrus, unlike the Persian laws, makes no pretense that such a policy is in the service of the common good (cf. 1.2.2). His words are intended for internal consumption and to hold his own men in check” (127).
⁴⁸ Nadon (2001) says “While he gives us a satire on the shortcomings of the Spartans’ domestic regime in the Constitution of the Lacedaemonians and extends that analysis is the Hellenica to consider the foreign policy towards which those defects lead, he then shows in the Cyropaedia how the attempt to overcome these difficulties by transforming an idealized Spartan republic into a full-fledged imperial power ultimately results in the ‘rebarbarization’ of its citizens” (163).
⁴⁹ Nadon (2001), 61-76.
strengths and weaknesses of republican and imperial politics. But it also demonstrates the contradictions and necessities that limit the attainment of justice and the common good in either regime.”

It seems that his intention of explaining Machiavelli’s reading of the text has in the end led him far from Xenophon’s Socratic focus on the individual. While the *Cyropaedia* is certainly fundamentally political, at its center there is a single (political) man, not dissimilar to the individual man—Agesilaos, Socrates, or Lycurgus—at the center of much of Xenophon’s corpus. Nadon has shifted his focus so far away from Due that his conclusions de-emphasize the role of the individual—that of Cyrus or of the reader/potential imitator of Cyrus. Most tellingly in this regard is that Nadon rarely mentions Socrates or Socratic philosophy. For example, he hardly discusses the *Memorabilia*, although it is crucial to understanding Xenophontic political thought. He underestimates the importance of Socratic philosophy in Xenophon’s works, and his reading does not explain, or even acknowledge, philosophy’s awkward absence from the *Cyropaideia*. Nadon’s conclusions are ultimately unsatisfying. He focuses so closely on the functioning of the Persian political system and Cyrus’ reforms that he loses sight of the individual at the center of the Persian state who is responsible for its sudden and abrupt collapse.

Vivienne Gray reacts strongly against Nadon and the other scholars who view the

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50 Nadon (2001) continues: “In other words, if Xenophon’s Persia represents classical republicanism at its best and Cyrus’s Persian empire the failed attempt to overcome its defects, then the *Cyropaedia* as a whole constitutes a critique of political life in the classical world *tout court*” (178).

51 Nadon (2001) says that Cyrus’ approval of the Armenian’s execution of the Socrates-Sophist “does not stop him from engaging in something of the same ‘crime’ for which the sophist was killed: supplanting the father in Tigranes’ eyes” (85). I do not discuss this passage in detail in my dissertation, but I would suggest that it is not inappropriate to identify this ‘sophist’ with Socrates: the Armenian sophist is termed as such by his enemies, the Armenian dynasty, who ultimately executed him. Certain Athenians also willingly applied this label to Socrates (e.g. *Clouds*, 1111).
surface of the text with skepticism. She argues that there is no subversive irony—“darker irony,” as she calls it—as in the *Cyropaideia* whatsoever. She argues that there is a consistency in Xenophon’s thought throughout his corpus: she identifies a number of parallel scenes in his various works that portray his positive leaders, Cyrus the Younger, Cyrus the Elder, Agesilaos, and Hieron, among others, as roughly equivalent men with similar methods. She refers to the consistencies in leadership behavior she collates from Xenophon’s various work as the “universality of his leadership requirements.”

Gray’s analysis of Xenophon’s leadership theory examines the reactions of various leaders in his corpus to similar situations and argues that they can be compared to one another with the result that the quality of each man’s leadership can be judged. For example, she argues that the instance when Cyrus the Younger urges his men into the mud to rescue wagons is used as a parallel to when Clearchos urges his men to build bridges over waterways swollen with water. They are both examples of ‘willing obedience to leaders.’ She says that “The main variation between these two otherwise formulaic scenes is the contrast between the leadership styles of Cyrus and Clearchus.” That is to say, “These represent two different ways of dealing with followers: Cyrus seems to make the second wave of followers compete for his favour in order to do much better than the first wave and Clearchus shames the second wave of followers into action by joining in the efforts of the first wave.” Curiously, Gray does not suggest which of

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52 Gray (2011), 63 and *passim*.
56 Gray (2011), 183. Her comparison of the two doesn’t raise the question of the justice of each man; however, this question seems to be inherent in the comparison. Cyrus the Younger is a traitor who is attempting to overthrow his brother’s legitimate government simply because he wants to be king instead. However glorious and honorable Cyrus acts after the commencement of the campaign, doesn’t
the two methods is to be preferred in this instance, but she is right to identify these scenes as parallel.

Gray is persuasive in her identification of the many parallel scenes throughout Xenophon’s corpus, and she is also convincing in her identification of these themes as constituent parts of Xenophon’s concept of leadership. Yet her general argument—that since these various leaders share the same leadership qualities they are all good leaders—\footnote{Gray (2011), 180.} is undermined by a number of her supporting arguments, which are problematic. For example, Gray asserts that all the narrators of all of Xenophon’s texts are all the same narrator, and, moreover, that Xenophon’s narrator’s interventions into the text are authoritative authorial interventions.\footnote{For example, “Xenophon’s evaluations can be the whole aim of works such as RL, which praises Lycurgus throughout, but in historical writing they take the form of more isolated character descriptions or comments that engage the reader in reflection on a character’s leadership in what is largely an ‘objective’ third-person narrative […] His explicit evaluations often shape whole sections of narrative and their characteristics include engagements by the narrator with the reader and the use of rhetorical proofs and evidence to support the evaluation” (70-1). Although she never explicitly states that all of Xenophon’s narrators are the same character, this is concomitant on her assumption that they all act as mouthpieces for Xenophon-as-author.} Yet she fails to reconcile this to certain facts—that Xenophon never names himself as his narrator, that he resists identifying the narrator with the character of ‘Xenophon’ when he appears, and that he even deliberately attempts to obscure the authorship of at least one of his works under a pseudonym.\footnote{MacLaren (1934) discusses the attribution in the Hellenica of the authorship of the Anabasis to a ‘Themistogenes of Syracuse,’ and concludes that “that Xenophon, in writing his historical works, followed certain general principles. He did not hesitate to make personal comments and render subjective judgments, but he did feel that a historian could not, with propriety, mention himself as taking part in the actual events of the narrative” (243). MacLaren also discusses that the “leader of Cyrus’ former troops” mentioned at Hel. G.2.7, and suggests that Xenophon applies this anonym in order to conceal himself (242).} In addition to this, Gray also insists that ‘seeming’ and ‘being’ in Xenophon are identical: “Xenophon’s
use of ‘seeming’ mainly confirms appearances as realities by focalizing the evaluation from the point of view of contemporaries who were engaging with the leader, often in the form of followers, and this is another way of protecting his judgement from challenge, because it draws on the testimony of these focalizors as witnesses. This is problematic because it depends upon the assumption that Xenophon’s characters never lie, cheat, or bend the truth for their own advantage, even if they are subordinates of absolute monarchs and tyrants, an assumption that is demonstrably false. She also argues that there cannot be dark irony in Xenophon’s texts because such irony would be unappealing to Xenophon’s elite and sophisticated readers. Central to esoteric philosophy, however, is the intent to lure people who might not normally be willing to pursue philosophy which provides the opportunity to teach them through revelations provoked by ironic dissonance. Finally, Gray rejects the possibility of irony in Xenophon because such irony is not expected of Xenophon. This position is also difficult, because it limits philosophical possibilities on the part of an author to what is already expected of them or common in the society in which they live. Gray’s assumptions and arguments that I have mentioned here create the impression that Xenophon is a rather dull creature whose speech is limited to the overt, obvious and simple, who cannot be creative or clever

60 Gray (2011), 100.
61 For example, one of Cyrus’ most easily demonstrated lies is the bad advice he gives to Cyaxares at Γ.3.31, advice that he himself contradicts when in command of the entire army at E.2.31-32. In the first case, Cyrus, as lieutenant and follower of Cyaxares, an absolute monarch, lies to his leader in order to advance his own personal interest at the king’s expense.
63 Grey suggests that ironic readers “check the horizons of expectation they bring to their readings against those expectations that we find in Xenophon’s own works. They will be found very often to impose on Xenophon’s writings horizons of attitude and belief and even language that cannot be found elsewhere in and are even contradicted by his works. This opens them up to the criticism that: ‘A coherent interpretation of a text which results in that text’s becoming anomalous within its author’s oeuvre, or its author anomalous within his culture, is suspect’” (62-3).
because we do not expect him to be so, and whose literature is limited in meaning to the most superficial interpretation. Gray seems to prefer Xenophon as “the colonel Blimp he was once supposed to be” to the “sophisticated faux-naïf manipulator of the written word, a man with a straight face and a glint in his eye” of the modern ironists, to use her terms.64

Gray’s assertion of the narrator’s authorial identity and authority, as well as her conclusion that when Xenophon’s various leaders act in similar ways they are similarly good, results in what I view as her greatest oversight, namely, the question of justice. The virtues that Gray identifies as possessed by Xenophon’s various leaders are only those of a certain type of virtue: among the behaviors she identifies as signifying good leadership are that the followers of good leaders follow them willingly,65 that good leaders’ react to bad news by controlling their own grief and the grief of their followers,66 and that good leaders will on occasion ‘unjustly’ acquit useful subordinates of crimes if their acquittal is in the public interest.67 Yet these are only the practical virtues: her good leaders are good at controlling and organizing their armies, good at utilizing friends, followers, and enemies most efficiently, and are the sorts of people who are willingly followed by their subjects. Yet this does not, and she does not, address the question of what her ‘good’ leaders do with their excellence and practical virtues. There is a world of difference between what Agesilaos, in the Agesilaos, does with his virtue, and what Cyrus the Younger does with his: Agesilaos puts his state and followers ahead of himself and fully devotes himself to preserving his country, while Cyrus the Younger puts himself ahead of

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64 Gray (2011), 62.
66 Gray (2011), 196-203.
his family and state in his attempt to conquer Asia. The two men cannot be equal—their justice, the telos of their leadership, is unequal—, yet Gray effectively suggests, by overlooking this issue, that both men are equally good leaders.

When Gray amalgamates the qualities of various leaders seen throughout Xenophon’s corpus into what she calls Xenophon’s universal theory of leadership, she is persuasive, as long as we understand this leader to be ideally effective but neither just nor good. Her larger argument, that there is no ‘dark’ irony in the Cyropaideia, is unconvincing: she depends upon many untenable assumptions and overlooks the crucial role that any leader’s (lack of) justice plays in determining whether he is or is not a ‘good’ leader.

Outline of the Dissertation

My dissertation is divided into two sections. In the first, composed of two chapters, I challenge two traditional assumptions that are found in nearly all modern discussions of the text. In Chapter One, I apply to Cyrus the definitions of ‘the good leader’ put forward by Socrates in the Memorabilia and argue that according to every Socratic definition, Cyrus not only falls short of being a good leader but even presents

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68 Cyrus the Elder destroys his native republic by overlooking his remit for which he was appointed general of the army, mockingly rejecting a recall order from his father and king, and abrogating the Paleo-Persian constitution; however, the narrator of the Agesilaos stresses how Agesilaos was obedient to his native constitution and the commands of the Spartan government. Agesilaos had defeated the Persian army in Asia (1.32) and was on the verge of capturing the whole of Asia Minor (1.35); however, he puts everything aside and returns to Greece because the ephors command him to return (1.36). Both men resist sexual temptation, control their lusts for food and drink, endure cold and heat, and are energetic, intelligent, and brave. However, Cyrus and Agesilaos do precisely the opposite thing in nearly identical situations: both men cannot be equally just (or equally excellent leaders), even if they are both excellent in respect to practical virtue.

69 Reisert (2009) is too harsh when he calls this position the “traditional but naïve reading of Xenophon” (296). Xenophon’s corpus presents what seems to be a very consistent political philosophy; the low impression previous generations have had of Xenophon’s intellectual gifts, along with his reputation in intermediate Greek courses as the ‘easy’ author, surely encourage readers to expect little of him.
many of the characteristics, and produces many of the consequences, representative of ‘the bad leader.’ In Chapter Two, I consider modern discussions of, and a Xenophontic narrator’s reaction to, unreliable narrators and argue that the Cyropaideia’s narrator is unreliable: I suggest the source of the narrator’s unreliability in order present a consistent explanation for his contradictions and incredible statements throughout the text. In the second section, I apply to Cyrus’ behavior, which is generally held up as an exemplary model for imitation, the conclusions I reached in the first section. I reinterpret Cyrus’ behavior in the light of my arguments from the first section, arguing that Cyrus’ selfishness and viciousness perpetually motivate him as he grows in confidence and skill at exploiting others. I trace the development of Cyrus’ exploitation of others from the insubordination he shows to Astyages (Chapter Three) to the vicious sedition to which he subjects Cyaxares (Chapter Four), to the contemptuous and triumphalist lack of empathy he shows to the powerless Cyaxares (Chapter Five). During the course of his life, Cyrus’ behavior undergoes a downward spiral of exploitation and harm, always worsening and always motivated by a cold contempt and lack of empathy for all humans. In my conclusion (Chapter Six) I argue that Xenophon’s reasons for composing the text in this manner are both didactic and political and that the Cyropaideia is, in effect, a protreptic work that conceals a fatal trap for those who, like a Critias or Alcibiades, are politically ambitious yet are inclined to see, or are only capable of seeing, the surface.

The Good Leader

Xenophon’s Cyropaideia claims it offers a solution to a problem central to politics: how can a government, whether a democracy, oligarchy, monarchy or tyranny,
ensure its own stability? The narrator identifies the root of this problem in his introduction: human leaders are chronically incapable of ensuring the constant obedience of their followers.\textsuperscript{70} This problem plagues not only political life but domestic life as well: even in “ἰδίοις οἴκοις τοὺς μὲν ἔχοντας καὶ πλείονας οἰκέτας, τοὺς δὲ καὶ πάντα ὀλίγους, καὶ ὅμως οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀλίγους τούτους πάντα τι ὑπακούειν χρῆσαι πειθόμενοι τοὺς δεσπότας (private households—some indeed having many servants, but others with only very few—and nevertheless, they, the masters, were not able to keep even these few at all obedient for their use).”\textsuperscript{71} The problem is universal. Yet the narrator changes his mind when he remembers Cyrus—he realizes that “μὴ οὔτε τῶν ἀδυνάτων οὔτε τῶν χαλεπῶν ἔργων ᾖ τὸ ἀνθρώπων ἄρχειν, ἤν τις ἐπισταμένως τοῦτο πράττῃ (ruling human beings does not belong among those tasks that are impossible, or even among those that are difficult, if one does it with knowledge).”\textsuperscript{72} Cyrus arranged his empire in such a way that his subjects “ἐθέλησαν πείθεσθαι (willingly obeyed)” him, even those “τοὺς δὲ οὐδ᾽ ἐωρακότας πῶσον αὐτὸν (who had never yet seen him).”\textsuperscript{73} Some obeyed him willingly and some because he “καὶ ὅμως ἐδυνάσθη ἐφικέσθαι μὲν ἐπὶ τοσαύτην γῆν τῷ ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ φόβῳ (was able to extend fear of himself to so much of the world that he intimidated all).”\textsuperscript{74} Cyrus is said to be an effective ruler; the reader is primed by the narrator to expect to learn from Cyrus some rare knowledge that teaches effective leadership, whether political or domestic. Yet the crucial and fundamental Socratic question is how a leader can be a just leader. This is what the narrator fails to consider in

\textsuperscript{70} Cyr., A.1.1.
\textsuperscript{71} Cyr., A.1.1.
\textsuperscript{72} Cyr., A.1.3.
\textsuperscript{73} Cyr., A.1.3; A.1.3.
\textsuperscript{74} Cyr., A.1.5.
his introduction and, indeed, throughout the *Cyropaideia*: is Cyrus a *just* leader as well as an *effective* leader? For the narrator, Cyrus’ rapid and incredible success at creating an empire out of virtually nothing, its stability efficiency while Cyrus lived, and its power that dominated the world have impressed the narrator: he accepts these qualities as sufficient proof that Cyrus is a leader deserving of emulation. Yet Socrates always returns to the question of justice: a good leader, inasmuch as he is a good leader, must be just. If he is not just, he is not a good leader. We must first examine whether the Cyrus of the *Cyropaideia* is a just leader before we can agree that, as the narrator claims, he is worthy of emulation.

The narrator’s implicit challenge produced by his overlooking the question of justice encourages the philosophical reader to apply the Socratic definition of the just leader, established especially in the *Memorabilia*, to the fictional figure of Cyrus presented in the *Cyropaideia*. Is Cyrus a just ruler? If he is a just ruler, it follows that the *Cyropaideia* should be read as an instruction manual for men to follow. That is to say, this text portrays Cyrus’ reactions to situations stretching across a lifetime—Cyrus interacts with family, superiors, equals, subordinates, men and women, organizes a household, organizes a nation, institutes a legal code, marries, teaches his children, and prepares to die; the reader who believes Cyrus acts justly should view his individual actions as guidelines for just behavior. Indeed, the narrator claims that Cyrus is uniquely successful: he has invented a new and effective method of ruling.\(^{75}\) This should suggest to the reader

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\(^{75}\) *Cyr.*, A.1.3. The narrator’s definition of Cyrus’ effective method of ruling is left vague in the introduction: this is what will be explored in the body of the text. The narrator defines Cyrus’ success in terms of what he does not do: he is not overthrown, disobeyed, loved, and victorious over all his foes (A.1.3-6). For these reasons he is “worthy of wonder” (A.1.6) and worthy of this text.
not only that Cyrus’ actions can be imitated, but that they must be imitated in both the household and in political life.\textsuperscript{76} As Higgens says, “the Kyroupaideia, if anything, is a prose epic in which Cyrus becomes the new paradigm of heroic action.”\textsuperscript{77} If private citizens imitate Cyrus’ treatment of his family in their treatment of their own families, if they acquire resources for financial growth as he acquires them, if, in short, they think and act as he thinks and acts, they would set themselves on the road to success. The Cyropaideia becomes not just a political primer but a guide for an entirely new lifestyle. If, however, the reader understands Cyrus to be vicious, not virtuous, then the Cyropaideia suddenly becomes a considerably different sort of text.

If the reader reaches the end of the Cyropaideia and is less than impressed with Cyrus’ ultimate results—as he may be encouraged to do by the sudden explosion of anger and disappointment that unexpectedly bursts from the narrator—he might question whether Cyrus’ campaigns and innovations achieved anything genuinely good. In the end, Cyrus’ empire collapses; Cyrus’ children war with each other; Cyrus even dies unmourned.\textsuperscript{78} This reader might then return to the text and reread it, considering at which points Cyrus erred and created an empire that seemed to be ideal at first glance but, upon his death, revealed itself to be a façade hiding a rotten core, an empire of gilt brass. He might question whether Cyrus’ treatment of his family and superiors was virtuous or exploitative; whether his treatment of Pantheia was noble or akin to David’s treatment of Bathsheba; whether the perfect empire explored in the last book was ideal or the product

\textsuperscript{76} The close parallel between a king and the father of a household is signaled in several places by Xenophon. For example, Socrates suggests the king of Persia as a good model for Kritoboulos to imitate in his private life (Oik., IV.4).

\textsuperscript{77} Higgens (1977), 53.

\textsuperscript{78} Or at least any mourning of his loss, as well as the disposition of his body, is left unexpectedly unmentioned (H.7.28).
of a profoundly vicious mind. If the reader comes to the latter conclusions, then the
Cyropaideia does not present a model for imitation but, at least, a warning: do not imitate
Cyrus, for he teaches self-destruction masquerading as a recipe for success.

In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that Cyrus is a warning, not a model. The
consequences of his rule are vicious, not virtuous, produced by a vicious leader, not an
ideal one. This reading will inform my analysis of Cyrus’ behavior in my other chapters.

**Justice and the Telos of Leadership**

Why become a king or leader of men? What should such a man strive for? If a
doctor is “the one who treats the sick” and a ship’s captain is not a sailor but “a ruler of
sailors,” what is the job, the virtue, of a leader of men? This is, of course, a question
fundamental to Plato’s Republic, but it is also discussed throughout Xenophon’s corpus.
Virtually every Xenophontic text addresses this question explicitly or implicitly.

Xenophon presents virtuous leaders, such as Agesilaos, vicious leaders, such as
Tissaphernes, ambiguous leaders, such as Cyrus the Younger, and discussions Socrates
had concerning leadership, such as his interrogation of Ischomachos. Even his essays
advise leaders in technical areas of leadership: the training of dogs, the training of
cavalrymen, and economic principles. Despite the plentiful comparanda, the question of

79 Republic, 341c.
80 Sandridge (2012), “He and his characters ask general questions about leadership. He praises leaders,
criticizes them, and shows them to be somewhere between praise and criticism. Many of his works are
centrally ‘about’ leadership […] He talks about leadership in terms of lessons or mathēmata […] that
are then put into practice and illustrated in narrative form” (6). Field (2012) begins to address this
question when she argues that Cyrus' empire fails because he fails to consider the point of leadership
(733), also noting that “But as Cyrus' own empire grows, what becomes most obvious is that Cyrus
would have benefited from a thorough consideration of the final ends of politics—that great theme of
ancient philosophy” (735). I would agree with Field, but while she attributes this shortcoming to a
failure of the School, I attribute it to Cyrus' peculiar personality.
82 The Hipparchicus (in Waterfield and Cartledge 1997) and the On the Art of Horsemanship (ibid.) both
discuss the training and disciplining of horses and men; the Kunegeticus (in Phillips and Willcock 1999)
whether Cyrus is a just leader has been unsatisfactorily considered by modern scholars: their general position, that Cyrus is a just leader, is based on textually dubious grounds and, as we have seen, on sweeping uncomfortable passages under the rug.

Xenophon’s various discussions of the telos of leadership outside the Cyropaideia allow us to come to some conclusions about his concept of the good leader. First, of course, are the ’practical’ virtues; these provide the prerequisites for a good leader. Moderation in food, in drink, in sex, the ability to endure physical labor, heat, cold, the avoidance of luxuries, the avoidance of laziness, and, in short, the avoidance of any excess, are Socrates’ basic requirements. These habits must be mastered before a man becomes a leader, before that man begins to try to be good: Socrates asks, “if we were at war and wanted to choose a leader most capable of helping us to save ourselves and conquer the enemy, should we choose one whom we know to be the slave of the belly, or of wine, or lust, or sleep? How could we expect that such an one would either save us or defeat the enemy?”83 Socrates lived this way himself: “He ate just sufficient food to make eating a pleasure, and he was so ready for his food that he found appetite the best sauce: and any kind of drink he found pleasant, because he drank only when he was thirsty.”84 Socrates demands moderation in all things, but especially those things which easily corrupt a man, such as food, alcohol, women, and laziness.85 Although the young Cyrus certainly fulfills the Socratic prerequisites, the manner in which he enforced his own

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83 Mem., A.5.1.
84 Mem., A.3.5.
85 Socrates chastises Aristippus, the founder of Cyrenaic philosophy, quite harshly for his lifestyle devoted to pleasures (Mem., B.1.1-34).
moderation makes it clear that his moderation is not identical to Socrates’. For example, Socrates is sexually moderate. He is sufficiently in control of himself that he is able to see, talk to, and even flirt with the beautiful *hetaira* Theodote without losing control of his self-restraint or becoming corrupted. 86 Cyrus, however, forces sexual moderation on himself by refusing to look upon the beautiful Pantheia from a distance; he admits that he doesn’t trust himself to remain moderate if ever he were to see her. 87 Cyrus, not trusting his ability to be moderate, enforces complete abstention on himself; this hints that (Cyrus fears that) his presentation of perfect self-moderation conceals a less-than-perfect commitment to it.

In addition to the practical virtues, there is another preliminary requirement that the potential leader must master before becoming a potentially good ruler: knowledge. After forcing Glaukon, an unintelligent aspiring politician, to admit that he is ignorant of Athens’ sources of revenue, its expenses, or the number of its soldiers and ships, 88 Socrates emphatically states that “You will find, I take it, that the men who are famous and admired always come from those who have the widest knowledge, and the infamous and despised from the most ignorant. Therefore, if you want to win fame and admiration in public life, try to get a thorough knowledge of what you propose to do. If you enter on a public career with this advantage over others, I should not be surprised if you gained the object of your admiration quite easily.” 89 Elsewhere Socrates claims that “surely it

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87 *Cyr.*., Ε.1.8.
88 *Mem.*., Γ.6.5; Γ.6.6; Γ.6.9.
89 *Mem.*., Γ.6.17-18. The *Poroi* is addressed to contemporary Athenian politicians who, like Glaukon, have a certain lack of knowledge regarding Athens. In the case of the *Poroi*, Xenophon addresses certain politicians who expressed a lack of knowledge about how to increase revenue of Athens (1.1).
would be disgraceful for one who wishes to be a general in the state to neglect the
opportunity of learning the duties, and he would deserve to be punished by the state much
more than one who carved statues without having learned to be a sculptor.”

This is because the truth of the matter is that

"Kings and rulers [...] are not those who hold the sceptre, nor those who are chosen by the multitude, nor
those on whom the lot falls, nor those who owe their power to force or deception, but those who know how
to rule.”

The more important the role in society one desires, the more important knowledge is. For
a ruler, it is crucial. Cyrus seems to have this knowledge: the narrator of the Cyropaideia
assures his readers that Cyrus proves that ruling over other men is not impossible “ήν τις
ἐπισταμένως τοῦτο πράττῃ.” Thus, according to the narrator and his general behavior,
Cyrus fulfills the basic Socratic qualifications for a good leader with few reservations. He
is, or at least acts, perfectly moderately and he has the knowledge required of a ruler. Is
he, then, a good leader?

Xenophon’s Socrates explicitly defines the telos of the good leader. He discusses
leadership in several places in the Memorabilia. He asks,

For what reason, think you, is Agamemnon dubbed ‘Shepherd of the people’ by Homer? Is it because a
shepherd must see that his sheep are safe and fed, and that the object for which they are kept is attained,
and a general must see that his men are safe and are fed, and that the object for which they fight is attained,

90 Mem., Γ.1.2.
91 Mem., Γ.9.10.
92 Cyr., Α.1.3.
or, in other words, that victory over the enemy may add to their happiness?  

He continues:

καὶ γὰρ βασιλεὺς αἱρεῖται οὐχ ἵνα ἑαυτοῦ καλῶς ἐπιμελῆται, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἐλόμενοι δι᾽ αὐτὸν ἐδ
πράσσωσι: καὶ στρατεύονται δὲ πάντες, ἵνα ὁ βίος αὐτοῖς ὡς βέλτιστος ἦ, καὶ στρατηγοῦς αἱροῦνται τούτο
ἐνεκα, ἵνα πρὸς τοῦτο αὐτοῖς ἡγεμόνες ὅσι. δεὶ οὖν τὸν στρατηγόν τοῦτο παρασκευάζειν τοῖς ἐλομένοις
αὐτοῦ στρατηγόν [...] καὶ οὕτως ἐπισκοπῶν τίς εἴη ἀγαθοῦ ἡγεμόνος ἄρετή τά μὲν ἄλλα περιῆρει, κατέλιπε
δὲ τὸ εὐδαίμονας ποιεῖν ἄν ἂν ἤγηται.

'a king is chosen, not to take good care of himself, but for the good of those who have chosen him; and all
men fight in order that they may get the best life possible, and choose generals to guide them to it.
Therefore it is the duty of a commander to contrive this for those who have chosen him...’ By these
reflections on what constitutes a good leader he stripped away all other virtues, and left just the power to
make his followers happy.  

Socrates’ discussion with Aristarchus about putting his relatives to work provides a
parallel example for the oikos: Aristarchus, on Socrates’ advice, compels his war-
impoverished female relatives to labor at work that was not fun, easy, or socially
acceptable for their class, yet it sustained them during a time of financial hardship.

Aristarchus’ leadership improves his ’subjects.’

Xenophon’s praise of Agesilaos perhaps provides his clearest illustration of the
telos of a good leader: Agesilaos is praiseworthy because “καὶ γὰρ δὴ οὐχ οὕτως ἐπὶ τῷ
ἄλλων βασιλεύειν ὡς ἐπὶ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ ἄρχειν ἐμεγαλύνετο, οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ τῷ πρὸς τοὺς
πολεμίους ἄλλ᾽ ἐπὶ τῷ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἄρετήν ἡγεῖσθαι τοῖς πολίταις (In point of fact,
Agesilaus prided himself less on reigning over others than on ruling himself, less on
leading the people against their enemies than on guiding them to all virtue).”

Moreover, he says that

93 Mem., Γ.2.1.
94 Mem., Γ.2.3-4.
95 Mem., Β.7.1-14. Seager (2001) also notes that Cambyses says something similar to Cyrus: “It is the
duty of a good ruler, as Cyrus is told by his father, to see that his subjects have all they need in
abundance and that they are the kind of men they should be (C. 1.6.7)” (386).
96 Age., 10.2.
ὅπου ᾤετο τὴν πατρίδα τι ὠφελήσειν, οὐ πόνων ὑφίετο, οὐ κινδύνων ἀφίστατο, οὐ χρημάτων ἐφείδετο, οὐ σῶμα, οὐ γῆρας προὐφασίζετο, ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλέως ἀγαθοῦ τοῦτο ἔργον ἐνόμιζε, τὸ τοὺς ἀρχομένους ὡς πλεῖστα ἀγαθὰ ποιεῖν.

when Agesilaus thought he would be serving his fatherland he never shirked toil, never shrank from danger, never spared money, never excused himself on the score of bodily danger, never shared money, never excused himself on the score of bodily weakness or old age; but believed that it is the duty of a good king to do as much as possible to his subjects.  

This last statement neatly combines the practical virtues of a leader—the moderate behavior which allowed Agesilaos to achieve what he achieved—and the telos of his leadership—what he attempted to achieved. He dedicated himself to moderation in all things in order that he could benefit his people and nation as much as possible. Finally, the Agesilaos’ narrator stresses, after arguing that Agesilaos’ victories in Asia were about to utterly destroy Persia, that

he suppressed all thought of these things, and as soon as he received a request from the home government to come to the aid of the fatherland, he obeyed the call of the state [...] thus showing clearly that he would not take the whole earth in exchange for his fatherland.

Thus what Xenophon’s Socrates emphasizes as the telos of leadership is clear: leaders must be moderate; taking advantage of their moderation, they must work as hard as possible for the benefit of their followers, rather than for themselves; they must put their country above themselves; finally, and most importantly, they must do what they can to

97 Age., 7.1  
98 As Seager (2001) says of citizenship in general, “The most basic demand made by the city on the individual citizen is that he should at all times manifest his solidarity with the interests, preoccupations, and aspirations of the civic community as a whole. The bad citizen, on the other hand, is isolated from the mass of the people in his pursuit of selfish interests that are at best irrelevant, at worst inimical to those of the city” (385). He later adds that “The democracy demanded from the individual not merely solidarity but subordination: absolute obedience to the people, its institutions, and its appointed representatives, and unquestioning acknowledgment of the priority of the city's interests over his own and those of his family and friends” (389) and that “Selfless service to the selfish interest of one's own city: that is the rule” (394).  
99 Age., 1.36.
improve their followers in respect to possessions and, more importantly, virtue.

Xenophon is unambiguous on this point: the good leader benefits his followers. Xenophon’s good leader exists to serve his people and it is in benefiting them that he manifests his goodness. Practical virtues, such as abstinence, courage, and wisdom, which Gray argues constitute Xenophon’s concept of the leader, are not inconsequential; they are, however, merely prerequisites, the virtuous means that allow the just end. That is to say, Xenophon’s leader serves his city, his city’s people, and his subordinates, and he should act “not to take good care of himself, but for the good of those who have chosen him” by “guiding them to all virtue.” Thus the only task of Socrates’ leader is “the power to make his followers happy,” but happiness is defined as both temporal and spiritual. I agree with Gray when she says that “the definition was ‘increase’ of the group, and this could be material ‘prosperity’ as well as moral ‘enhancement’.” Xenophon’s good leader benefits his followers in respect to both finances and virtue. Let us allow that a leader can be good if he improves his followers either financially or in respect to virtue while preserving the status quo in the other category. Let us then consider, using Gray’s categories, whether Cyrus improves his followers either financially or in respect to virtue.

Cyrus’ Financial Benefits to his Followers

100 Danzig (2009) sees Xenophon’s concept of justice differently. He says that “Justice for Xenophon means matching goods and offices to human merit or talent; and it is no coincidence that by adopting and implementing this conception of justice, Cyrus succeeds in founding a vast empire” (272). Yet this is an extremely limited form of justice that would allow the leader to commit any number of heinous crimes as long as he appropriately rewarded his subordinates according to merit.

102 Mem., Γ.2.3; Age., 10.2.
103 Mem., Γ.2.4.
104 Gray (2011), 12.
The less important question, from the Socratic perspective, is whether Cyrus improves his subjects financially: I focus on the *homotimoi/entimoi* ('those of equal honor’ and ‘those held in honor,’ the terms used for the Persian elite prior to and after Cyrus’ reforms). The text provides enough data concerning them that one can easily see how Cyrus’ campaigns and reforms impact this group both financially and in respect to their virtue. In this section I analyze Pheraulas’ self-audit of his financial situation after the settlement in Babylon; Pheraulas goes into substantial detail about what he used to possess, what he possesses now, and the emotional impact this change has had on him. I argue that the example of Pheraulas shows that Cyrus’ reforms have had no positive financial impact on the *entimoi* whatsoever—they are, practically, as poor as when they were *homotimoi*—and in some respects Cyrus has in fact worsened their financial situations. The conclusions I reach in this section do not automatically condemn Cyrus according to the Socratic criterion, but they begin to hint that Cyrus is not as beneficial as he would have the reader believe.

The *homotimoi’s* lives in Paleo-Persia were penurious; they lived not unlike

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105 Less important but not unimportant: Socrates is of course concerned with the financial well-being of his friends. He advises Aristarchus how he might support his extended family, impoverished by the war (*Mem., B* 7.7-14) and he advises Eutherus how he might support himself in his old age (*Mem., B* 8.1-6). Despite this, however, Socrates’ primary concern is with the souls, not the purses, of men.

106 The narrator does not address the shift in terminology; rather, in the sentence that the Persian elites vote to attend to Cyrus at the gates of his Babylonian palace (H.1.6), the narrator calls them *entimoi* for the first time. This shift is clearly connected to the elites’ decision to wait upon Cyrus. Previously, as those in charge of the Persian state on account of their excellence and virtue, they were *homotimoi*: they were equals and equally honored because of their excellence. Now, however, they are no longer equals: they have surrendered their equality to Cyrus and are now only honored when Cyrus holds them in honor. Hence they have become *entimoi*. This shift is not meaningless: it signifies the death of the paleo-Persian constitution, based on equality of power and honor, and the birth of the neo-Persian constitution, based upon Cyrus’ power and the honor Cyrus alone can dole out.

107 It might also be possible to address how Cyrus’ reforms impacted the commoners and the subjugated foreigners, but the evidence is less plentiful regarding the virtue of the commoners and the financial situation of the subjugated foreigners.
Xenophon’s *homoioi* after Lycurgus’ reforms. Both the Spartans and the Paleo-Persian *homotimoi* eat in common groups; their meager food is supplemented by hunting; both are forbidden from being involved in financial affairs or making money; finally, both groups live under the constant gaze of their peers, superiors, and subordinates. In both cases, the logic for this elite communalism is that it would encourage and reward virtue. If Cyrus—to use Grey’s word—’increased’ the Paleo-Persian *homotimoi* financially, we should see some improvement from this baseline when we look at the Neo-Persian *entimoi*.111

Pheraulas, who may be taken as representative of the financial position of the

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108 There are a many parallels between Xenophon’s Sparta and his Persia which have been variously explained. Weathers (1954) argues that the idealized Persia of the *Cyropaideia* combines Athens and Sparta; that is to say, “Sparta represented the preparation of the individual, Athens the function of the individual” (320). Christesen (2006) argues that the *Cyropaideia* amounts to Xenophon’s proposed reforms to the Spartan military with an eye on the waxing Boiotian power of the day (63). Nadon (2001) also identifies these parallels (32). Luccioni (1948) says that “La Perse de la *Cyropédie* […] ressemble à Sparte. Souvent aussi, c’est l’esprit de Sparte qui anime la monarchie idéale de Xénophon” (201). Briant (1987) adds that “les rapprochements et analogies sont trop nombreux pour être fortuits” (4) and that Arrian believed Xenophon was associating Persia with Sparta (4). Tuplin (1994), however, convincingly argues that “there is no reasonable sense in which *Cyropaedia* can be said to be a book about Sparta in which Persia is used as a mere disguise” (162). He allows for points of comparison between the two, such as the above, but also notes significant differences. For example, Persia does not suffer from *oliganthropy* like Sparta (139); Persia does not need to ban compulsory drinking (143); also, while Sparta trains children in *aidos*, Persia focuses on *sophrosune* (155). He suggests, rather, that Xenophon’s Persia is not “fitted to a Spartan template [but] sometimes contrasted with Spartan models whether to the latter’s advantage (*Agésilaos*) or, more interestingly, disadvantage” (163). Carlier (2010) also emphasizes a number of significant differences between Sparta and paleo-Persia, among which he singles out the theoretically public nature of the School, the less rigid nature of the paleo-Persian hierarchy, and the School’s emphasis on justice (338). Seager (2001) concludes of Xenophon in general that “Our sources as a whole are overwhelmingly Athenocentric, but, as was noted in the preamble to this paper, a great deal of what is said about Athenian democracy can be and often is applied to other cities, including Sparta, and other types of constitution. Nevertheless, it is at least possible that Xenophon, the (qualified) admirer of Sparta, was not averse to pointing out that Sparta sometimes provided a better exemplar than Athens of those values that Athenian democrats claimed to praise” (396).

109 *CL*, 5.2; 5.2; 7.2; 10.2 and 10.4. *Cyropaideia*, A.2.8; A.2.11; A.2.3; A.2.6 and A.2.13-14.

110 *Cyr.*, A.2.4-9. *CL*, 2.2.

111 The *homotimoi*, as they are called throughout most of the text, are transformed without comment into *entimoi* in Book H. The first appearance of this term as a title is at H.1.6: when the narrator announces that the Persian elites agree to serve Cyrus by waiting on him at the gates of the palace, he refers to them as *entimoi* for the first time. The change of terminology seems to indicate a change in status: they are no longer all equal.
entimoi in Babylon, discusses his financial position in the aftermath of the war. His self-analysis, in response to his interlocutor’s envy, is worth reproducing in full.

Do you suppose, Sacian, that I now live with an increase in pleasure in keeping with the increase in my possessions? Do you not know that I now eat, drink, sleep in no way more pleasantly than then when I was poor? As to there being more, here is what I gain: I need to guard more, to distribute more to others, and to have the trouble of having more to take care of. For now, of course, many servants demand food of me, many demand drink, and many demand clothes. Others need doctors, and another comes in carrying either sheep that have been mangled by wolves, or cattle that have fallen off cliffs, or professing that a disease has come upon the flocks. Consequently, I think... that I am in more pain now because I have many things than I was before because I had few... Having money is not so pleasant as losing it is painful. You will know that I speak the truth. For of the wealthy, no one is compelled by his pleasure to lose sleep, but of those who lose something, you will see that no one is able to sleep, for they experience such pain...What you say is true...for if having were just as pleasant as getting, then the wealthy would by far exceed the poor in happiness. And doubtless there is an necessity, Sacian, that he who has a lot also spend a lot on gods, on friends, and on guests. Be assured that whoever is intensely pleased by money also feels intense pain on spending it.112

What, then, did Pheraulas gain by being made fantastically wealthy in exchange for his loyalty to Cyrus? Pheraulas has received everything tangible that Cyrus (elliptically) promised at the beginning of the campaign:

"οἱ τε αὖ τὰ πολεμικὰ ἄσκοντες οὕς ὁ χρήματος ὑπενθυμεῖαι τότε ἐκπονήσειν, τὸτε ἐκπονήσειν, ἀλλὰ νομίζοντες καὶ οὗτοι τὰ πολεμικὰ ἄγαθοὶ γενόμενοι πολλὸν μὲν ὅλβον, πολλὴν δὲ εὐδαίμονίαν, μεγάλας δὲ τιμὰς καὶ ἐαυτοῖς καὶ πόλει περιάψειν.

Those who practice military affairs...do so believing that by becoming good in military affairs they shall secure much wealth, much happiness, and great honors both for themselves and for their city."113

112 Cyt., H.3.40-44.
113 Cyt., A.5.9. Similarly, Cyrus complains that the ancient Persians did not profit from their virtue (A.5.8) and urges to his men, “let us not suffer these things” (A.5.11). He also discusses financial rewards for virtue with his army (B.3.2-4).
Although Cyrus’ promises are of debatable virtue, these are his promises. Although Cyrus’ promises are of debatable virtue, these are his promises. Pheraulas has received wealth and honor, where is his promised happiness? According to Sandridge, “Xenophon says that Pheraulas, for his part, wanted nothing to do with the responsibility of vast wealth.” On the contrary, I would suggest that Pheraulas is in a quandary: he has received the riches he was once promised, yet he is prevented from taking advantage of them in such a way that (he thinks) will make him happy. He is forbidden because of Cyrus’ demands that he remain ascetically virtuous.

What might Pheraulas spend his money on, were he allowed to act as a typical rich man? Pheraulas has clearly considered this question himself. He says, “Do you not know that I now eat, drink, sleep in no way more pleasantly than then when I was poor?” That is to say, he could (and once expected to) spend his money luxuriously after the victory on food, drink, and women, and use the free time money provides to live lazily. As Cyrus once said, “those who abstain from the 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.” This is the life Pheraulas expected: he fought the Assyrians to experience greater pleasure at a later time.

Despite the promises of luxuriant decadence Cyrus used to motivate his men to fight for him, once Cyrus settles in Babylon, he insists that the entimoi preserve the old

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114 Ischomachus, at least, would consider Cyrus’ promises to be the words of a vicious man spoken to vicious men: “For it seems to me it is in this, Socrates […], that the ambitious man 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” (Oik, XIV.10.). Cyrus motivates his men by encouraging them to become lovers of profit, to become vicious. Cf. Nadon (2001), 70-72 and Whidden (2008), 229-232.
115 Sandridge (2012), 37.
116 Cyr., A.5.9.
moderation of the *homotimoi*. He forbids them from using their wealth to wallow in (or even enjoy) sensual pleasures. Chrysantas orders the men to continue to be rigorously obedient to Cyrus; Cyrus condemned even those who fell under suspicion of immorality to total confiscation of their property; Cyrus tried to discourage his men from “shameful gains;” Cyrus also used the Eyes and Ears of the king to root out shameful behavior.  

Rasmussen notes the contradiction in Cyrus’ constitution, saying that “The problem is that the changing requirements of his rule are in tension with the kind of moral commitment necessary in his subordinates to maintain the health of his empire as a whole.”  

Johnson is more emphatic: he says that Cyrus “requires an inhuman mixture of continence and greed.”  

Those pleasures which an affluent Athenian might spend his money on, those for which the *entimoi* had worked so hard—fish, alcohol, sex, and symposia, the last more or less a combination of the first three—are forbidden to the *entimoi*, even though they are now able to afford them for the first time.  

Nadon argues that Cyrus insists on this old moderation because only ascetic and moderate soldiers could preserve the empire: “what makes these men indispensable is their practice of the kinds of virtues inculcated by those same [Paleo-Persian] laws.”  

His eunuchs and mercenaries are not numerous enough to preserve the peace, so he cannot dissolve the Persian army. The old Persian moderation must be preserved. Perhaps, though, it is

117 *Cyr.*, H.1.1-5; H.1.16-20; H.1.26; H.2.10-12.  
118 Rasmussen (2009), 66.  
120 Davidson (1998), 4; 40; 77; 238. While symposia in Persia are not banned, they are not, as in Athens, “a discreet way of spending money, inconspicuous consumption” (239). Cyrus’ numerous symposia are teetotal and generally lacking in (at mention of) food and wine; Cyrus’ pervasive spy system (H.2.10) seems to ensure that the *entimoi* follow his ascetic example even in his absence.  
121 Nadon (2001), 120-1.  
122 Nadon (2001), 120.
unobjectionable that the *entimoi* are forbidden to wallow in decadence, even if Cyrus once used the promise of it to motivate them. Certainly Socrates often stresses the importance of moderation in food, drink, and sex.\textsuperscript{123} If not pleasures and luxuries, what else then might the *entimoi* purchase with their new-found wealth?

People in general also need money in order to be able to afford certain services and privileges. Yet Cyrus’ *entimoi* need not use money to gain access to institutions or services they want or need. Doctors were provided by Cyrus to his army free of charge; after the Persians settled in Babylon, Cyrus maintained this service for those in his favor which, by definition, are the *entimoi*.\textsuperscript{124} Membership in the prestigious cavalry is not granted to those who have the money to afford horses and equipment, as in Athens; rather, Cyrus continues to grant horses and equipment to those who have made themselves outstanding due to their loyalty even after the end of the war.\textsuperscript{125} Unlike in some constitutions, government offices and magistracies are appointed by the monarch: the *entimoi* cannot purchase their office from the king, nor can they expend money in campaigning for elections, as in a democratic system.\textsuperscript{126} The fundamental source of all of these services and privileges, access to Cyrus (which implies membership in the *entimoi*), is never granted because of wealth; on the contrary, membership in the *entimoi*, and its concomitant, wealth, is granted to men who have proved themselves outstanding in loyalty to Cyrus.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{123} Mem., B.1.2; B.1.2; B.1.3.  
\textsuperscript{124} Cyr., A.6.15; H.2.24-5. Those who have money are the *entimoi*; they have money because they are *entimoi*. Those who do not have money do not have money because they are not *entimoi*. Thus, paradoxically, doctors are provided for free to the only men in the empire who could afford to pay for them.  
\textsuperscript{125} Cyr., Z.4.16; H.3.6. Regarding Athens, cf. Hipparchius, 1.9.  
\textsuperscript{126} Cyr., H.1.11.  
\textsuperscript{127} Cyr., H.4.10.
If Pheraulas cannot spend his money on luxuries and need not spend his money on access or services, he can—and does—acquire land and the slaves to work it. We learn from his self-audit that he at least owns land, sheep, cows, and slaves. He was born as a commoner-farmer; presumably he now owns more sheep and cattle than he did as a poor farmer. In addition, slavery is a known, but alien, custom in Persia prior to Cyrus’ campaign; it is likely that Pheraulas owned no slaves when a poor farmer. In a sense, then, Pheraulas has been financially benefited by Cyrus: he owns herds of animals; he owns swaths of farmland; he owns an army of slaves.

Xenophon suggests elsewhere, moreover, that farming is noble and rewarding; however, a man may be benefited by his farming only if he is personally engaged with it. Socrates asks, “τίς δὲ τοῖς ἐργαζομένοις πλείω τέχνη ἄντιχαρίζεται; τίς δὲ ἥδιον τὸν ἐπιμελόμενον δέχεται προτείνοντι λαβεῖν ὅ τι χρῄζει (What art brings more gratification to those who work at it? What affords a more pleasant welcome to the one concerned with it)?” Socrates also points out that...not even the altogether blessed can abstain from farming. For the pursuit of farming seems to be at the

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128 The *entimoi*, or at least many of them, are also given houses in Babylon (H.6.5).
129 *Cyr.*, H.3.38.
130 Cambyses and Cyrus had both separately used the term to refer to those in a humiliated and abused position: Cyrus (and Tigranes) applied the term ‘slavery’ to the political situation of the Armenians after their defeat by Cyrus (Γ.1.11; Γ.1.19, *passim*) and Cambyses uses the word to describe how hubristic politicians mistreat their friends—“as slaves” (A.6.45). Until Cyrus’ army acquires their first slaves, slavery seems to have existed for Persians only as a metaphorical term signifying a man in a humiliating situation. The first Persian slaves are the Assyrian slaves Cyrus captures, ‘frees,’ and then decrees that they “would need to carry whatever weapons they [the Persians] gave them” (Δ.5.57). Free in name, Cyrus compels them to work indefinitely without compensation. They are first of many men enslaved by the Persians. Prior to the appearance of these men, genuine slaves had only been seen in Media, never in Persia (e.g. A.4.13), yet subsequently slaves take an increasingly prominent role in Cyrus’ society to the extent that enslaved eunuchs fulfill a crucial role in Cyrus’ government (Z.5.58-65).
131 *Oik*, V.8.

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same time some soft pleasure, an increase of the household, and a training of the bodies so that they can do whatever befits a free man.  

Farming improves the body and the household of the farmer; it provides him gratification and pleasant work. Moreover, “ἡ γῆ θεὸς οὖσα τοὺς δυναμένους καταμανθάνειν καὶ δικαιοσύνην διδάσκει: τὸν γὰρ ἄριστον θεραπεύοντας αὐτὴν πλεῖστα ἀγαθὰ ἀντιποιεῖ (the earth, being a goddess, teaches justice to those who are able to learn, for she gives the most goods in return to those who serve her best).” Farming rewards the farmer by teaching him justice, it only rewards the farmer who pays attention and works hard—a disinterested absentee landlord will accrue no benefit. Thus Phraulus’ possession of such land provides an exciting opportunity from a Socratic perspective: this land can allow Phraulus, through diligent work, to either prove himself to be excellent or to make himself excellent if he is not already.

In the event, however, Phraulus finds the whole business of running his new oikia tedious, as seen already. He must trouble himself with organizing his slaves and caring for them when sick; he must be concerned for his animals; he must organize his fields. Thus he is forced to spend his time doing things he is disinterested in. It would seem that the transition from a small farmer to an owner of estates, the responsibilities of a rich man, were not what Phraulus had anticipated or enjoys. Farming, praised in the Oikonomikos as proving the excellence of, or teaching virtue to, the farmer, is uninteresting to Phraulus. He does not personally oversee his estates—he is so uninvolved that his slaves must even come to him to notify him of epidemics amongst his

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132 Oik, V.1.  
133 Oik, V.12.
flocks—and he finds the management of his slaves to be boring. This is not, moreover, the boasting of a too-rich man who advertises his extreme wealth by claiming he owns too much: he is so disinterested in his estates that he hands everything to the Sacian to manage. Pheraulas’ annoyance is striking contrasted to Ischomachus’ enthusiasm: he says that to lead men, even one’s own slaves, is the test and proof of a good man: “καὶ ἔστι τὸ τοῦτο μέγιστον [...] ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ὅπου τι δι’ ἀνθρώπων πράττεται (this is the greatest thing [...] in any work where something is achieved by human beings).”

Pheraulas is so disinterested in his possessions that he does not even care how loyal or skilled the Sacian is, although Ischomachos stresses the importance of this most highly. An unjust or incompetent steward can bankrupt a man; Pheraulas, however, entrusts everything he owns to a man he literally met the day before.

Even if Pheraulas’ indifference to his estates is not representative of the entimoi, his absence from his rural possessions is: no entimos has the opportunity to devote himself to farming, to reap its spiritual benefits, as a kaloskagathos should. The narrator says that “καὶ ἔδοξε τοὺς ἐντίμους ἀεὶ παρεῖναι ἐπὶ θύρας καὶ παρέχειν αὑτοὺς χρῆσθαι ὅ τι ἂν βούληται, ἐως ἅφειῃ Κῦρος (it was decided that those in honor always report at the

134 Cyr., H.3.46. This is not to say that a rich man who appoints an overseer is automatically vicious: Ischomachus claims they are necessary for the proper functioning of an estate (XIV.1 ff.). Ischomachus, however, also stresses that overseers and farms require the supervision and constant involvement of the rich man, responsibilities clearly far beyond what Pheraulas is willing to do.

135 Oik., XXI.11.

136 Oik., XIII.1-11, XIV.1-10.

137 In addition, Cyrus’ Neo-Persian society is so dysfunctional that even Pheraulas’ mutual exchange of kindnesses and favors with the Sacian does not produce actual friendship, as Socrates says should happen (Mem., B.9.1-8, B.10.1-6). Pheraulas believes the Sacian loves him but the Sacian only conditionally tolerates him: he “ἐφίλει δὲ ὁ μὲν Σάκας τὸν Φεραύλαν, ὅτι προσέφερε τι ἂν (loved Pheraulas because he always brought in something further).” The implication is that if ever Pheraulas stops handing his revenue over to the Sacian, his love will cease. In this sense, the estates Pheraulas obtained as a result of Cyrus’ campaigns did not benefit him: he cannot enjoy them or profit from them, and even yielding total control over them to another does not win him a friend.
gates and offer themselves to Cyrus to use in whatever way he wished, until he should dismiss them.” As originally intended, this decision would not keep the *entimoi* from their farms: periodic dismissals from the gate are promised. In practice, however, Cyrus never dismisses the *entimoi*. This is due to his (revealing) paranoid belief that the *entimoi* would constantly commit crimes should they be unsupervised for even a moment. This is why he prosecutes any *entimos* absent from the gates (except those who hold offices, of course). Cyrus

made inquiries if they did not report at his gates, for he believed that those who reported were not willing to do anything either evil or shameful...Those who did not report he held to be absent because of some incontinence, injustice, or neglect.139

Such criminals were harshly punished: “τῶν γὰρ παρ᾽ ἑαυτῷ μάλιστα φίλων ἐκέλευσεν ἄν τινα λαβεῖν τὰ τοῦ μὴ φοιτῶντος (He bade one of his closest friends to take what belonged to the person who did not show up);” after the dispossessed man complained, 

Cyrus would not find leisure to listen to such people for a long time. When he did hear them, he would postpone his judgment for a long time. In doing this he held that he habituated them to serve...”140

This is a Catch-22: if an *entimos* were to absent himself to personally oversee or enjoy the estates he had acquired through loyalty to Cyrus, his estates would be confiscated and his disloyalty to Cyrus proved; if he never devoted himself to his estates, he would prove his loyalty and be allowed to keep them. Even if the *entimos* could prove he has

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138 *Cyr.*, H.1.6. My emphasis.
139 *Cyr.*, H.1.16.
140 *Cyr.*, H.1.17; H.1.18.
committed no crime during his absence, he would win his estate back only after much struggle and delay. The entimoi are thus de facto forbidden by Cyrus to personally involve themselves in their estates.

The narrator also notes that, even though Cyrus gives houses to the entimoi in cities throughout the empire and that “καὶ νῦν εἰσίν ἔτι τοῖς ἀπογόνοις [...] αὐτοὶ δὲ οἰκούσι παρὰ βασιλεῖ (Even now lands still remain for the descendants [...] they themselves dwell beside the king).”\textsuperscript{141} The entimoi own estates and mansions throughout the empire; despite this they must eternally attend to the king. The entimoi cannot use anything they possess without risking its confiscation.

Daiphernes, one of the entimoi, once took inexcusable liberties and was punished.

Daiphernes was

\[\text{τῆς ἴν σολοικότερος ἄνθρωπος τῷ τρόπῳ, ὃς ἄφετο, εἰ μὴ ταχὺ ὑπακούοι, ἐλευθερότερος ἂν φαίνεσθαι. αἰσθόμενος οὖν ὁ Κῦρος τοῦτο [...] αὐτῷ ὑποπέμψας εἰπεῖν ἐκέλευσε πρὸς αὐτὸν ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔτι δέοιτο: καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν οὐκ ἐκάλει.}\]

\[\text{a human being whose manner was rather clumsy, who thought that he would appear to be more free if he did not respond quickly. When Cyrus noticed this [...] he sent one of his mace bearers and ordered him to tell him that he was no longer needed; nor did he call him ever after.}\textsuperscript{142}\]

Daiphernes is permanently disgraced for doing what Cyrus commanded with insufficient enthusiasm. This took place during Cyrus’ inaugural procession and, thus, before the eyes of the entire empire: no one could misunderstand Cyrus’ silent message to his subjects. If we consider this example, we must admit that the entimoi would be unlikely to even ask Cyrus for permission to visit their land and potentially plant the suspicion of disloyalty in Cyrus’ mind. However frequently the entimos could get permission oversee his fields, it

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Cyr.}, H.6.5.
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Cyr.}, H.3.21-22.
must be less than the daily involvement that Ischomachus prescribes.\textsuperscript{143} The most philogeorgic entimos will benefit from his estates no more than the apathetic Pheraulas.

What benefits do accrue from the wealth Cyrus awards to his entimoi? They cannot buy, or more accurately \textit{consume}, goods beyond what was customary when they were homotimois. They do not need to use this money to gain access or services. The entimoi are awarded, and can purchase, land and slaves, yet in practice they are forbidden from their farms; moreover, whatever profit they derive from their farms would necessarily remain unspent due to the moderation Cyrus imposes. Thus the only benefit provided to the entimoi from their money is its use as a status symbol; that is to say, it is only useful in not being used. The quantity of money and estates an entimos possesses represent the favor of that man in Cyrus’ eyes: this is one of the reasons that Cyrus confiscates the possessions from one who has fallen into disfavor. Thus, inasmuch as money is a status symbol but is otherwise virtually useless, the wealth of the entimoi is as inherently beneficial and useful as, for example, the extravagant Median robes the entimoi are compelled by Cyrus to wear.\textsuperscript{144} It is a \textit{thing} that separates the honored from those who are not honored. It is a more desirable thing than the Median robes because the entimoi, as humans, are motivated by feelings of greed, a passion that Cyrus had stirred up throughout the entirety of his campaign.\textsuperscript{145} As Johnson notes, the entimoi are caught between the two powerful forces of greed, stirred up by Cyrus, and iron moderation,

\textsuperscript{143} Ischomachus does not visit his fields and oversee his slaves only “if there is something I need to do in the city” (\textit{Oik.}, XI.14). This would, include, presumably, the appointment with ‘foreigners’ that provided the occasion for his conversation with Socrates (\textit{Oik.}, VII.2). Otherwise, he walks to his fields, oversees his slave-farmers, practices his horsemanship, and then goes home, alternating a walk and a run (\textit{Oik.}, XI.15-18).

\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Cyr.}, H.1.5; H.1.40-1.

\textsuperscript{145} As Cyrus says, “I too am insatiable for money, just as others are” (H.2.20). Cf. Nadon (2001), 71-2.
compelled by Cyrus and his spies.\textsuperscript{146}

In this section, I have argued that Cyrus’ campaigns and reforms did not financially benefit the Neo-Persian \textit{entimoi} in any substantial way: they receive money but are unable to use it (beyond what they could do as Paleo-Persian \textit{homotimoi}) without violating Cyrus’ rigid and paranoid insistence on moderation. They receive land but are unable to supervise it without risking its confiscation. They have no time or opportunity to oversee the farming of their lands, from which the spiritual benefits of farming arise. In addition, whatever revenues accrue from their farms would be as useless as the rest of their money. As a leader, Cyrus effectively failed to increase his followers financially: he awarded them money yet forbade them to use it. This increase in wealth benefits them no more than if he had given them bags of sand instead of bags of gold. We shall hesitate, at this stage, from declaring Cyrus an unjust leader according to Socrates’ criteria. We must still consider the more important question of whether Cyrus improved his followers in respect to virtue.

\textbf{Cyrus’ Benefits to the \textit{Entimoi} in Respect to Virtue}

In this section I address the question of whether Cyrus improved the \textit{entimoi} in respect to virtue. Although this question is more important than that of their financial situation, the \textit{entimoi’s} increase in virtue is more difficult to quantify than that of their finances. Virtue, unlike money, is not a tangible thing easy to count or analyze from afar. In addition, no \textit{entimos} in Babylon volunteers a self-audit of his virtues parallel to Pheraulas’ self-audit of his finances. We must then address this question indirectly. I begin by compare the Paleo-Persian School to the constitutional reforms promulgated by

\textsuperscript{146} Johnson (2005), 202.
Cyrus in Babylon; I argue that through his reforms Cyrus enables himself to seize near-
absolute control over the minds, words, and actions of all the entimoi. Cyrus subsequently
misuses this absolute control by exploiting the obedience of the entimoi for his own
benefit instead of encouraging them to pursue virtue. I then highlight Cyrus’ swift
degradation into moral decrepitude after the settlement in Babylon and note that this
should compound our worries about the impact his absolute control might have on the
entimoi. I conclude this section by identifying the vices and crimes of ’modern’ Persians,
angrily brought to the fore in the epilogue by the narrator, as identical to the decadent and
decrepit innovations introduced to Neo-Persian life by Cyrus himself. This shows that
Cyrus, after attaining near-absolute control over the minds of the entimoi, did descend
into moral decrepitude, and that the consequences of this were obvious: Cyrus corrupted
the once-virtuous entimoi until they presented, not long after his death, all the
characteristics familiar to anyone aware of contemporary Greek stereotypes of the
behavior of the effeminate and decadent Persians. Cyrus is personally and directly
responsible for the collapse of the Persian state, aesthetic and Spartan, into the deep and
revolting moral decrepitude associated with the despotic Persia more commonly seen in
Greek literature.

The condition of the virtue of the homotimoi prior to Cyrus’ reforms can be
discovered by examining the education they receive at the hands of the Paleo-Persian
government. The young who are to become homotimoi attend the School, organized and
staffed by homotimoi who strive to shape the souls of the youths into an appropriate
condition. At first glance, the manner in which the students live and are educated is

147 Carlier (2010) associates this with “a quite significant trend of opinion [in the fourth century, which]
imitative of the lifestyle and philosophy of Xenophon’s own teacher, Socrates.

There are three components of education at the School: training in hunting, which is practice for warfare; training in moderation, the prerequisite for becoming a virtuous man or leader; and training in justice, which is the most important of all. The students, when they are not in the wilderness hunting with Cambyses, spend the majority of their time sitting around the government buildings discussing justice. Beyond a theoretical discussion of justice, the youths also make practical application of it daily: they and their teachers judge cases of injustice that happen to come up among themselves. This is because “γίγνεται γὰρ δὴ καὶ παισὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὄσπερ ἀνδράσιν ἐγκλήματα (for just as men do, of course, boys also accuse each other)” and the judges “κολάζουσι δὲ καὶ ὃν ἄν ἀδίκως ἐγκαλοῦντα εὑρίσκωσι (punish also whomever they find to be bringing an unjust accusation).” The Paleo-Persian definition of justice and the habituation of its practice are at the heart of the training of the homotimoi.

Not only is the focus the School places on justice and virtue reminiscent of Socrates, but many of the individual philosophical and pedagogic positions taught by the School are reminiscent of positions Socrates takes in the Memorabilia. Despite what the narrator claims when introducing the homotimoi’s education, there seem to be two sorts of laws or customs discussed: prescriptive and prohibitory laws. The prescriptive

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148 Cyri. A.2.6.
149 Cyri. A.2.6-7.
150 Carlier also says of the School and the constitution that instituted it that it “can look like a model for Greek cities only because it is fundamentally a constitution of a Greek city. Inside each age class equality prevails and is equated with justice […]. All are subjected to the laws and to the magistrates, even the king” (339).
151 The narrator contrasts ‘normal’ laws, of the sort that, for example, “enjoin [citizens] not to steal or plunder” (A.2.2) with Paleo-Persian laws, which “take care that the citizens will not in the first place even be such as to desire any vile or shameful deed” (A.2.3). Despite his claim that Persia lacks the
laws almost all echo Socrates from the *Memorabilia.* For example, the boys are raised in a form of moderation in which they must avoid over-eating or -drinking alcohol. They acclimate themselves to enduring extremes of heat and cold without complaint and they vigorously exercise. They avoid sexual excess. The *homotimoi* are trained to have no possessions but to be happy with their moderation and poverty. The boys spend most days sitting in the Persian *agora,* analogous to Socrates’ favorite haunt in Athens. They, like Socrates’ students, discuss justice every day with those who know more—their teachers—and those who know less—younger students. This lifestyle in which the School trains the young *homotimoi* is strikingly similar to the lifestyle that Socrates tries to encourage in his own students. In this respect, the School is the Socratic method institutionalized.

Another example of this similarity is the attitude that both Socrates and the Paleo-Persians have in respect to piety. Socrates’ position regarding divination and divine 

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first, it clearly does have traditional laws, such as a ban on stealing. That is to say, the boys in the School “accuse each other of theft, robbery, violence, deceit, calumny, and other such things as are likely” (A.2.6). Cf. *CL.,* 2.2-3. This seems to suggest that there are two levels to Persian laws, despite what the narrator says: unlike most societies, they undertake to ensure their educated sons do not desire to commit crimes, but they nevertheless have laws prohibiting such crimes. Although the description that follows makes these laws seem prohibitory, they are not in practice. Persian law does not tell the students, ‘It is forbidden to overindulge in food;’ rather, it trains them to be so moderate in food through habituation and the examples provided by elders that they do not even think of overindulging in food (A.2.1-2).

154 *Cyr.,* A.2.4. *Mem.,* Β.1.1.
155 *Cyr.,* A.2.3-4. *Oec.,* ΙΙ.2.
156 *Cyr.,* A.2.3. *Mem.,* Α.1.10. Higgens (1977) notes how fair this system is compared to some. He says, “In the same spirit the system of education Xenophon describes does not allow the younger boys a communal barracks life; they continue to live with their parents until they become ephebes at age sixteen or seventeen, and only then do they spend the night away from home. Even amongst this latter group, those who marry can receive dispensations (45).”
157 *Cyr.,* A.2.3. *Mem.,* Α.1.10. At *Oik.,* VII.1 Socrates goes to Ischomachus to learn from him what a *kaloskagathos* is and does (whether he gets a satisfactory answer is another question). At *Mem.,* Δ.2.1-40 Socrates attempts to convince Euthydemus that he is ignorant of what justice and injustice is and that he is in need of further education.
favors, for example, is echoed in what Cambyses tells his son. According to Xenophon,

Socrates said

καὶ τοὺς μαντευομένους ἃ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἔδωκαν οἱ θεοὶ μαθοῦσι διακρίνειν οἷον εἰ τις ἐπερωτῇ ἄλλον ἐπὶ ἐπιστάμενον ἢ ἑαυτὸν ἐπίσταται τὸ καλὸν κρεῖττον ἢ μὴ ἐπιστάτησαν, [...] ὥρα δὲ δείν, ἣ μὲν μαθόντας ποιοῖς ἔδωκαν οἱ θεοὶ, μαθαίνειν, ἢ δὲ μὴ δῆλα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐστίν, πειράζεσθαι διὰ μαντικῆς παρὰ τῶν θεῶν πυθαγόραςμαι: τοὺς θεοὺς γὰρ εἰς ἄν οἷς ἔτοι μὲν ἔγειρον σημαίνειν.

that those are crazy also who consult divination concerning matters the gods gave to human beings to decide by learning—for example, if one should inquire into whether it is better to take on a chariot someone who understands or does not understand how to drive...And he said that what the gods permit to be done by those who have learned, one should learn, but that what is not clear to human beings one should try to ascertain from the gods through divination.”159

Cambyses reminds Cyrus that “ἐκεῖνα ἅ ποτε ἐδόκει ἡμῖν, ὡς ἀσκέῃ δεδώκασι ποιεῖν μαθόντας ἀνθρώπους βέλτιον πράττειν ἢ ἄνεπιστήμονας αὐτῶν ὄντας (we once decided that there are things in which the gods have granted to human beings who have learned to fare better than those who do not understand).”160 Cyrus, in reply, says that “καὶ γὰρ οἶδά σε λέγω ἃτις οὐδὲ δεδώκασιν οἱ θεοὶ μαθόντας ἄνθρωπος βέλτιον πράττειν ἢ ἄνεπιστήμονας αὐτῶν ὄντας ζητεῖν ἢ μὴ μαθόντας ἄνθρωπος ζητεῖν (I also know that you added that it would not even be right for those who have not learned how to ride a horse to ask from the gods to be victorious in a cavalry battle).”161 Thus the School and Socrates have identical positions regarding divination: the gods help those who have already educated themselves. In addition, many of the School’s prohibitive laws, which denote behaviors forbidden to the homotimoi, are likewise Socratic.

That which the School forbids echoes the Memorabilia; however, some slight differences—mostly in the stress placed upon individual injustices—can be seen here.

Some positions taken by the School are fairly conventional: for example, the boys are

159 Mem., A.1.9.
160 Cyr., A.6.5.
161 Cyr., A.6.6.
taught to avoid “κλοπῆς καὶ ἁρπαγῆς καὶ βίας καὶ ἀπάτης καὶ κακολογίας (theft, robbery, violence, deceit, [and] calumny).” 162 While this position is Socratic, it is a position held by most philosophical schools and societies (though, notably, not by Xenophon’s Sparta). 163 The crime worse than these, though, is ingratitude: this is because the Persians believed that along with ingratitude comes

tοὺς ἀχαρίστους καὶ περὶ θεοὺς ἢν μάλιστα ἀμελῶς ἔχειν καὶ περὶ γονέας καὶ πατρίδα καὶ φίλους. ἔπεσθαι δὲ δοκεῖ μάλιστα τῇ ἁριστείᾳ ή ἁνασχίνεια: καὶ γάρ αὕτη μεγίστη δοκεῖ εἶναι ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ αἰσχρὰ ἠγεμόν.

uncaring also about gods, as well as about parents, fatherland, and friends; and shamelessness seems to follow especially upon ingratitude, and it seems in turn to be the greatest leader to everything shameful. 164

As Higgens notes, “There is something particularly human in gratitude.” 165 The School believes that ingratitude is the root of many of society’s ills.

Socrates also condemns ingratitude, though he does not place nearly as vivid an emphasis on it. He agrees with his son Lamprokles that “φίλου εἴτε πολεμίου μὴ πειράται χάριν ἀποδιδόναι, ἄδικος εἶναι (it is also unjust to be ungrateful to friends but just to be ungrateful to enemies);” thus “οὐκοῦν [...] εἰλικρινής τις ἂν εἴη ἀδικία ἡ ἁριστεία (ingratitude [is] something purely and simply unjust).” 166 Socrates points out that “ἐὰν δέ τις γονέας μὴ θεραπεύῃ, [...] οὐκ ἐὰν ἄρχειν τοῦτον (if someone does not serve [his] parents, the city [...] will not allow him to rule)” and that “εἰ γάρ σε ὑπολάβοιεν πρὸς τοὺς γονέας ἁριστον εἶναι, οὐδεὶς ἂν νομίσειεν εὖ σε ποιήσας χάριν ἀπολήγεσθαι

162 Cyr., A.2.6.
163 CL., 2.2.
164 Cyr., A.2.7.
165 Higgens (1977), 45. He continues, “and Xenophon has the commoner Pheraulas realize this, who avers, using as a corroborative example the regard humans have for parents, that man stands apart from the animals because he is more gracious and responds more positively to kindness than beasts do” (45-6).
166 Mem., B.2.2; B.2.3.
(should they suppose that you are ungrateful to your parents, no one would hold that the favor will be returned him after he has treated you well).”

There are notable differences here between the School’s position and Socrates’: Socrates argues that ingratitude to enemies is an injustice; Cambyses seems to suggest that ingratitude towards enemies is just. Socrates discusses how treating one’s parents ungratefully leads to ostracism due to the suspicion that the ingrate will take advantage of his friends, family, and city; the School believes that should someone begin to treat fellow citizens ungratefully he would start to commit crimes of all sorts. Thus the reasons that both the School and Socrates condemn ingratitude are not identical, but similar. Overall, however, the lifestyle and philosophical positions in which the *homotimoi* are trained, as these examples have shown, are more or less similar to what Socrates teaches his students in the *Memorabilia*.

Despite these similar features, the School’s and Socrates’ methods of teaching are not identical. If the Paleo-Persian education mimics Socrates’ relationship with his students both in topics and mode, there are differences. The beatings the students receive for incorrect or unacceptable responses to their teacher’s prompting provide one striking difference. Cyrus describes to his mother what happened when he gave an unacceptable judgment as trainee judge:

> ἐν τούτῳ δή με ἐπαινεὶν ὁ διδάσκαλος, λέξας ὅτι ὅπως μὲν τοῦ ἁρμόττοντος εἴην κριτής, οὕτω δέοι ποιεῖν, ὅπως δὲ κρίνας δέοι ποτέρου ὁ χιτὼν εἴη, τοῦτ’ ἐρη σκεπτεῖον εἶναι τίς κτῆσις δικαία ἐστί, πότερα τὸ βίᾳ ἀφελόμενον ἔχειν ἢ τὸ ποιησάμενον ἢ πριάμενον κεκτῆσθαι...

Upon this the teacher beat me, saying that whenever I should be appointed judge of the fitting, I must do as I did; but when one must judge to whom the tunic belongs, then one must examine, he said, what is just possession, whether it is to have what is taken away by force or to possess what [one has] made or purchased.  

167 Mem., B.2.13; B.2.14.
168 Cyr., A.6.27.
169 Cyr., A.3.17.
There are two components to the teacher’s painful reaction to his student’s error. First, Cyrus was beaten because of the error of his judgment. Second, after the beating, Cyrus is given a detailed explanation of precisely why his judicial decision was incompatible with Persian justice.

It is important to note this because of Rasmussen’s discomfort with the School’s policy of beating mistaken students. He does accurately identify this as a problem but his analysis does not go far enough. Rasmussen sees the School’s recourse to beating as a consequence of Persia’s failure to “eliminate the unjust impulses of its citizens […] Xenophon indicates that habituation to self-sacrificing virtue through regular exercises and salutary models is not sufficient: the city must also rely on routine beatings...”

Rasmussen identifies this as representative of one of the three problems with the constitution of the Paleo-Persian republic: that is to say, the “tension between its idea of civic virtue and the ambitions of its most talented citizens.” It is true that Paleo-Persia

170 Higgens (1977) argues that “It is clear that this justice involves respect for the property of others, since theft is condemned outright, and that justice must use persuasion, not force, when seeking to improve an unfortunate situation” (45). Although there is a persuasive element to the School's education—the teacher explains to Cyrus why his decision is wrong—, in claiming that Persian justice uses persuasion and not force, Higgens does not consider the seemingly ubiquitous physical component of Persian education.

171 Rasmussen (2009), 11. Field (2012) sees this differently: “The political question that lurks here is whether Cyrus’ ambitions might somehow have been channeled within the regime without undermining its stable character. This would have involved preventing Cyrus’ morally corrosive trip to Media and providing him with a better understanding of the relative merits and virtues of the traditional Persian regime. For example, if Cyrus had been in Persia rather than Media during his early youth, perhaps he would have come to understand the benefits of laws—something that is beaten into him when he is very young, but which is ultimately a lesson that Cyrus never learns. Stated simply, Cyrus is never taught how justice and the law […] at times compromise short-term interests for the sake of more important goals, like the peace, stability, and flourishing of one’s homeland” (734). I would partially agree with Field’s approach, yet Cyrus is not unique in abandoning the paleo-Persian laws when he saw fit: as Nadon (2001) points out (60), the speed at which all Persians abandon Persian laws is stunning—this suggests that the problems with Persian education were systemic.

172 Rasmussen (2009), 13.
was unsuccessful at perfectly sublimating individual ambitions into the pursuit of the common good, of which failure the beatings are symptomatic. Yet, a comparison with the *Memorabilia*, which Rasmussen does not consider, shows the full extent of Paleo-Persian failure.

While in general the lifestyle of the students and their teachers mimics that of Socrates and his students, the beating of the Paleo-Persian youths is a stark divergence in pedagogical methods. Socrates, it goes without saying, does not beat his students; while the *Memorabilia* does not discuss the application of violence in an explicitly pedagogical setting, the *Memorabilia*’s narrator does discuss the foolishness of attempting to compel people through violence:

\[\text{ἐγὼ δ᾽ οἶμαι τοὺς φρόνησιν ἀσκοῦντας καὶ νομίζοντας ἱκανοὺς ἔσεσθαι τὰ συμφέροντα διδάσκειν τοὺς πολίτας ἣκιστα γίγνεσθαι βιαίως, εἰδότας ὅτι τῇ μὲν βίᾳ πρόσεισιν ἐχθραί καὶ κίνδυνοι, διὰ δὲ τοῦ πείθειν ἀκινδύνως τε καὶ μετὰ φιλίας ταὐτά γίγνεται. οἱ μὲν γὰρ βιασθέντες ὡς ἀφαιρεθέντες μισοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ πεισθέντες ὡς κεχαρισμένοι φιλοῦσιν. οὔκουν τῶν φρόνησιν ἀσκούντων τὸ βιάζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἰσχύν ἀνευ γνώμης ἐχόντων τὰ τοιαῦτα πράττειν ἐστίν.}\]

But I hold that they who cultivate wisdom and think they will be able to guide the people in prudent policy never lapse into violence: they know that enmities and dangers are inseparable from violence, but persuasion produces the same results safely and amicably. For violence, by making its victims sensible of loss, rouses their hatred: but persuasion, by seeming to confer a favour, wins goodwill. It is not, then, cultivation of wisdom that leads to violent methods, but the possession of power without prudence.173

The *Memorabilia* thus explicitly links wisdom (and its cultivation) with persuasion: violence and compulsion, linked with the opposite of wisdom, produce enmity and hostility. This is more serious when taken in conjunction with the narrator’s pedagogic statement later in the *Memorabilia*. He says that "πάντας δὲ τοὺς διδάσκοντας ὁρῶ αὐτοὺς δεικνύντας τε τοῖς μανθάνουσιν ἃπερ αὕτοι ποιοῦσιν ἃ διδάσκουσι... (I find that all teachers show their disciples how they themselves practice what they teach...)"174

173 Mem., A.2.10.
174 Mem., A.2.17.
Thus the *Memorabilia* indirectly condemns this method of teaching: a teacher who beats his student would cause the student to feel lasting enmity for the teacher; moreover, and more importantly, it would teach the student that it is appropriate for a superior to compel his followers through the application of pain.

This deviation from the Socratic style then shows that, however superficially similar the two methods are, there is an irreconcilable disagreement between the two. That a disappointed or frustrated Paleo-Persian teacher could beat his students must have had a chilling effect on the mental development of the young *homotimoii*. Would a student feel it an acceptable risk to challenge his teacher on either the general scope or individual details of Paleo-Persian justice if he need worry about being beaten for divergent thought? A student would be, sooner or later, discouraged from developing his own ideas or even learning how to reach the same conclusions that his teacher had reached. The effect of this is that the *homotimoii* are not trained to develop their minds philosophically, to develop their skills of independent thought, but rather to rigidly and automatically conform to the law of Paleo-Persia. The ‘incorrect’ student is beaten and then told precisely how to act in the future: there is no room for disagreement. Thus the conversations in the Persian marketplace are not discussions of justice which attempt to

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175 Field (2012) notes that “The aim of the education seems to be respect for the laws, in conjunction with a submission of the self. Xenophon describes a life devoted exclusively to bodily preparation and justice understood as obedience to the laws” (726). She later praises paleo-Persia because it is “especially impressive in its respect for the law and the longstanding stability which this brings to the regime” (734).

176 Luccioni (1948) has a similar point. He says, “Le but général de l’éducation décrite par Xénophon est de former d’excellents citoyens ou, pour mieux dire, d’excellents sujets. Sans doute, l’idée d’honnêteté n’est-elle pas absente du mot βελτίστους qu’emploie l’auteur; mais ce mot implique surtout l’idée des services que chacun doit rendre à l’Etat” (219). Luccioni’s point seems to be that the purpose of the School is to produce not the best people, but the people most likely to maintain and reproduce the state, which is why it needs excellent subjects more than excellent citizens. Reisert (2009) similarly notes that “The Persian education system as Xenophon describes it relies on a combination of indoctrination and habituation—not philosophy” (313).
reach consensus through persuasion and mutual respect like the conversations in the Memorabilia, but an in-depth exploration of the rigid rules that the students must conform to without doubt or hesitation. The narrator does not reveal at what age, if ever, the homotimoi graduate beyond being beaten by their superiors. It seems likely, though, that the combination of corporal punishment and the expulsion of those who do not conform would quickly eliminate most nonconformists.\textsuperscript{177} The homotimoi, rather than being trained in justice through the development of philosophical minds like the students of Socrates, are trained in strict conformity through the memory of past, and fear of future, beatings. This goes some way to explaining the ease and speed with which Cyrus was able to persuade the homotimoi to abandon the old system of virtues: they have been violently conditioned for most of their lives to obey superiors without objection or question—what else would they do but obey their leader when he gives an order?\textsuperscript{178}

Another objection to the Persian system of education, complementary to what I have just argued, has been made by Nadon and Rasmussen. They note that those who are chosen to be leaders and teachers of the different age divisions are mostly selected due to

\textsuperscript{177} The narrator is clear that only those who conform graduate: “To those in turn among the youths who spend their time fulfilling what is prescribed by the law, it is permitted to be enrolled among the mature men and to share in political offices and honors” (A.2.15). Cf. Higgen (1977), 46. The pedagogic system outlined in the CL is similar to that of paleo-Persia, although it is unclear whether a boy can fail out of the Spartan school. The Spartans appoint citizens to oversee their children who “punish them severely in case of misconduct” (2.2); the teachers also controlled “a staff of youths provided with whips to chastise them when necessary” (2.2). Yet there is no talk of failing out of the program: a boy’s graduation from the youths’ system of education to the teenagers’ seems to be predicated solely upon the advancement of age (3.1). This rigorous control over the Spartans continues through adolescence (3.1-5) and adulthood (4.1-6). Expulsion never seems to replace physical punishment as the primary form of punishment for the Spartans.

\textsuperscript{178} Rasmussen (2009) says that “The Peers’ quick and unanimous acceptance of Cyrus’ command confirms...the tenuousness of their commitment to the more aristocratic notion of virtue as a good in itself” (55). My objection is closer to Nadon (2001)’s: he says that “the rapidity of its acceptance by the peers [...] provide some grounds for wondering whether their original conception and practice of virtue ever possessed a solid foundation” (60). It seems that the School has not prepared the homotimoi in such a way that they could intellectually resist a leader like Cyrus.
their skill at making their followers the best: “καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τοῖς παισίν ἐκ τῶν γεραιτέρων ἠρημένοι εἰσίν οἳ ἄν δοκῶσι τοὺς παῖδας βελτίστους ἀποδεικνύναι: ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς ἐφήβοις (Over the boys are chosen those of the elders who are thought to make the boys best; over the youths)” it is the same, though these leaders are chosen from the mature men.¹⁷⁹ For the mature men, though, “οἳ ἄν δοκῶσι παρέχειν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα τὰ τεταγμένα ποιοῦντας καὶ τὰ παραγγελλόμενα ὑπὸ τῆς μεγίστης ἀρχῆς (those who are thought to render them especially ready to carry out the orders and exhortations of the greatest office)” are chosen as their leaders.¹⁸⁰ As we have seen, the duty of a (Xenophontic) leader is to improve his followers in finances and virtue, but the entimoi have no possessions: thus it would seem that the leaders of the boys and the youths are chosen solely for their excellence in teaching virtue. The criterion, however, by which the leaders of the mature men are selected has been noted as problematic. Nadon says that Xenophon “first indicates his reservations when relating how the Persians select their magistrates:” this causes them to “fail to live up to their formal appellation as ‘complete’ or ‘perfect’ men;”¹⁸¹ This would, one expects, contribute to the willingness of the homotimoi to abandon the Paleo-Persian system of virtues and adopt Cyrus’ new system, since their leaders had been appointed to inculcate excellence in obedience amongst their followers.

One final objection to the Paleo-Persian education is the seeming naïveté it inculcates in the young homotimoi. One dimension of the training for the homotimoi is that “οἱ δὲ Περσικοὶ νόμοι... ἐπιμέλονται ὅπως τὴν ἀρχὴν μὴ τοιοῦτοι ἔσονται οἱ πολῖται οἵοι πονηρῶν τινος ἢ αἰσχροῦ ἔργου ἐφίεσθαι (the Persian laws...take care that the

¹⁷⁹ Cyr., A.2.5.
¹⁸⁰ Cyr., A.2.5.
citizens will not in the first place even be such as to desire any vile or shameful deed).”

In practice, the young homotimoi are, so it seems, not taught to do anything but 'good' things. Yet Cambyses abruptly reveals to Cyrus that as general he must be “ἐπίβουλον εἶναι καὶ κρυψίνουν καὶ δολερόν καὶ ἀπατεῶνα καὶ κλέπτην καὶ ἀρπαγα καὶ ἐν παντὶ πλεονέκτην τῶν πολεμίων (a plotter, a dissembler, wily, a cheat, a thief, rapacious, and the sort who takes advantage of his enemies in everything)” if he is to be successful.

Cyrus is scandalized and cannot believe his ears. Cambyses, however, reveals that he has been trained in harming others all along through practice in hunting:

καὶ ἐξαπατᾶν δὲ καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν οὐκ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐπαιδεύομεν ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν θηρίοις, ἵνα μηδ᾽ ἐν τούτοις τοῖς φίλους βλάπτοτε, εἰ δὲ ποτὲ πόλεμος γένοιτο, μηδὲ τούτων ἀργύμναστοι εἴητε.

we educated you to deceive and take advantage not among human beings but with wild animals, so that you not harm your friends in these matters either; yet, if ever a war should arise, so that you might not be unpracticed in them.

Since these skills are so important, Cyrus objects that “καὶ διδάσκειν ἀμφότερα ταῦτα ἐδεῖ ἐν ἀνθρώποις (you ought to have taught both [benefiting and harming] with human beings):” such important skills should have been explicitly developed by the School.

Cambyses responds by telling his son that once a Persian teacher did teach helping and harming people to the homotimoi. He “διώριζε δὲ τούτων ἃ τε πρὸς τοὺς φίλους ποιητέον καὶ ἃ πρὸς ἕχθροος (defined which of these one must do to friends and which to enemies),” but in the end the youths “οὐκ ἀπείχοντο οὐδ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν φίλων τὸ μὴ οὗ πλεονεκτεῖν αὐτῶν πειρᾶσθαι (did not abstain from trying to take advantage even of their friends).”

182 Cyr., A.2.3.
183 Cyr., A.6.27.
184 Cyr., A.6.29.
185 Cyr., A.6.30; A.6.31; A.6.32.
there arose a decree that we still use even now, to teach the boys simply [...] to tell the truth, not to deceive, not to steal, and not to take advantage, and to punish whoever acts contrary to this, so that being instilled with such a habit, they might become tamer citizens.186

Thus the *homotimoi* are taught simple virtues and how to benefit people—rules rigidly and violently enforced from above—yet they are also surreptitiously taught how to harm others through hunting.

Cyrus’ disbelief at what his father tells him—“Heracles, father, what sort of man you say I must become!” hints at the shortcoming of this system.187 Cyrus, as I argue in subsequent chapters, has been harming and manipulating his friends and family for the whole of his narrative life thus far. Despite this, he, an intelligent man, does not make the connection between harming others and what he was really learning when hunting at the School. The *homotimoi* have been (overtly) trained solely in benefiting their friends, and their vicious impulses have, to a greater or lesser degree, been beaten out of them for decades by the time they enroll in the army: they are trained to not “desire any vile or shameful deed.”188 Would they—*could* they—expect to be manipulated or harmed by their leader? If their leader does manipulate or harm them, would they be capable of recognizing it over their decades of indoctrination telling them to expect only benefit?

They were not auditors of this conversation in which Cambyses ‘unlocks’ Cyrus’ awareness of his School-trained capabilities to harm people: the rest of the Persians have not yet realized—and perhaps never fully do—that they (and Cyrus) have this power to

186 *Cyr.*, A.6.33.
187 *Cyr.*, A.6.27.
188 *Cyr.*, A.2.3.
harm others. The education of the School—always to do good, never to do bad—would prepare the *homotimoi* to expect nothing but benefit and good intentions from their leaders. This would delay, if not wholly prevent, them from realizing it if they were being exploited by their leaders.

Socrates does not encourage in his students such a naïve concept of virtue and justice. In the *Memorabilia* he attempts to convince resistant—perhaps arrogant—Euthydemus that he needs to become Socrates’ student, yet the young man repeatedly rebuffs him. Socrates eventually succeeds in convincing Euthydemus to follow him by proving to him how complicated the definitions of virtue and justice are. He writes a *delta* and *alpha* on the ground and, listing a number of actions to Euthydemus, has him put them under the column for Justice or Injustice.\(^\text{189}\) Euthydemus then confidently places *ψεύδεσθαι* and *ἐξαπατᾶν*, lying and deceit, under the category of Injustice.\(^\text{190}\) Once Socrates asks him whether it is unjust to deceive an enemy in war, Euthydemus is quickly forced to revise his answer. He is compelled to revise his answer yet again when Socrates asks him if it is then unjust to lie to a friend if it is to the benefit of said friend.\(^\text{191}\) This brief conversation, which instantly destroys Euthydemus’ erroneous self-confidence, is already more honest and beneficial to the young man than twenty years at the School would have been.\(^\text{192}\) Philosophy, virtue and justice are not simple concepts: fully understanding them takes years of free and honest thought, impossibilities within the School.

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\(^{189}\) *Mem.*, Δ.2.13 and ff.  
\(^{190}\) *Mem.*, Δ.2.14.  
\(^{191}\) *Mem.*, Δ.2.15; Δ.2.17.  
\(^{192}\) *Mem.*, Δ.2.19.
The state of the Paleo-Persian *homotimoi* in respect to virtue prior to Cyrus’ constitutional reforms is thus mildly positive, but there are a number of serious shortcomings. The School is well-intentioned but seriously flawed. The youths are trained in, and maintain, a rigid physical moderation: they eat and drink little, they are sexually moderate, they endure heat, cold, and exercise; they maintain a moderate poverty; they are quite sensibly pious. More importantly, they discuss justice and other virtues, judging each other on how they behave: their conversations and lifestyle are superficially quite Socratic. The system seems to have worked very well within its own limited means; as long as the *homotimoi* are never exposed to new ideas, the system achieved its intent.\(^{193}\)

However, there are weaknesses built into this system that leave its students open to easy manipulation by a corrupt superior. The corporal punishment omnipresent in the School prevents the creation of a Socratic dynamic between teacher and students. The education in justice the boys and teenagers undergo does not encourage independent or philosophical thought, but rather rigid adherence to the commands of hierarchical superiors.\(^{194}\) When they graduate into the army, they are put under the command of men who are appointed not for their ability to make their followers best but rather to make

193 As Nadon (2001) puts it, “Because of the nature of this balance, the republican community must remain an essentially closed society, distrustful of change” (42).
194 Despite my objection, I am not arguing that this section suggests that such beatings necessarily be dismissed as an unacceptable way to inculcate discipline in soldiers. Such styles of military training exist today in modern states with stable governments. For example, the Soviet, and later the Russian Federation, army has seen value in the practice of *дедовщина*, *dedovshchina*. It is a form of extreme hazing—humiliations and severe beatings that are on occasion fatal—which senior enlisted men visit upon their junior compatriots to enforce hierarchy, among other things. The difference is that the paleo-Persian School uses brutality to inculcate obedience in their soldiers and their politicians simultaneously, inasmuch as all their leaders and politicians have been trained as—and continue to be—the elites of the Persian army. While it may be effective for a military training program to inculcate rigid obedience in soldiers through brutality, political life—especially political life in non-totalitarian states—requires a greater freedom of thought. I see this objection as based not in concern for the human rights of the Persian students, but in the fear that the intellectual development of those being trained to lead the state (Cf. Gray 2011, 9-11) may be stunted by such training. For a junior enlisted man’s harrowing account of *dedovshchina*, cf. Babchenko (2007), 55-72 and passim.
them the most obedient. Finally, the *homotimoī’s* training, training that openly focuses solely on benevolence but secretly teaches how to harm, is not ‘activated’ in all the *homotimoī* by Cambyses but only in Cyrus. This, taken together with their habituated thoughtless obedience and the standing orders of the leaders of the adults to encourage obedience, makes it clear how vulnerable the *homotimoī* are as a whole to manipulators and exploiters. Cyrus, who spent several years learning another type of justice in Media, is therefore perfectly placed to destroy the Paleo-Persian system and replace it.\textsuperscript{195} But while the *homotimoī* and the pedagogic system that produced them were not perfect, they are preferable to the lifestyle and justice of the *entimoī* in Babylon, as we shall see.

Once Cyrus captures Babylon and murders the Assyrian king, he organizes his new empire into a form that he believes will be most stable and most beneficial to himself. As a result of this, the *homotimoī*, whose lives had already been greatly changed after leaving Persia, find themselves undergoing—and agreeing to—a many changes in their lives. The law as pertaining to the *homotimoī* change; their habits and daily routines change; what society expects of them changes; even their title changes. On the one hand, the lifestyle of the *entimoī* in Babylon is not unrecognizably different than their lives as *homotimoī*. They are still obliged by Cyrus to maintain strict standards of moderation in respect to sex, food, and other consumables.\textsuperscript{196} In Persia, they were required to report to the Free Square to serve at the command of the government; likewise, the *entimoī* are required in Babylon to report daily to the gates of Cyrus’ palace to serve at their king’s

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\textsuperscript{195} Mandane, perhaps because she is also between two worlds as a Mede married to a Persian, is the only character aside from Cyrus to note that Paleo-Persian and Median concepts of justice are radically different (A.3.15-18).

\textsuperscript{196} *Cyr*, H.1.36.
There are differences, of course: in Persia, only the youths and unmarried mature men were required to spend every day at the Free Square while the married adults and elders freely came and went at their pleasure. In Babylon, every entimos must spend every day at the palace gates or be dispossessed of all he owns. It is in noting this difference that we can begin to understand how radically Cyrus changes the manner in which the entimoi function: his control over their behavior goes far beyond merely ensuring that they remain in constant attendance at the gates.

Cyrus arranges his new system of rewards and punishment in such a way as to compel the entimoi to devote every waking second to thinking and acting in Cyrus’ best interests, not their own. An example of this is the cynical ranking system that he institutes to visibly signify the favor in which he held individual entimoi. The narrator notes Cyrus’ thoughts in inventing this system:

óπου μὲν οἴονται ἅνθρωποι τὸν κρατιστεύοντα μήτε κηρυχθήσεσθαι μήτε ἄθλα λήψεσθαι, δήλοι εἰσιν ἐνταῦθα οὐ φιλονίκως πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔχοντες: ὅπου δὲ μᾶλλον πλεονεκτῶν ὁ κράτιστος φαίνεται, ἐνταῦθα προθυμότατα φανεροὶ εἰσιν ἁγωνιζόμενοι πάντες καὶ ὁ Κῦρος δὲ οὕτως ἐσαφήνιζε μὲν τοὺς κρατιστεύοντας παρ᾽ έαυτῷ, εὐθὺς ἀρξάμενος εἰς ἕδρας καὶ παραστάσεως. οὐ μέντοι ἀθάνατον τὴν ταχθεῖσαν ἕδραν κατεστήσατο, ἀλλὰ νόμιμον ἐποιήσατο καὶ ἀγαθοῖς ἔργοις προβῆναι εἰς τὴν τιμιωτέραν ἕδραν, καὶ εἰ τις ῥᾳδιουργοὶ, ἀναχωρῆσαι εἰς τὴν ἀτιμοτέραν.

Wherever human beings think that the one who is best will neither be heralded nor receive prizes, here it is clear that they are not competitively disposed toward each other. Yet wherever the best person is especially evident in getting the advantage, here all are also evident contending with the greatest enthusiasm. Cyrus thus made it clear who the superiors were in his company, beginning immediately from one’s sitting and standing position. He did not establish one’s assigned seat in perpetuity, however, but he made it customary to advance by good works into a more honored seat, and if one slacked off, to retreat into a seat of diminished honor.

197 Cyr., A.2.4; 8.1.16. Nadon (2001) notes that Cyrus tries to replicate the stabilizing aspects of paleo-Persia when establishing his state in Babylon (121).
198 Cyr., A.2.4.
199 Cyr., H.1.16.
200 Gera (1993) says that Cyrus here “is slightly disturbing. The Persian leader devises a stratagem which he uses against his friends, and he manipulates them into offering him what he considers his due” (287). Original emphasis.
201 Cyr., H.4.4-5.
Cyrus incorporates this ranking system, as the narrator notes, into every gathering at which he made an appearance, whenever the *entimoi* and Cyrus were ‘sitting and standing.’ It is a daily visible announcement to each *entimos* of how valuable Cyrus believes him to be because of how beneficial the actions that *entimos* had recently preformed were. The stated intention is to encourage—if not compel—every *entimos* to throw himself headlong into serving Cyrus; it is worth remembering at this stage that the only way that the *entimoi* are able to earn money is if Cyrus feels it necessary or appropriate to grant it to them—and if Cyrus feels it appropriate for them to keep whatever money they already have. Nadon rightly notes that “justice can no longer be thought of as obedience to the kind of laws that both expressed and supported the way of life found in a small and isolated republican regime... Cyrus has himself now taken the place of those laws...”

To put this another way, this system of visible ranking encourages the *entimoi* to look inwardly at Cyrus exclusively: their position depends solely on him. As Rasmussen puts it, “They are little more than loyal servants whose service to the regime is effectively indistinguishable from fulfilling Cyrus’ merely personal wishes in exchange for selfish and base gratification.”

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202 Nadon (2001), 123-4. Reisert (2009) adds that “the virtue he now aims to teach bears scant resemblance to the virtues taught in republican Persia […] It is left to Chrysantas to translate Cyrus’ noble-sounding exhortations into practical direction: his speech praises nothing other than obedience to the ruler and issues in a single, concrete recommendation: ’let us report to the official buildings … and let us offer ourselves to Cyrus to use in whatever way might be needed’ (8.1.5). The external similarity in conduct may obscure but cannot efface the fundamental difference between republican and imperial Persia: republican citizens put themselves at the service of lawful magistrates themselves conspicuous for obedience to the law; Cyrus’ followers place themselves at the arbitrary discretion of their master” (306). Seager (2001) says of Xenophon in general that “One of the most important ways in which the individual manifests his subordination to the city is, as several passages already cited have made clear, by obedience to the magistrates and the laws. […] Xenophon’s Socrates also accepts the customary distinction between monarchy and tyranny: monarchy is rule over willing subjects in accordance with laws (M. 4.6.12). Thus the standard to which Cyrus’ father conforms among the Persians is not his own whim but the law (C. 1.3.18).” Whether this makes Cyrus, who rules without laws but at least allegedly with the willingness of his followers, a tyrant or a monarch is uncertain.

203 Rasmussen (2009), 79.
constant attendance at Cyrus’ gates, leaves them little to no time for leisure, leisure necessary to pursue philosophical study, leisure which Socrates says is a crucial requirement for being a good person. Yet Cyrus’ attempts to regulate every action of his subjects do not stop here.

Cyrus’ control over his subjects’ minds extended far beyond the gates of his palace. He instituted the so-called Eyes of the king and Ears of the king in no other way than by giving gifts and honors. For by richly benefiting those who reported what it was opportune for him to learn, he made many human beings keep their ears and eyes open for things to report that would benefit the king...and people are everywhere afraid to say what is not advantageous to the king, just as if he were listening, and afraid to do what is not advantageous, just as if he were present.

Cyrus’ Eyes and Ears serve a similar function to that of the ranking system at the palace. The ranking system attempts to compel or persuade the *entimoi* by means of rewards to constantly act in Cyrus’ benefit; the Eyes and Ears attempt to bring about the same thing only through distrust and fear of punishment. Gray emphasizes that the Eyes and Ears,  

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204 At Mem., B.6.3, Socrates states that a man with time for nothing but business would make an awful friend. Compare the system that Cyrus has created here with what Seager (2001) identifies as the Xenophontic ideal of a politician’s subordination to his city: “A particular case of the general principle of the subordination of the individual to the community is the requirement that the people should keep its politicians under control. The stoke image is of the people as master, the politicians as its slaves [...] Aristippus in the Memorabilia concurs. He equates holding office with providing for the needs of the other citizens and rejects it because it is hard enough to provide for oneself. He sees no attraction in neglecting one’s own concerns while running the risk of prosecution if one does not accomplish everything that the city wants. For cities, he says, treat their magistrates as I treat my slaves, expecting them to provide benefits in plenty for the city while keeping their hands out of the till (M. 2.1.8-9)” (389). This Xenophontic ideal, in which the city treats the leader as their slave, is here inverted: Cyrus has all but enslaved the *entimoi* so that they will work for his best interest. The entire state, but especially the *entimoi*, have been organized to make the state most beneficial and profitable to Cyrus, not to the citizens.  

205 Cyr., H.2.10-12.
and the fear they produce, because of the “willing obedience that Cyrus inspired,” do in fact “serve the common good.” First of all, perhaps this would be true if Cyrus’ interests were perfectly equivalent to ‘the common good,’ a question I will return to. It is, however, one thing for Cyrus to pay informants to inform on threats to his throne. The narrator, however, makes it clear that the spies inform on not only those who plot against Cyrus but also those who do not constantly act in Cyrus’ best interest. Action (or hostility) and inaction (or apathy) are equally criminalized. Fear of betrayal and punishment, not loyalty or love, compels Cyrus’ subjects—the entimoi and the rest—to work constantly in his best interest. The ability of the entimoi to choose their own paths in life, to decide what is best for themselves, their families, and their friends becomes increasingly restricted.

Another of Cyrus’ constitutional innovations further limits the ability of his subjects to act for themselves: he rigs the court system to spread hostility and anger amongst the entimoi. Litigants are compelled to concur on the choice of judge in the suit: the end result of this is that

ό δὲ μὴ νικῶν τοῖς μὲν νικῶσιν ἐφθόνει, τοὺς δὲ μὴ ἑαυτὸν κρίνοντας ἐμίσει: ὁ δὲ νικῶν [...]

The one who was not victorious would envy those who were, and he would hate those who had cast their judgments against him. The one who was victorious, on the other hand, would [...] consequently hold that he did not owe gratitude to anyone. And like others who inhabit cities, those who wished to be first in Cyrus’ friendship would also be envious of one another, and consequently most of them wished one another to be simply out of the way rather than do anything for their mutual good. So this makes it clear how he contrived that all who were superior would love him more than each other. 207

206 Gray (2011), 279; 278.
It is Cyrus’ explicit concern here to destroy the ability of the entimoi to act in concert without his approval or involvement. The Neo-Persian constitution attempts to compel the entimoi to be helpless without Cyrus: they distrust and hate each other. The consequences of this can perhaps already be seen in Hystaspas’ naked jealousy of his old friend Chrysantas. Not only does this, as it seems to be intended to do, reduce the ability of the entimoi to unite against Cyrus and overthrow him, but this endemic hostility and jealousy are contradictory to Socratic philosophy. In the Memorabilia, open hostility is rarely seen but, when it does appear, it is always a problem to be solved, a problem that prevents the natural working of society. When it comes to Socrates’ attention that the brothers Chairephon and Chairecrates have had a serious falling out, Socrates makes it his business to intervene and restore harmony. He asks Chairephon,

εἰπὲ μοι, ἔφη, ὦ Χαιρέκρατες, οὐ δήπου καὶ σὺ εἶ τῶν τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων, οἳ χρησιμότερον νομίζουσι χρήματα ἢ ἀδελφούς; καὶ ταῦτα τῶν μὲν ἀφρόνων ὄντων, τοῦ δὲ φρονίμου, καὶ τῶν μὲν βοηθείας δεομένων, τοῦ δὲ βοηθεῖν δυναμένου, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τῶν μὲν πλειόνων ὑπαρχόντων, τοῦ δὲ ἑνός.

surely you too do not belong to the sort of human beings who hold that wealth is more useful than brothers, even though wealth lacks sense while a brother has it, and wealth is in need of assistance while a brother is able to assist, and, in addition to these things, you possess rather a lot of wealth but only one brother.

He prods the reluctant Chairephon into attempting a reconciliation because this harmony is so important. Anger and jealousy are, for Socrates, harmful emotions that should be neutralized philosophically; they are not the desirable status quo for an entire nation.

I have discussed four of Cyrus’ constitutional innovations pertaining to the elites made after the settlement in Babylon: the requirement of the entimoi to perpetually wait on Cyrus at the gates of his palace, the ranking system he introduces, the Eyes and Ears

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208 Cyr., H.4.10.
209 Mem., B.3.1.
of the king that he begins to finance, and the rigged justice system that produces hatred between litigants and ensures that they would “love him more than each other.” Each of these innovations—and their combined result—cause, above all else, the *entimoi* to abandon any attempts to consider what might benefit them to Cyrus’ detriment or to act alone or in concert in such a way that would harm Cyrus. This is, it must be said, not automatically an unjust constitutional arrangement. As the narrator indicated in the introduction, he turned to Cyrus after seeing, among other things, “how many monarchies...have been overthrown by the people.” People of all classes so often act against their governments rashly, foolishly, or because of manipulation; Cyrus has discovered a way to stifle this. *He has achieved absolute control over the entimoi*: they cannot act or think (openly) against their king’s interests and they cannot not constantly work in his best interest. If they benefit their king, they will be richly rewarded; if they act or speak against their king they will be found out, put on trial, and punished. If they do nothing, they will be tried and punished. They must do what he says and wants. Cyrus

210 Cyr., H.2.28.
211 Too (1998) sees the relationship between Cyrus and his subjects as a father-son relationship, but one with an exploitative twist. She says that “The characterisation of the Persian king as a ‘father’ always figures the citizen as a *pais*, as a child, and then inevitably, in the case of a corrupt leader, as a slave. Cyrus reconstructs the Persian ‘father’ as a figure who not only rules but also dominates, such that any possibility of an Oedipal struggle between father and son is abrogated” (301).
212 Cyr., A.1.1.
213 Seager (2001) notes that absolute power concerns Xenophon. He says that “Xenophon is also aware of another commonly perceived threat to democracy, an excess of individual δύναμις, power, or influence. He notes that because of his influence in the city and among the allies, Alcibiades was cultivated by many men who were themselves powerful and admired by the demos. This caused him, like Critias, to become puffed up and led him from from the precepts of Socrates […]” It may be a cliché to say today that ‘absolute power corrupts absolutely,’ but it seems to be a concern of Xenophon’s. Higgens (1977), for his part, argues that “For all his sense of personal resolve and ability, Cyrus recognizes a limit to his power and the necessity, if he is to preserve it, to utilize and respect the services of others. Yet it is typical that, even as he always rewards those who aid him, he esteems someone like Khrysantas more than Hystaspas [...]” (47). In a limited sense, I would agree with Higgens: Cyrus recognizes that he cannot be everywhere at all times and so invents satrapies to delegate his power (Cf. Higgens 1977, 51-2). On the other hand, I would suggest that Cyrus believes his ability to control and dominate his subordinates is limitless: in this respect, Cyrus does not recognize a limit to his power.
drives wedges between the *entimoi*, with courts and spies, in order that, even if some, or even many, do find themselves appalled by his regime or think that an oligarchy might be preferable, they would find it difficult if not impossible to even hint at such feelings to their friends due to fear of betrayal. The aristocrats are crushed and have no control over their lives because Cyrus is in complete control. It is not coincidental that there are no domestic threats against his reign for the rest of his life. Yet—does Cyrus’ near-omnipotent control improve the *entimoi*, every aspect of whose lives he manages, in respect to virtue or does it make them worse? This depends solely on Cyrus’ character because Cyrus alone is in charge.

**The Ends of Cyrus’ Means**

We can start to answer this question by examining what Cyrus himself says about the purpose of the ranking system he institutes for the *entimoi*. As mentioned above, Cyrus ranked Chrysantas above Hystaspas and, when pressed, told Hystaspas precisely why he had done so:

Χρυσάντας τοίνυν, ἐφη, οὕτως πρῶτον μὲν οὐ κλῆσιν ἀνέμενεν, ἀλλὰ πρὶν καλεῖσθαι παρῆν τῶν ἡμετέρων ἕνεκα: ἔπειτα δὲ οὐ τὸ κελευόμενον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅ τι αὐτὸς γνοὶ ἄμεινον εἶναι πεπραγμένον ἤμιν τοῦτο ἔπραττεν. ὡστε δὲ εἰπέν τι δέοι εἰς τοὺς συμμάχους, ἢ μὲν εἰμὴ δείκτιον λέγειν ἔμοι συνεβούλευσαν: ἢ δὲ εἰμὴ αἰσθητοῦ βουλόμενον μὲν εἰδέναι τοὺς συμμάχους, αὐτὸν δὲ με αἰσχροῦν ἄριστην εἰς τοὺς συμμάχους, ταῦτα οὕτος λέγω τὰς καλοὶς πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐμοὶ ἀγάλλεται καὶ ἥδεται.

Chrysantas here did not wait for our call; he instead reported before he was called, for the sake of our affairs. Secondly, not only did he do what was ordered; he also did what he himself knew would be better for us if it were done. Whenever it was necessary to say something to the allies, he counseled me on what he thought it fitting for me to say. Whatever points he perceived that I wished the allies to know, but was ashamed to say about myself, he said himself, declaring them as his own judgment. Consequently, in these matters as least, what prevents him from being even better for me than I am myself? And as for himself, he always says that his present possessions suffice, but for me it is always evident that he considers what possible further acquisition would be beneficial; and he rejoices and takes pleasure in what is noble for me much more than I do.\(^\text{214}\)

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214 Cyr., Η.4.11.
Due had argued that “The purpose of this system...is to stimulate everybody to constantly prove his worth in competition with others...Men obtain privileges if they deserve them and lose them if other men prove themselves more worthy...” Yet Cyrus’ words are very revealing and belie what Due has said: when the narrator had introduced the ranking of the entimoi, as noted above, he also claimed that he favored those “who [are] best;” Cyrus himself, however, claims something crucially different. He has favored Chrysantas because Chrysantas works for and “takes pleasure in what is noble for me.” This is, therefore, an attempt to conflate what is in Cyrus’ best interest and what is best.

It is difficult to argue that this a justifiable position for a leader to take.

Xenophon’s narrators and Socrates argue again and again that the ideal leader must subordinate his own interests to those of his people. The only way in which Cyrus’ position—the identification of himself with ‘Persia’—is defensible is if Cyrus actually is a perfect ruler and his own interest perfectly coincides with the interests of his nation. Cambyses, Cyrus’ own father, warns Cyrus against this sort of thinking: he says to his son that “εἰ δὲ ἢ σὺ, ὦ Κῦρε, ἐπαρθεὶς ταῖς παρούσαις τύχαις ἐπιχειρήσεις καὶ Περσῶν ἄρχειν ἐπὶ πλεονεξία ὥσπερ τῶν ἄλλων [...] εὖ ἴστε ὅτι ἐμποδὼν ἀλλήλοις πολλῶν καὶ ἄγαθῶν ἐσεσθε. (But if either you, Cyrus, being raised up by your present fortunes, undertake to rule Persians as you do others, with a view to your own special

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216 Cyr., H.4.4.

217 My emphasis. Cyr., H.4.11.

218 As Reisert (2009) puts it, “Xenophon underscores that Cyrus successfully established the full range of institutions necessary to sustain a despotic government, and he also indicates that the efficacy of these institutions has nothing to do with the success of establishing a legitimate hereditary monarchy. Cyrus’ regime systematically undermines the conditions necessary for any principle other than that of the ruler’s will to be regarded by the subjects as a necessary criterion of legitimacy” (308).
advantage...be assured that you will hinder each other from many good things).”

Cambyses, in other words, has recognized that Cyrus rules the non-Persian constituents of his empire only to benefit himself. From a Socratic point of view, this is a damning condemnation of Cyrus’ style of leadership. Moreover, I hope that in my above discussion I have shown that what is good for Cyrus was financially damaging to the entimoi, suggesting that Cambyses’ warning has come too late, even if Cyrus would have listened. His interests and Persian interests do not perfectly coincide, but it is indicative—and ominous—that Cyrus not only apparently thinks that they do, but is arrogant enough to speak openly of this.

The Neo-Persian constitution—to do what is best for Cyrus—is an outright rejection of the Socratic statement that initiated this discussion: “a king is chosen, not to take good care of himself, but for the good of those who have chosen him.” This is the opposite of what Cyrus has done: he has established his empire to benefit himself—and only himself—at the expense of all others. Perhaps all is not lost, though: Xenophon places heavy emphasis on the potential of a leader to inspire and shape the souls of his followers through personal example. Although Cyrus has created his empire to benefit himself, if he has maintained his old moderation and asceticism, perhaps his followers will be able to imitate him in this at least.

When we turn to examine Cyrus’ lifestyle following the settlement in Babylon, we

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219 Cyr., H.5.24.  
220 Mem., Γ.2.3. We may rather see that as a form of extreme pleonexia, of which Seager (2001) notes that “Like others, Xenophon associates it with absolute rule. To believe that one should have more than all the rest, Cyrus is told by his mother, is characteristic of a tyrant (C. 1.3.18). So Cambyses warns him that he should not try to rule the Persians, like other peoples, in the interest of his own πλεονεξία (C. 8.5.24)” (394).
find that his old moderation has undergone a transformation—to be more exact, a decline into crapulence. Xenophon once says of Socrates that “προτρέπειν τοὺς συνόντας ἀσκεῖν ἐγκράτειαν πρὸς ἐπιθυμίαν βρωτοῦ καὶ ποτοῦ καὶ λαγνείας καὶ ὑπνοῦ καὶ ρίγους καὶ θάλπους καὶ πόνου (he turned his companions towards training themselves to be continent in their desire for meat and drink, and in regard to lust, sleep, cold, heat, and labor).”

As I noted above, Socrates argues that these practical virtues—in sum, moderation—are the prerequisites to being a good ruler (or man). Yet Cyrus, after the settlement in Babylon, abandons moderation in respect to food, cold and heat. As a result of this, we may doubt whether Cyrus, with his absolute control over the entimoi, could increase them in respect to virtue.

First of all, Cyrus’ appetite has become reified in keeping with his new palatial lodgings. The narrator describes one way in which Cyrus wins the gratitude of his friends, followers and slaves in Babylon: he is generous with the food of the royal table. Yet the young Cyrus might be surprised by the old Cyrus’ table:

Moreover, what is sent from the king does not bring delight only because of what has been said, but what comes from the king’s table really differs greatly also in the pleasure it affords. That this is so, however, is nothing amazing, for just as also the other arts have been developed to an exceptional degree in great cities, in the same way the food of a king has been labored over to a very exceptional degree...But where it is a sufficient work for one person to boil meats, for another to roast them, for another to boil fish, for another to roast them, for another to make loaves of bread—and not even loaves of all kinds, but it is sufficient if he provides some one form that is well regarded—it is by necessity, I think, that each develops in quite an exceptional way such things as are done like this.
This is a radical departure from the ascetic dicta of the young Cyrus who once
imperiously informed his grandfather, Astyages, of the dangers of gourmet food:

πολὺ ἁπλουστέρα καὶ εὐθυτέρα παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἡ ὁδός ἐστιν ἐπὶ τὸ ἐμπλησθῆναι ἢ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν: ἡμᾶς μὲν γὰρ ἄρτος καὶ κρέα εἰς τοῦτο ἄγει, ὑμεῖς δὲ εἰς εἰς μὲν τὸ αὐτὸ ἡμῖν σπεύδετε, πολλοὺς δὲ τινὰς ἐλεγμοὺς ἄνω καὶ κάτω πλανώμενοι μόλις ἀφικνεῖσθε ὅποι ἡμεῖς πάλαι ἥκομεν.

the road to satisfaction is much more simple and direct among us than among you, for bread and meat take us to it. You hurry to the same place as we do, yet only after wandering back and forth on many curves do you arrive with difficulty at the point we reached long ago.²²⁴

Cyrus’ table was once the epitome of simple eating: Gobryas, eating his first dinner with Cyrus, observes that “τὸ δὲ κεκινῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν βρωμάτων καὶ τῆς πόσεως πάνυ αὐτοῖς ὑικὸν καὶ θηριῶδες δοκεῖ εἶναι (It seems to [the Persians] that being excited by food and drink is very piggish and bestial).”²²⁵ Yet now Cyrus employs dozens of specialized chefs who create exceptional food that “differs greatly also in the pleasure it affords.”²²⁶ Cyrus’ poissonniers produce for him boiled and roasted fish, a clear sign for an Athenian audience of an affluent, if not decadent, diet: “It is at the fishmonger’s stall, however, that the gap between the rich and poor gapes most widely...There are even a couple of passages [in comedies] which seem to treat fish-consumption as a jealously guarded privilege of the rich.”²²⁷ Whidden connects this sort of motivation, not to Odysseus’ men, but to cows. Once, Cyrus offered double food to one of his officers, who refused. Whidden says that “For all the levity in their conversation, the captain nonetheless recognizes on some level that Cyrus is trying to corrupt him with a way of life more fit

²²⁴ Cyr., A.3.4.
²²⁵ Cyr., E.2.17.
²²⁶ Cyr., H.2.5.
²²⁷ Davidson (1998), 226.
for a cow than a human being.”

Cyrus has started to become, like Odysseus’ men or, as Whidden suggests, like a cow, bestial in his diet.

Moreover, Cyrus no longer eats only that meat caught on the hunt, flavored with appetite and exertion. Cyrus’ approach to hunting has changed somewhat. Whereas the Paleo-Persians ate only “greens with their bread” and “whatever they catch on the hunt,” Cyrus no longer relies on chance in such matters. The narrator describes how Cyrus organizes his camps:

εὐθὺς δὲ τοῦτο ἐνόμιζε Κῦρος, πρὸς ἑω βλέπουσαν ἵστασθαι τὴν σκηνήν: ἔπειτα ἔταξε πρῶτον μὲν πόσον δεῖ ἀπολιπόντας σκηνοῦν τοὺς δορυφόρους τῆς βασιλικῆς σκηνῆς: ἔπειτα σιτοποιοῖς μὲν χώραν ἀπέδειξε τὴν δεξιάν, ὀψοποιοῖς δὲ τὴν ἀριστεράν, ἵπποις δὲ τὴν δεξιάν,

Cyrus immediately adopted the custom of pitching his tent facing the east. Next he determined, first of all, how far distant from the king’s tent his bodyguards should pitch their tents; then he showed a place on the right for the breadmakers, and one on the left for the saucemakers, and another on the right for the horses...

Note Cyrus’ priorities here: he considers his bodyguards first; second, his bakers; third, his saucemakers; fourth, the Persian horses. He values his personal safety most of all, positioning his bodyguards closest to his tent. For a typical king this is perhaps unsurprising; for Cyrus, who once walked freely among armed Persians and Medes, it is, at least, unusual. However, after the bodyguards he situates the breadmakers next. It is possible that the Paleo-Persian army was also accompanied by a contingent of bakers.

228 Whidden (2008), 230.
229 Too (1998), 291-2, notes some instances of Cyrus' moderation in food weakening prior to Book H.
Cyrus relaxes the rule about sweating before eating at B.3.21; later, Cyrus also reveals that his men had grown accustomed to drinking wine at C.2.29.
230 Cyr., A.2.11.
231 Cyr., H.1.34.
232 Cyr., A.2.11; A.2.11.
233 Cyr., H.5.3.
234 Hieron, in the Hie., is well aware that for a man to even have a bodyguard is characteristic of a tyrant: “But the tyrants, all of them, proceed everywhere as through hostile territory. They themselves at last think it necessary to go armed and always to be surrounded by an armed bodyguard” (2.8).
Yet, it is noteworthy that they are so important to Cyrus that they deserve second consideration after the bodyguards—this is again unusual. What is more troubling still is that after the boulangers come the saucemakers—the official Persian army sauciers. Let us recall the ascetic virtue of the Paleo-Persian army:

εἰ δέ τις αὐτοὺς οἴεται ἢ ἐσθίειν ἄηδῶς, ὅταν κάρδαμον μόνον ἔχωσιν ἐπὶ τῷ σίτῳ, ἢ πίνειν ἄηδῶς, ὅταν ὕδωρ πίνωσιν, ἀναμνησθήτω πῶς μὲν ἡδὺ μᾶζα καὶ ἄρτος πεινῶντι φαγεῖν, πῶς δὲ ἡδὺ ὕδωρ πιεῖν διψῶντι.

And if someone should think that they eat without pleasure when they have only greens with their bread, or drink without pleasure when they drink only water, let him remember how pleasant barley cake and bread are to those who hunger to eat, and how pleasant water is to one who thirsts to drink.235

Consider Cyrus’ statement to Astyages—“I see that even you, grandfather, are disgusted with these meats...Because...you too, whenever you touch your bread, do not wipe your hand on anything; but whenever you touch any of these, you wipe your hand on your napkin as if you were most distressed.”236 It was the unanimous and unambiguous position of all Paleo-Persians that the consumption of sauces was grotesque. Cyrus’ behavior after he settles in Babylon suggests that he no longer holds this ancient teaching to be worthy. Cyrus has surrounded himself with bakers and saucemakers; surely Astyages would approve of this turn of events.

One final troubling aspect of this passage is that Cyrus concerns himself with placing his bodyguard, his bakers, and his sauciers in the camp before he places the Persian horses. The Persian cavalry was once all-important to Cyrus. As Cyrus states, “if we should acquire a cavalry no worse than theirs, is it not obvious to us all that, in facing our enemies, we would be able to do even without our allies what we now can do only

235 Cyr., A.2.11.
236 Cyr., A.3.5. “ἀλλὰ καὶ σέ [...] ὥσπερ, ὃς πάππος, μυσαττόμενον ταῦτα τὰ βρώματα. [...] ὅτι σε [...] ὅταν μὲν τοῦ ἄρτου ἰσχύς ἐν τῇ χεῖρα ἄρημωμενον, ὅταν δὲ τούτων τινὸς θήρης, εὐθὺς ἀποκαθαίρει τὴν χεῖρα εἰς τὰ χειρόμακτρα, ὡς πάνο ἄχθομενος ὅτι πλέα σοι ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἐγένετο.”
with them, and that we would also then have allies who thought about us in a more measured way?" The new Persian cavalry provided the foundation of Cyrus’ conquests. Yet, he now considers the safety of his chefs over that of his cavalry: in the narrator’s recapitulation of the camp organization—which leaves out discussion of his cooks—he emphasizes the “strong place” Cyrus allocates to the horsemen. Horsemens need to be protected when encamped, because “they encamp without having any of the weapons with which they fight ready at hand.” Despite his previous manly care for the cavalry, and his awareness that they are vulnerable, he now ensures that their position is less secure than that of the cooks.

The presence of bakers and saucemakers in Cyrus’ army, along with the value he places on them, suggests that Cyrus has abandoned his old moderation. He has rejected his ancient arrogant pronouncements to Astyages as well as the rigorous discipline that had been drilled into him through two decades of training at the School. Not only does the School disapprove but Socrates speaks firmly against paying such careful attention to his diet. The Memorabilia’s narrator says of Socrates that

...he used as much food as he could eat with pleasure, and he came to it so prepared that his desire was the relish for his food...He said jokingly that he thought that Circe too made [men into] pigs by entertaining [them] with many such things at dinner.

Socrates asks his followers whether they should “ἐλέσθαι ἄνδρα [...] ἄρ’ ὄντινα ἂν

237 Cyr., Δ.3.7.
238 Cyr., Η.5.8.
239 Cyr., Η.5.9.
240 Mem., Α.3.5-7.
αἰσθανοίμεθα ἥττω γαστρὸς (elect someone [as general] whom we perceived to be not equal to resisting his stomach...).”241 These statements taken together suggest that Cyrus is no longer moderate in respect to food. He no longer eats moderate and simple food with pleasure derived from hard exercise and starvation; if he did, he would not need gourmet chefs, especially when on campaign. Cyrus has turned himself into a pig, playing Circe for himself and his followers.

Cyrus’ decline into luxury is not limited to his foods: he also radically alters his position on luxurious garments.242

καταμαθεῖν δὲ τοῦ Κύρου δοκοῦμεν ὡς οὐ τούτῳ μόνῳ ἐνόμιζε χρῆναι τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν ἄρχομένων διαφέρειν, τῷ βελτίονας αὐτῶν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταγοητεύειν ἀυτὸ χρῆναι αὐτούς, στολήν τε γοῦν εἵλετο τὴν Μηδικὴν αὐτός τε φορεῖν καὶ τοὺς κοινῶς ἐπείσειν ἐνδύεσθαι: —αὕτη γὰρ αὐτῷ συγκρύπτειν ἐδόκει εἰ τίς τι ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐνδέξατο ἐχοντας τοὺς φοροῦντας καὶ γάρ τὰ ὑποδήματα τοιαύτα ἐξουσιων ἐν αἷς μάλιστα λαθεῖν ἐστι καὶ ὑποτιθεμένους τι, ὥστε δοκεῖν μείζους εἶναι ἢ εἰσί: —καὶ ὑποχρίεσθαι δὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς προσίετο, ὡς εὐοφθαλμότεροι φαίνοντο ἢ εἰσί, καὶ ἐντρίβεσθαι, ὡς εὐχροώτεροι ὁρῶντο ἢ πεφύκασιν.

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 them. At least he himself both chose to wear a Median robe and persuaded his partners to dress in one as well, for this robe seemed to him to hide it if anyone should have some bodily defect, and they displayed their wearers as especially beautiful and tall, for they have shoes in which it is especially possible to avoid detection when inserting something underneath, so those who wear them seem to be taller than they are. And he allowed them to use color beneath their eyes, so that their eyes might appear nicer than they were, and to rub on colors so that they might be seen as having better complexions than they did by nature.243

There is no place for the basse couture of paleo-Persia in Cyrus’ court at Babylon. He has adopted the elegant and painted fashion of Median dress, once exemplified by the so-called tyrants of Media, Astyages and Cyaxares. Gray defends Cyrus’ adoption of Median

241 Mem., A.5.1.
242 I will raise the possibility in my chapter on Cyaxares that Cyrus never genuinely prefers simple clothes but adopts them to maintain the respect of the Persian soldiers and so that he can imply that Cyaxares is effeminate. Cyrus, when a child in Media, happily wore Median clothes and jewelry, if not the makeup as well (A.3.3). He only reverted to Persian apparel upon his return to his homeland (A.4.26). As Too (1998) argues, Cyrus’ Median clothes “become the whole foundation for Cyrus’ power as the youth holds on to and develops the politics of display as the basis of his subsequent power” (294).
243 Cyr., H.1.40-41.
dress, arguing that it “enhances his public image” and that Cyrus “knows that a good cloth and a good cut will conceal imperfections, as well as a bit of make-up, and that people are impressed by a good showing.” Her arguments are utilitarian: Median clothes are effective at bewitching the commoners, and so Cyrus’ adoption of this fashion is appropriate.

Even if Median clothes are effectively bewitching—after all, Astyages and Cyaxares’ apparel failed to awe Cyrus—they are roundly rejected throughout Xenophon’s literature as both effeminate and as symptoms of serious immoderation. Cyrus himself once as a younger man condemned his imperial adoption of these clothes as risible:

καὶ ποτέρως ἂν, ὦ Κυαξάρη, μᾶλλόν σε ἐκόσμουν, εἰπερ πορφυρίδα ἐνδὺς καὶ ψέλια λαβὼν καὶ στρεπτὸν περιθέμενος σχολῇ κελεύοντι ὑπήκουόν σοι, ἢ νῦν ὅτε σὲν τοιαύτη καὶ τοσαύτη δυνάμει οὕτω σοι ὀξέως ύπακοιοῦ διὰ τὸ σὲ τιμᾶν άδρῶτι καὶ σπουδῇ καὶ αὐτὸς κεκοσμημένος...

Which would adorn you more, Cyaxares, if I heeded you by strolling in at my leisure, after dressing in purple garments, selecting bracelets, and putting a necklace around my neck; or now when, because I honor you, I have heeded you so promptly with a power of such size and quality, and with myself adorned with sweat and zeal...

Cyrus believed that that simple clothes were associated with, even contributed to, masculinity and honorable hard work. He argued that the purple and gold of the Median royal uniform was, conversely, associated with, and likely contributed to, effeminacy and immoderation. Thus, although Cyrus once had prided himself on his simple attire, he now

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245 Too (1998) argues that “the Persian leader encourages his state officials to articulate their position and influence wholly through a rhetoric of dress: attire is what fundamentally distinguishes the rulers from those they rule. Cyrus’ leaders are made to wear shoes which make them seem taller than they really are; they wear make-up which causes their eyes to appear more handsome than they actually are; in short, they are dressed so as to seem more impressive than their true natures” (295).

246 Cyrr., B.4.6.
dresses in the same outfit that he mocked when he encountered his uncle dressed in it.

Cyrus is not the only Xenophontic character to disparage fancy clothes.

Socrates, in the *Memorabilia*, goes even further than the young Cyrus in rejecting Median-style clothes:

τά γε μὴν ἱμάτια οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι οἱ μεταβαλλόμενοι ψύχους καὶ θάλπους ἑνεκα μεταβάλλονται, καὶ ὑποδήματα ὑποδοῦνται, ὅπως μὴ διὰ τά λυποῦντα τοὺς πόδας κωλύωνται πορεύεσθαι: ἡδὴ οὖν ποτε ἡσθον ἐμὲ ἡ διὰ ψύχος μᾶλλὸν τοῦ ἕνδον μένοντα, ἡ διὰ θάλπος μαχόμενόν τῳ περὶ σκιᾶς, ἡ διὰ τὸ ἄλγειν τοὺς πόδας οὐ βαδίζοντα ὅπου ἄν βούλομαι;

Regarding cloaks, you know that those who change them do so for reasons of cold and heat, and that they put on shoes so that they will not be prevented from walking due to what pains their feet. Now then, have you ever perceived me more than another remaining inside because of the cold, fighting with someone over a spot in the shade because of heat, or not going wherever I wish because of pain in my feet?\(^\text{247}\)

Socrates all but recommends nudity, regardless of weather or season, as his ideal state: wearing clothes keeps off the heat and keeps out the cold, reducing a man’s ability to resist these extremes of temperature. Wearing shoes, by protecting his feet from the cold and from stones, reduces a man’s ability to endure cold and stones. Thus we see that unlike Cyrus, who primarily mocked Median fashion, Socrates both rejects it and explains why it leads to greater immoderation. Anything that protects a person from the extremes of the elements—clothes, shoes, or staying indoors—reduces a man’s ability to resist the elements.\(^\text{248}\) Self-control is, according to Socrates, the foundation of all virtues,\(^\text{249}\) but self-control cannot be maintained without practice.\(^\text{250}\) This would lead us to

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\(^\text{247}\) *Mem.*, A.6.6.

\(^\text{248}\) This should be a familiar sort of Socratic argument for Platonists: Socrates tells a story in the *Phaedrus* in which the pharaoh Thamus disapproves of the invention of writing because it would first supplement but then replace human memory, which would lead to a withering of mental faculties (*Phaedrus*, 274a-b).

\(^\text{249}\) *Mem.*, A.5.1; A.5.5.

\(^\text{250}\) Socrates asks Antiphon, “Do you not know that by training, a puny weakling comes to be better at any form of exercise he practices, and gets more staying power, than the muscular prodigy who neglects to train? Seeing then that I am always training my body to answer any and every call on its powers, do you not think that I can stand every strain better than you can do without training” (A.6.7).
conclude that, whatever the reasons Cyrus alleges for adopting Median fashion as part of his reforms in Babylon, the Median finery would invariably and unavoidably lead to Cyrus, and the *entimoi*, becoming more immoderate and more decadent. Thus Socrates effectively disapproves of two aspects of Cyrus’ new wardrobe. Since Socrates argues that even simple shoes and robes are immoderate, it follows that Cyrus’ platform shoes and purple-and-gold robes are more immoderate still. Moreover, Socrates’ arguments show that, even if Cyrus is still moderate when he begins to wear such clothes to bewitch the commoners, their softening effects on his body will ensure that he does not remain moderate for long.251

Cyrus and Socrates have both rejected Median clothes and shoes as immoderate and effeminate; Xenophon’s Ischomachos also rejects Cyrus’ introduction of makeup for men as unnatural and effeminate. He asks his wife,

Ischomachos denigrates the makeup that Cyrus wears: it is deceptive and dishonest and incompatible with the lifestyle of the *kaloskagathos*. Yet his point goes beyond this: not only is it dishonest, but it allows a man to dishonestly compensate for shortcomings in his body which he would otherwise attempt to overcome through hard work and moderation.

251 Cyrus, in fact, does not. As I discuss below, Lincoln (2001) 315-6 notes that Cyrus begins migrating with the weather, although he attributes it to an attempt at ensuring cosmological order.
Ischomachos states that a healthy and vigorous appearance is the product of effort, of deliberate practice. This echoes Socrates’ argument that one must continually practice to maintain virtue: beautiful appearance—truly beautiful appearance—only comes as a product of continual effort. Makeup conceals reality; the logical conclusion of this, as Socrates suggested above, is that the man who wears makeup to make himself appear more beautiful will begin to rely on makeup at the expense of striving to ensure his true appearance is beautiful through hard work and effort. He will depend more and more upon makeup until he relies upon it alone for his beauty.

Cyrus’ Median clothes, Median shoes, and Median makeup are all unequivocally rejected as vicious throughout the Xenophontic corpus. Not only do they deceptively conceal a person’s true nature, but they tend to cripple that person’s moderation. The more a person wears fancy clothes, shoes, and makeup—for whatever reason—the less inclined, and the less able, he will be to exercise and endure those extremes of heat and nature that Socrates holds fundamental to virtuous man, the kaloskagathos, whether he is a father, magistrate, general, or king. Even though Cyrus believes his appearance will, and perhaps it does, bewitch the commoners into holding him in awe, his method of inspiring awe will invariably lead him, and his identically-dressed entimoi, to immoderation.

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253 Contra Carlier (2010), 361.
254 Too (1998) points out another reason that Cyrus and the entimoi’s new clothes are problematic: “The author's implication is that Cyrus resorts to the very deceptive devices which Cambyses insists should only be used against one's enemies and never against one's own people on his subjects” (296). She argues that “In Cyrus’ Persia, power is consolidated and realised when the external trappings of position are displayed by the leaders of the state and viewed by their subordinates” (297) and that “Cyrus creates a 'panoptic' state, one in which power is maintained through surveillance rather than through more overt violence or force” (297). I agree with Too's appraisal of this situation: our two objections are complementary.
I have argued in this section that Cyrus has failed to remain moderate in several key areas that Socrates identifies as crucial prerequisites for good leadership.\footnote{255 Too (1998) argues that “Scholars have conventionally articulated what they perceive to be Cyrus’ fulfillment of the ideals set out at the beginning of the work in terms of his Socratic qualities. So Cyrus displays self-control, moderation, physical stamina, engages in dialogue and elenchus: in short, he is what Socrates would have been if he were the philosopher-king of the ideal state. Yet it is doubtful whether Socratic pedagogy can be transferred in this manner to Xenophon's Persia. The Cyropaedia is a narrative about the failure of Cyrus' Persia to live up to the ideal of the pedagogical state. It is an account of how the inadequate education of a future leader, Cyrus, leads to the vitiation and perversion of the political structure, particularly as regards the relationship of the ruler to those he rules. The Persian ruler achieves the complete and utter enslavement of his subjects and in doing so he can only call into question his own authority as the state's father-teacher” (301). It is here that I diverge from Too's argument about why Cyrus' empire fails. Too seems to see Cyrus as well-intentioned but ultimately educated in such a way that he harms his followers when attempting to organize his empire to help them. As I argue especially in Chapters Three through Five, I do not find Cyrus in the least well-intentioned or insufficiently educated: he knows exactly what he is doing and does so because he derives personal benefit from the exploitation of his subjects. Too's ultimate conclusion, that “the Greek polis, above all Athens, is the realised pedagogical state, while the philosopher, most obviously Socrates—perhaps together with the philosopher’s biographer, Xenophon—is its ideal citizen and leader. Pedagogy is thus the trope which articulates the political and cultural superiority of the Attic democratic state by inviting the replacement of Persia by Athens and of Cyrus by Socrates” (302), also seems to be problematic. If Cyrus may be associated with Critias, as I argue in my conclusion, then Too's ideal teacher, Socrates, and ideal state, Athens, have historically attempted and failed to either sublimate Critias' vices or protect themselves from him, respectively. If Sparto-republican paleo-Persia, monarcho-tyrannical Media, and open and democratic Athens have all failed to reform or eliminate Critias/Cyrus, one may conclude that traditional constitutions are lacking something necessary for men like Cyrus.} His decline in moderation is not, it must be said, all-encompassing. He does not become a sex maniac—his attitude towards human companionship remains, as always, uncomfortably clinical and detached.\footnote{256 Cyrus' reaction to Cyaxares’ offer of his daughter—Cyrus' cousin—in marriage is emotionless (H.5.20). Cyrus' cousin is sweet and seems to love Cyrus: Cyaxares says that “whenever anyone should ask her whom she would marry, she used to say, 'Cyrus’” (H.5.19). Compare this with what Cyrus says when offered her hand in marriage: “I wish to concur with you on these things in conformity with the judgment of my father and mother” (H.5.20). It is not coincidental, I think, that this appearance of Cyrus’ future wife, her first, is also her last appearance in the text. The reader is not allowed to see how the relationship between husband and wife develops, to see what Cyrus’ wife thinks of him as a husband after a year or two of marriage. She does not even visit Cyrus on his deathbed (H.7.5) which may tell us all we need to know about what she thinks of her husband.} He does not sleep excessively. He does not become lazy or a drunk. However, Socrates makes it clear that the excellence required for a good leader consists of moderation in all prerequisites, not merely most. Cyrus no longer meets the
qualifications of being a good leader.\textsuperscript{257}

\textbf{The Epilogue}

I have thus far argued two things: first, that Cyrus’ Neo-Persian constitution grants him absolute control over the minds and souls of the \textit{entimoi}; second, that Cyrus ceased to be moderate at some point. According to Socrates’ criterion, Cyrus can no longer be a good leader. I now discuss the aftermath of Cyrus’ death, which testimony proves that the effect Cyrus’ innovations have had on the virtue of his followers was deleterious. For many decades Cyrus wielded absolute control over the culture and society of his empire and in particular that of the \textit{entimoi} who were under his direct supervision. The \textit{entimoi} throughout his reign were obedient to their king; yet, once Cyrus dies, everything immediately collapses. The Neo-Persian empire begins to dissolve, nations revolt, brother fights brother, and moderation—or its trappings—is instantly abandoned by everyone. On the one hand, political turmoils following the death of a king is not unusual: consider the confusion resulting from the death of Cambyses II in Herodotos or the civil war resulting from the death of Darius II in the \textit{Anabasis}.\textsuperscript{258} Yet, in the \textit{Cyropaideia} the death of Cambyses in Persia, the death of Astyages in Media, and the death of Cyaxares in Media all result in law and order. Similarly, there is no indication that internal instability followed the deaths of Cambyses’ father or Astyages’ father. The death of these five kings

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{257}] These examples explain why I would hesitate to agree with Higgens (1977), when he says that “Unlike Kyaxares, Cyrus does not equate kingship with the license to be regal. He does not care for dissipation but wants to provide the motivating and controlling spirit for everything. He is at once the nonpareil and the model for his subordinates” (53). Although Higgens here presents the majority opinion, I would argue that, at least towards the end of the \textit{Cyropaideia}, Cyrus ceases to show the moderation that once, perhaps, distinguished him from Cyaxares. I would rather suggest, as Higgens (1977) does, that “becoming a good man is no guarantee that one will remain so, unless care is taken through to the end” (55), although I would suggest that Cyrus does not live up to the high standard he claims for himself.
\item[\textsuperscript{258}] Herodotos, 3.67 ff.; \textit{Ana.}, A.1.1-4.
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did not prompt the collapse of virtue and society, yet the death of Cyrus did. This would suggest that whatever changes Cyrus produced in his society, they were responsible for its collapse upon his death. There is no other explanation, as the narrator makes clear:

“ἐπεὶ μέντοι Κῦρος ἐτελεύτησεν, εὐθὺς μὲν αὐτοῦ οἱ παῖδες ἐστασίαζον, εὐθὺς δὲ πόλεις καὶ ἑθνη ἀφίσταντο, πάντα δ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἔτρέποντο (When Cyrus died, however, his sons immediately fell into dissension, cities and nations immediately revolted, and everything took a turn for the worse).” 259 This happened immediately: there is no time for intervening malicious forces to miraculously ruin the perfect society Cyrus had created. 260

Erich Gruen argues that the epilogue—rather than proving the corruption of Cyrus’ reforms or the inferiority of Cyrus’ successors—“subjects alternative images to ridicule.” 261 Xenophon “stole a march on potential critics” by taking the “opportunity to caricature contemporary stereotypes.” 262 This is unlikely, as I argue below. The problems that the narrator identifies with contemporary Persian society are either continuations of

259 Cyr., H.8.2. My emphases. Reisert (2009) points to Xenophon’s mention of Darius and his clear belief that Cyrus was the founder of the contemporary Persian empire as evidence that “It is important […] not to overstate the negative repercussions of Cyrus’ departure from the scene” (307). He adds, “The revolt of cities and nations, which Xenophon notes second, is the natural consequence of civil war. That these revolts are eventually suppressed can be inferred” (307). I would suggest, however, that in the world of the Cyropaideia these revolts are unprecedented and shocking: never before has the death of a king—Persian, Median, or even Assyrian—led to civil war. Even the death of the old Assyrian king and the accession of his apparently brutal and tyrannical son leads not to civil war but defections alone. Even Gadatas, who was castrated by the new Assyrian king, only agrees to defect after Gobryas induces him to do so (E.3.15-16. Cf. Carlier 2010, 343). This suggests that if Cyrus had not invaded, even these defections may not have happened. This civil war is the first in Mesopotamia in the world of the Cyropaideia. Although the narrator complains of the constant instability of governments in the introduction, the history of Persia, Media, and Assyria as seen in the body of the text suggests that these problems did not plague Mesopotamia until Cyrus’ death.

260 Gray (2011) disagrees. She argues that Cyrus’ reforms are healthy but that Cyrus’ inadequate successors cannot live up to his high example (259). She compares the situation to that of the failure of Socrates to permanently rein in Alcibiades and Critias (260). It seems, however, difficult to praise a political system as worthy of imitation if, whenever someone less competent than its founder comes to command it, it collapses into years of war and mayhem.

262 Gruen (2011), 65; 64.
the innovations Cyrus personally introduced to Persian society or the direct consequences of the same. 263 If a dedication to luxurious food, for example, is a stereotype of Persian society, then it is a stereotype for which Cyrus is responsible himself. 264

After describing the immediate collapse of society upon Cyrus’ death, mentioned above, the narrator begins cataloging the various ways that Persian society disgusts him. The narrator begins with “the divine things:” that is to say, “earlier a king and those beneath him would remain firm in their oaths...and would remain firm in their agreements...” 265 This is because, previously, nobody would trust an oathbreaker because “their impiety has become known.” 266 The narrator makes reference to Tissaphernes’ betrayal of the Greek generals, saying that the generals “trusted in their former reputations, and handed themselves over, and being led up to the king, they had their heads cut off.” 267 Admittedly, Cyrus does not explicitly break any oaths in the course of

263 Azoulay (2000) also raises the issue that “Toutefois, chose étonnante, dans le dernièrè partie de l’oeuvre, Cyrus adopte des moeurs fastueuses diamétralement opposées au mode de vie simple et austère qu’il avait connu in Perse” (2). Azoulay notes that one can “lire entre les lignes” (3) as Strauss did, and interpret this “que de symboliser le pouvoir despotique dans toute sa cruauté. Dans une telle perspective, leur institutionnalisation à Babylone serait un simple clin d’œil de Xénophon à son lectorat grec” (2). However, he cautions against assuming that Xenophon would necessarily view castration as monstrous (3), and argues that “Xénophon, loin de réduire l’eunuque à l’incarnation suprême de l’horreur despotique, le conçoit comme un élément objectivement essentiel d’un régime politique digne d’une approche autonome” (3). Xenophon used historical reality “pour développer ses idées propres et poser des problèmes politique grecs” (3).

264 Reisert (2009) argues something similar. He says that “on the one hand, he emphasizes the great number of institutions and practices established by Cyrus that continue to exist in his own day; on the other, he underscores the problem of succession tot he imperial throne by observing, contrary to Herodotus, that ’cities and nations immediately revolted’ and by pointedly alluding to the usurpation of his line by Darius. These two points are intimately connected, and both of them relate to the problem of moral corruption” (307). This is why Winsor Sage (1994) is not convincing in her argument that “Xenophon’s emphasis throughout the Cyropaedia is on Cyrus as a leader worthy of wonder […]—it is on his individual virtue, not on the Persian politeia he leaves behind” (164) and so he is not responsible for the collapse that comes after his death (167). On the contrary, I would argue that the focus of attention in the epilogue is specifically on the effects the neo-Persian politeia (which Cyrus created) had on the Persians.

265 Cyr., H.8.2.

266 Cyr., H.8.2.

267 Cyr., H.8.3; H.8.3. Xenophon makes reference to relatively contemporary Persians in this section; this has been taken to mean that these problems developed later or gradually in Persian society (Gray 2011,
his life. It is worth noting, however, that the narrator twice refers to the gods in this passage, saying first that this concerns “divine things” and second that an oathbreaker is guilty of an “impiety.” Cyrus does not break an oath, but he expresses a consistent and clinical ingratitude consistent with his utilitarianism. To give a number of examples, Cyrus disobeys and humiliates his uncle Cyaxares after Cyaxares went to the effort of organizing a hunt for him; he takes advantage of his grandfather’s kindness and good nature so that he can recklessly participate in his first battle; finally, he overlooks Cyaxares’ friendliness, good nature, and the vast amounts of money he has given him to usurp his army and his throne. Many of Cyrus’ successes depend on him overlooking favors and kindnesses done him by his family; this would, conventionally, be considered ingratitude. We remember, moreover, that the School considered the most heinous crime to be ingratitude, “for they think that those who are ungrateful would be especially uncaring also about gods, as well as about parents, fatherland, and friends.” Not only is Cyrus guilty of such crimes, but his followers would have learned from his example. Cyrus succeeded partially due to ingratitude, by taking advantage of those whom he should thank: his followers, especially the entimoi, are not unaware of this. They are, while he is still alive, compelled by his harsh laws to remain loyal to the king and moderate in their behavior, but they must be aware of how Cyrus himself succeeded. If

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246-7) but the narrator provides no evidence of this. On the contrary, Persian society instantly collapses upon Cyrus’ death.
268 Due (1989) argues that Cyrus “decided to become a model for everyone to imitate” (208) in respect to his piety, yet there is more to piety than sacrificing to the gods. Cyrus’ constant ingratitude and disrespect of his relatives amounts to a disregard for divine laws that govern human nature (A.2.7).
269 Cyr., A.4.10; A.4.20; Δ.1.21.
270 Cyr., A.2.7.
able to succeed? If ingratitude leads to success, so the entimoi think, and if ingratitude leads to impiety, so the narrator claims, then it should be no surprise that the entimoi break their oaths and become untrustworthy.

The narrator’s next complaint should come as no surprise either. He says that

Before, if someone should run risks on the king’s behalf, or should make either a city or nation subordinate, or should accomplish any other noble or good thing for him, these were honored. Yet now, even if someone like Mithridates betrays his father, Ariobarzanes, and if someone like Rheomithres leaves his wife, offspring, and his friends’ children as hostages in the hands of the Egyptian king, and after transgressing the greatest oaths may seem to do something advantageous for a king, these are those who are rewarded with the greatest honors.272

Impiety, betrayal, and cruelty and the misuse of relatives go hand in hand: the kings now reward anyone who benefits them, even if the benefits are contrived through horrible betrayals such as these. But how can the narrator justifiably complain about this situation?273 He has spoken approvingly of Cyrus’ betrayal or misuse of all of his family members and dependents: Cyrus constantly abuses his uncle, Cyaxares; he lies to his

272 Cyr., H.8.4.
273 Cf. Reisert (2009), 308. Carlier (2010), “Not only is Cyrus preferred over friends, but also, thanks to his generosity, over brothers, fathers, and children. It is even more advantageous, from his perspective, that friendship for the king be the only emotional attachment in the individual. This is why eunuchs are so appreciated by Cyrus—they have no wives or children, but are entirely devoted to their benefactor” (356). Carlier (2010) later notes that “The traditions were not abandoned, they were perverted. Cyrus wanted his subjects to be mor attached to him than to each other. Mithridates, in delivering his father to Artaxerxes II and Rheomithres in leaving his wife and his children hostage to serve the king, just pushed devotion to the king to its final consequences, to the point of forgetting all familial ties” (363). The difference between Carlier’s position and mine is that he sees Cyrus’ successors as perverting his (not ideal) constitution—“As soon as Cyrus’ successors lost his virtue, decadence was inevitable” (363)—while I would argue, somewhat like Whidden (2008), 236, that it was not Cyrus’ virtue that was lost, but his ability to suppress the vicious nature of his lieutenants which he had long ago induced in them. Carlier attributes the necessary destruction of paleo-Persian paideia in the creation of Cyrus’ empire as the cause of Persia’s collapse, but as Nadon has shown, the traditional paleo-Persian paideia and constitution were destroyed by Cyrus long before his creation of the empire (91).
mother in order to get what he wants; he disobeys the legitimate order of his father, his king and superior; he manipulates Astyages.\textsuperscript{274} Again, these abuses of those who trusted and depended on him are crucial to Cyrus’ success, politically, economically, and socially. Cyrus turns betrayal and abuse into an art form: it is one of the ways he obtains what he wants. While Cyrus still lived, he even deliberately inculcated this behavior in the entimoi.\textsuperscript{275} On top of this, if the entimoi look up to Cyrus as a role model, or if they envy him his achievements and want to emulate his methods, it should be no surprise that the betrayal and misuse of close friends and relatives should become dominant.

Another complaint is that Cyrus’ successors will do anything in pursuit of ever more money:

As for money, they have become more unjust in the following way: they round up not only those who have done many injustices but not also those who have done nothing, and they compel them to pay out money without just grounds. Consequently, those who seem to have many possessions are no less afraid than those who have committed many injustices.\textsuperscript{276}

This is the consequence of Cyrus’ manipulation of his soldiers, starting from first speech to his army: at the very beginning of his campaigns, he attempted to motivate his men into enthusiastically obeying him by encouraging the avarice inherent in everyone. He tells his men that “οἵ τε αὖ τὰ πολεμικὰ ἀσκοῦντες οὐχ ὡς μαχόμενοι μηδέποτε παύσωνται, τοῦτ᾽ ἐκπονοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ νομίζουσι καὶ οὗτοι τὰ πολεμικὰ ἀγαθοὶ γενόμενοι πολὺν μὲν ὄλβον, πολλὴν δὲ εὐδαιμονίαν, μεγάλας δὲ τιμὰς καὶ ἑαυτοῖς καὶ πόλει

\textsuperscript{274} Cyr., B.4.6; A.3.15; C.1.4-5; C.1.45.
\textsuperscript{275} Cyrus’ rigged court system (H.1.16-19) and ubiquitous network of informants (H.2.10-12) attempted to destroy normal human bonds to keep the entimoi disorganized and friendly toward him alone.
\textsuperscript{276} Cyr., H.8.6.
perìápsein (Those in turn who practice military affairs do not work at them in order that they never cease fighting, but these too do so believing that by becoming good in military affairs they shall secure much wealth, much happiness, and great honors both for themselves and for their city).”

He uses similar arguments to motivate the commoners and even uses cash to reward squads in his army that trained effectively. Cyrus consistently motivates his army by promising them—and rewarding them—with cash, increasingly large amounts as his successes against the Assyrians grow. It seems clear that greed becomes worked into the fabric of the Persian army.

The narrator, moreover, complains because Cyrus’ successors despoil everyone, friends and enemies, of their money. Yet the narrator does not object when Cyrus announces to his followers that

νόμος γὰρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις άδιός ἐστιν, ὅταν πολεμοῦσιν πόλις ἀλῷ, τῶν ἑλόντων εἶναι καὶ τὰ σώματα τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ τὰ χρήματα. οὐκ οὖν ἀδικίᾳ γε ἔξετε ὅ τι ἂν ἔχητε, ἀλλὰ φιλανθρωπίᾳ οὐκ ἀφαιρήσεσθε, ἢν τι ἐὰν ἔχειν αὐτούς.

It is an eternal law among all human beings that when a city is captured by those at war, both the bodies of those in the city and their valuables belong to those who take it. It will not be by injustice, then, that you will have whatever you may have, but it will be by benevolence that you refrain from taking something away, if you allow them to have anything.

The problem must therefore be that Cyrus’ successors are treating friends like enemies, exploiting loyal—quickly perhaps not so loyal—subjects in the same way they would enemies. Cambyses the Elder warned Cyrus that this was a possibility in the conversation when he revealed to his son his capacity to harm in his discussion of the failed teacher of the homotimoi: “Some [children], then, having natural gifts for both deceiving and getting

277 Cyr., A.5.9.
278 Cyr., B.1.15; B.1.24.
279 Cyr., E.5.73.
the advantage, and perhaps also not lacking in a natural gift for the love of gain, did not abstain from trying to take advantage even of their friends.”"\textsuperscript{280} According to this story, the power to harm others combined with the immaturity, lack of empathy, or irresponsibility of a child make for a dangerous combination. Yet this type of behavior is what the \textit{entimoi} have seen Cyrus do, in particular after the settlement in Babylon. He arranged the \textit{entimoi} to be powerless and to work for Cyrus’ best interest, not their own, as I have argued above. Cyrus also proved to Croesus that he considers—and treats—the possessions of his followers as his own because he can borrow their money whenever he wishes: “[Hystaspas] is already one treasury for us, Croesus. Examine the others and calculate how much money is ready if I need to use any.”\textsuperscript{281} None of this displays empathy or concern for his subjects: they are to be used—explicitly so—to benefit and stabilize Cyrus’ throne.\textsuperscript{282} Cyrus’ successors have simply taken what Cyrus did to its natural conclusion: like Cyrus they treat their subjects as resources to exploit, only more openly; like Cyrus they dispossess their subjects of their money permanently, instead of temporarily. As Whidden says, “The fact that some of the hounds that had once served Cyrus turn on one another when their shepherd is no longer watching over them, far from being surprising or shocking, is actually quite logical and even predictable.”\textsuperscript{283} This is a difference of degree.

Finally, the narrator complains that the Persians after Cyrus have become more

\textsuperscript{280} \textit{Cyr.}, A.6.32.
\textsuperscript{281} \textit{Cyr.}, H.2.18.
\textsuperscript{282} \textit{Cyr.}, H.4.11.
\textsuperscript{283} Whidden (2008), 236. Johnson (2005) uses a similar argument, although the animals to whom he compares Cyrus’ Persians are Centaurs (177 ff.).
effeminate and soft than the Persians of Cyrus’ day. He says that

In the first place, it is not sufficient for them that their beds be softly spread: They even set the feet of their beds on carpets, so that instead of a hard floor resisting, soft carpets yield. Moreover, as for foods baked for their meals, they have not omitted anything previously discovered; rather, they are forever contriving new ones. So too with sauces, for they possess inventors of both. It does not suffice for them in winter that their head, body, and feet be covered, but they also have lined sleeves and gloves for their hands and fingers. Nor indeed in summer does the shade of either trees or rocks suffice for them, but people stand by and contrive additional shade for them.

Whether the narrator is being genuinely disingenuous here or is being forgetful is impossible to answer. What is important is that several of these luxuries, which the narrator terms unacceptable, were introduced into Neo-Persian culture by Cyrus himself moments ago in Book H. The narrator complains that the Persians forever contrive new dishes for their gourmet meals and that the Persians are obsessed with sauces and bakers, yet the first appearance of Persian gourmet bakers and saucemakers in this text is when Cyrus himself provides sauciers, boulangers, and poissoniers for his palace and his army. The Persians shamefully—from a Socratic perspective—dress in warm clothes during the winter, yet it was Cyrus who initiated the tradition of wearing purple and gold cloaks, platform shoes, and rouge. It was also Cyrus who initiated the practice of rotating between palaces to avoid inclement weather. If the hyper-masculine Cyrus felt it

284 This at least is delayed indignation. When the narrator describes Astyages’ clothes early on in the text, he notes that “among the Persians who are at home, their clothes are even now much more ordinary” (A.3.2). This comment can be seen as somewhat misleading when the reader much later learns that all the important, affluent, and politically connected Persians dwell in Babylon, leaving only the remnants of the impoverished farmer-commoners behind in Persia.

285 Cyr., H.8.16-17.

286 “At this point, the Indian ocean bounded his empire to the east; the Black Sea to the north; Cyrus and Egypt to the west; and Ethiopia to the south. The limits of these borders are uninhabitable because of
necessary to dress more effeminately than is appropriate for the wife of a *kaloskagathos* in order to impress in public—should we believe this justification—there is nevertheless only a fine line between wearing effeminate apparel in public and effeminate apparel in private.  

Cyrus’ successors combined the two by completing the transformation of the appearance of the *entimos* that Cyrus initiated. These luxuries are not degradations of Cyrus’ reforms or indicative of the disappointing decline of Persia after his death: they are his reforms, either his reforms unchanged—Cyrus instructs the *entimoi* to dress in fancy clothes to awe the commoners—or his reforms taken to their natural conclusions—the *entimoi* now wear fancy clothes to stay warm in the winter as well as to awe the commoners.

The behavior of Cyrus’ successors mimics Cyrus’ own behavior: they treat their subordinates like he treated his subordinates.  

As Due puts it, the (good) leader “is there heat, in one case; by cold in another; by water in another; and by lack of water in another. Making his habitation in their center, he himself spent seven months around wintertime in Babylon, for this place was warm. Around springtime, he spent three months in Susa. The peak of the summer heat he spent in Ecbatana, for two months. Acting in this manner, they say that he always spent his time in the warmth and the coolness of spring” (H.6.21-22). Lincoln (2001), in analyzing this passage, concludes that Cyrus “is then supposed to situate himself at that place which is most beneficial for his health and that of the empire. Two operations permit him to do this: First, he remains within his central provinces (Babylon, Elam, Persia), avoiding all extremes of the compass and climate. Second, within this vital center he shifts his residence in a regular pattern of rotation, designed to offset effects of the seasons [...] This is not simply a question of seeking pleasant vacation spots, for all that it may have had that effect” (315). Lincoln raises this passage to make conclusions about the Persian cosmology (315-6), but I would say this is significant behavior from a Socratic perspective. This is the precise inability to endure hot and cold weather that Socrates singles out as representative of immoderation (*Mem.*, B.1.1). Socrates also states that “it [is] gross negligence that so many men are untrained to withstand heat and cold,” and that “one who is going to rule must adapt himself to bear them [i.e. heat and cold] lightly” (B.1.6). Cyrus, by migrating with the seasons, shows that he no longer is adapted to bear them lightly.

287 Perhaps his sole and genuine motivation in wearing Median robes is to bewitch the commoners. However, as a child he was “pleased…and exceedingly delighted” (A.3.3) with Median apparel. The possibility remains that he wears these clothes not only to bewitch the commoners but to indulge his own luxury and vanity.

288 Cf. Reisert (2009), 308. Whidden (2007a) adds that “As the widespread decadence at the *Cyropaedia’s* conclusion suggests, it is far easier for a people to abandon moderation than it is for them to get it back. With Cyrus looking on, the Persians pretended to be moderate, because that was what he commanded. But in truth they were only play-acting to please their leader (8.1.33). Their outward behavior was moderate, but their hearts were anything but. Cyrus’s attempt after his revolution to make the Persians
all the time, implicitly in all the different subjects, because he is what everything is
supposed to lead to […] The leader must himself be like what he wants his men to
become.” The leader provides an example for his followers. Thus we should be
unsurprised if his diadochoi exploit their followers just as Cyrus exploited his. The
money of the entimoi belongs to the king whether it is Cyrus or Cambyses II: the
difference is the sugar-coating Cyrus applies by calling it ‘borrowing.’ Cyrus’ chefs,
bakers, robes, jewelry, and makeup are all thoroughly incorporated into the Neo-Persian
lifestyle. Families turn against each other, husbands betray wives and children, and sons
betray their fathers. By doing so they imitate Cyrus’ betrayals. Impiety runs rampant, the
consequence of widespread ingratitude produced by Cyrus’ own policies and actions.
These characteristics did not suddenly or inexplicably appear in the Persian people the
instant that Cyrus died; the Persian people had learned well from Cyrus and had
restrained themselves from imitating him only because of his demand of absolute
moderation, enforced by spies, courts, and punishments, from the entimoi. This is where
Gruen’s argument fails to convince: the entimoi and Cyrus’ sons did not diverge from him
but imitated him. Their fear of Cyrus died with him; they find themselves suddenly able
to imitate the man who had always forbidden them from imitating him. Certainly Paleo-
Persia was not perfect, but the Paleo-Persians lived in harmony and did not plot against

moderate once again was ultimately negated by his unwillingness to codify his will in a system of laws
that could be passed onto his heirs” (566). Whidden also says (2008) that because Cyrus views his
subjects as animals, and treats them as such, “the fact that many of his subjects become even less
humane and virtuous after he dies, far from being a surprising aberration inconsistent with the bulk of
the Cyropædia, as some have suggested, much less a spurious addition clumsily tacked on by a second-
rate author, is actually the logical outcome of his policy of dehumanizing both his enemies and his
subjects that he enacted from the beginning” (228). I am unconvinced by the emphasis Whidden places
on the importance of Cyrus’ animalization of his followers, but I do agree with his claim that the causes
of Persia’s collapse are not disconnected to Cyrus' treatment of his followers.

289 Due (1989), 95.
each other. Certainly the *homotimoi* exploited the commoners, but it was a mild exploitation compared to the outright theft and abuse of Cyrus. Certainly the *homotimoi* were not perfectly virtuous, but they were not the society of criminals produced by Cyrus. Carlier notes the “ambiguity of Cyrus’ ’benevolence’ towards dependent people: he certainly tries to get their gratitude, but even more so to make them weak and to maintain them in subjection.”290 I would add that Cyrus’ benevolence crippled not only the Assyrian (and other conquered) commoners, but even the neo-Persian *entimoi*. He made them absolutely dependent on him through a combination of carrots and sticks; he forced them to imitate him as he declined into decadence in his later years. After corrupting them, after eliminating their independence, after forcing them into bizarre social structures for his own benefit, he sets them free with his death. It should be no surprise that everything collapses.

**Conclusions**

In Field’s discussion of the effects Cyrus has on the Persians, she notes that “It is hard to deny that Old Persia was more just and ultimately more impressive than the new empire, in spite of its various inadequacies.” 291 I would agree and, in this chapter, I have taken such a realization to its logical conclusion. I analyzed the character of Cyrus by making use of previously unused comparanda: I applied the definitions of ’the good leader’ advanced by Socrates in the *Memorabilia* to the figure of Cyrus presented in the *Cyropaideia*. In applying these criteria, I investigated whether Cyrus actually attained the benefits Socrates expects a good leader to produce for his followers. As a result, I

290 Carlier (2010), 350.
291 Field (2012), 734.
concluded that in both respects Cyrus falls far short of what we would expect of a good leader. He, at best, effectively preserves the financial status quo of the *entimoi* and perhaps worsens it. The consequences of Cyrus’ actions are far more disappointing in respect to the virtue of the *entimoi*: not only does Cyrus not improve the virtue of his elites, but his actions directly lead to the *entimoi*’s total collapse into moral crapulence. His reforms, the absolute control he seized, guided by his own moral degradation after the settlement in Babylon, were in effect contagious; they infected the minds of the *entimoi* with selfishness and greed. The obvious conclusion we should reach at the end of this investigation is that Cyrus, in failing to satisfy either criterion, is not a good leader according to the Socratic definition. The serious consequences of Cyrus’ reforms lead us to further conclude, again obvious though it may be, that Cyrus is in fact a *bad* leader. This realization should provoke a considerable amount of perplexity in any reader. If the *Cyropaideia* is purportedly an account of an ideal leader and if the narrator of the *Cyropaideia* explicitly claims in the introduction that Cyrus is a good leader and model for imitation, yet Cyrus fails to live up to even the most straightforward Socratic definitions of a good leader, then this text is not as straightforward as it claims to be.

The reader should realize that he has been tricked—by someone. The Cyrus he believed he was reading about, Cyrus the role model, was a fraud: he is actually a bad leader masquerading as a good leader. In reaction to this trick, the reader’s first reaction should be to consider how this trick was perpetrated: the most obvious target for investigation at this stage is the narrator, for it was he who first claimed that Cyrus was worthy of imitation. It is the narrator who, through his introduction and intercessions into
the text, repeatedly assures the reader of Cyrus’ goodness and virtues as a man and as a leader. That is to say, the reader should realize that the narrator’s historical presentation of what Cyrus says, does and believes does not agree with the narrator’s interpretation of what Cyrus says, does and believes: he claims that Cyrus is a model for good leadership, yet Cyrus’ actions and their consequences do not satisfy the Socratic definition of a good leader. This is the problem we will address in the next chapter.
Chapter Two: Narration

In this chapter I suggest an explanation for the problematic aspects I have identified in the narrator’s account of Cyrus. At various stages in the Cyropaideia, the narrator makes contradictory arguments, puts forward incredible interpretations of the events he describes, and remains noticeably silent about significant events in the course of Cyrus’ life. I argue that the source of these contradictions is the narrator’s inherent unreliability caused by his specific motivations in composing this text. In order to engage with this problem, I rely on several methodological models. I first engage with another unreliable narrator in the Xenophontic corpus: Socrates’ accuser, responded to by the narrator of the Memorabilia, behaved as an unreliable narrator in his prosecution, his one-sided presentation of Socrates’ life, through his dependence on hostile interpretations, omissions, and vaguely ‘true’ lies in his successful attempt to prove Socrates’ guilt to the jury. I focus on how the narrator of the Memorabilia responds to the accuser’s unreliable narration by identifying the Memorabilia’s narrator’s four methods to expose the accuser-narrator’s narrative as hostile and unreliable. The Memorabilia’s narrator’s methods prove useful in engaging with the narrator of the Cyropaideia. I next discuss the modern theoretical discussion of the unreliable narrator, siding myself with Booth’s rhetorical, instead of Nünning’s cognitive, approach. I apply to the Cyropaideia’s narrator not only Booth’s schematic for identifying whether a narrator is unreliable but also the Memorabilia’s narrator’s approach to narratorial unreliability. I conclude that the
Cyropaideia’s narrator is unreliable in terms of two of the four basic types of unreliability as defined by Hansen. As Booth urges, I then consider the reasons behind the narrator’s unreliability, and trace it to what the narrator says about his motivations in composing the text. I conclude that the narrator’s various inconsistencies, contradictions, and incredible interpretations are all consistent with his respect, if not awe, for Cyrus prior to researching the Cyropaideia: his impressed attitude leads him to overlook or explain away (for his own benefit as much as the reader’s) the aspects of Cyrus’ behavior that contradict his initial belief and mission.

Before I begin, however, I must address the awkward (at least unwieldy in English) terminology I use throughout my dissertation to refer to the various narrators of Xenophon’s texts. As unwieldy as it may be to insist on referring to the narrator of the Memorabilia as 'the narrator of the Memorabilia’ and the narrator of the Cyropaideia as 'the narrator of the Cyropaideia,’ I suspect that the equivocation of these various narrators with each other or with ‘Xenophon’ is misleading. The universal assumption is that all these narrators are Xenophon speaking in his own voice. Since the narrator has

Most modern scholars—for example, Nadon (2001), 27; Gray (2011), 80; Tatum (1989), 189; Gera (1993), 225; Due (1989), 31—refer to the narrator as ‘Xenophon.’ Gera (1993) states that the text is “its author’s vehicle for developing and discussing his own cherished ideas and interests (2).” Beyond this, Gera identifies characters when they say ‘Xenophontic’ things as serving as Xenophon’s spokesman, calling Cyrus “a mouthpiece for his author’s ideas” (114) and saying of Gobryas that his “reflections are intended, of course, to present Xenophon’s own views” (172). In these cases, Gera effectively argues that the opinions of characters, the narrator, and Xenophon are all three identical. Gray (2011) is frustrated by ironic readings of the text because they make Xenophon “unable to speak plainly in any of them or to praise anyone sincerely at any point” (62). Gray (2011)'s fundamental assumption is that the narrator in all of Xenophon’s texts is Xenophon speaking in his own voice; although she places such weight on it, she does not make an argument for this position. Luccioni (1948) says that the Cyropaideia is “le reflet exact de la vie et des idées de l’auteur, et, pour ainsi dire, l’aboutissement de sa pensée” (212). Perrotta (2003) notes that Xenophon contradicts himself, advocating traditional closed agricultural economics in the Oikonomikos and new mercantile and open economics in the Poroi (191-2); he attributes this to Xenophon “writing in a phase of crisis and uncertainty between two diverging prospects” (193). Irvin Oost (1977), claims that Ischomachus is Xenophon’s mouthpiece in the Oikonomikos (226) and that Socrates is Xenophon’s mouthpiece in the Memorabilia (226); his reaction to this assertion shows the problem of this approach. When he identifies a number of inconsistencies
until now always been assumed to be Xenophon, the narrator has never before been considered as a character independent of Xenophon. Yet I would suggest that three crucial points signal that Xenophon’s use of narrators is not so straightforward. First, every single primary narrator in the Xenophontic corpus is anonymous. Second, Xenophon chooses not to identify the narrator with the character of 'Xenophon’ when he appears in the Memorabilia, Anabasis, and (perhaps) the Hellenica. Third, Xenophon published at least one of his texts, the Anabasis, under a pseudonym, further complicating the simple identification of the narrator with 'Xenophon.’ Xenophon thus attempts to prevent, as much as possible, any attempt to identify the narrators—even the authorship in one case—of his works with himself. Thus, more important than my desire to respect Xenophon’s narratorial anonymity is my concern that by simply mashing all the anonymous Xenophontic narrators into one character which we then label 'Xenophon,’ we may be mistakenly waving away something key to understanding these texts. This is why I decline to label the narrators of any of Xenophon’s works as 'Xenophon;' this is also why I am reluctant to identify Xenophon’s various narrator’s as the 'same’ character, between Ischomachus’ treatment of his wife and Socrates’ discussion of women, he attributes it to Xenophon’s alleged internal struggle between his native upper-class prejudices and Socratic philosophy (236). This disappointing conclusion, not unique to Irvin Oost (e.g. Gera 1993, 299; Due 1989, 60), —that the failure of scholars to extract a coherent message from Xenophon is due to Xenophon’s incoherence—effectively discourages any further attempt to obtain coherent meaning from Xenophon by claiming it impossible.

293 MacLaren (1934) discusses the attribution in the Hellenica of the authorship of the Anabasis to a ‘Themistogenes of Syracuse,’ and concludes that “that Xenophon, in writing his historical works, followed certain general principles. He did not hesitate to make personal comments and render subjective judgments, but he did feel that a historian could not, with propriety, mention himself as taking part in the actual events of the narrative” (243). MacLaren also discusses that the “leader of Cyrus’ former troops” mentioned at Hellenica G.2.7, and suggests that Xenophon applies this anonym in order to conceal himself (242).

294 MacLaren (1934), 242.

295 To use Bal’s (1997) terminology, all of Xenophon’s narrators are anonymous, external focalizors (148-9): these narrators have no connection to the events of their texts, even when Xenophon appears as a character in their narration.
or to claim that the political and philosophical positions advocated by these various characters are necessarily consistent. Although this compels me to refer prolixly to these characters as 'the narrator of the Cyropaideia' and 'the narrator of the Agesilaus,' I am addressing these texts on Xenophon’s terms by doing so. This will prove useful.

The Memorabilia

The narrator of the Memorabilia opens the text in frustration. He cannot understand how Socrates’ jurors were persuaded to condemn him to death: they were somehow convinced by his accuser that he “ἀδικεῖ [...]. οὖς μὲν ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζων, ἕτερα δὲ καὶνὰ δαιμόνια εἰσφέρων: ἀδικεῖ δὲ καὶ τοὺς νέους διαφθείρων (is guilty of rejecting the gods acknowledged by the state and of bringing in strange deities: he is also guilty of corrupting the youth).” Yet the Socrates the narrator knew did not reject Athens’ gods, introduce novel gods, or corrupt youths. The narrator begins the Memorabilia by identifying an obvious divergence between the historical Socrates and version of Socrates the jury was persuaded was real: the real Socrates is innocent, but the Socrates created by the accuser’s narration deserved execution in the minds of the jurors.

Socrates’ accuser presented him in such a way that he appeared to be an evil man harmful to Athens when, in reality, he was a good man and beneficial to Athens. The events, actions, and sayings of his life were reinterpreted to provide the necessary

296 Edelstein (1961) says of the similar problem of the Platonic corpus that “Refusing to assume responsibility for any of the views which he proposes, [Plato] gives the impression that the story he is telling is not his. What is the reason for this self-effacement, this anonymity, which he maintains throughout his literary work [...]? It is no wonder that this question has exercised the interpreters of Plato. To discover its answer is surely prerequisite to an understanding of Plato’s work, to an appreciation of the specific form in which he presents his philosophy” (1). Xenophon is no different in respect to this, yet the important issue of narratorial identity has not similarly exercised the interpreters of Xenophon.

297 Mem., A.1.1.
evidence to condemn him: he was Alcibiades’ teacher, so he shared in the guilt for Alcibiades’ crimes.\textsuperscript{298} His opposition to vicious behavior, which used poetry to prove his point, was taken as evidence of his support of tyranny.\textsuperscript{299} His desire to educate the ignorant became a desire to imprison the ignorant.\textsuperscript{300} The time he spent with youths educating them in virtue was used to insinuate that he corrupted them.\textsuperscript{301} Socrates’ virtue, benefit (to others) and justice were manipulated by his accuser into proof of his viciousness, harm (to others) and injustice.

The \textit{Memorabilia}’s narrator spends the first two chapters of Book A arguing against the accuser’s specific indictments. In the section that follows, I discuss four methods the narrator of the \textit{Memorabilia} uses to rebut the inaccuracies of the accuser-narrator's speech about the life and deeds of Socrates. In doing so, I am not interested in evaluating the particular quality or relevance of the narrator of the \textit{Memorabilia}'s arguments, or evaluating whether he persuasively or successfully proves that Socrates is innocent. What I am solely interested in is how the narrator of the \textit{Memorabilia} chooses to respond to an account of a man's life that the narrator claims is inaccurate. If, as I argue below, the narrator of the \textit{Cyropaideia} recounts Cyrus' life in such a way that, as I will argue, his account is full of inaccuracies, contradictions, and impossibilities, this would put the narrator of the \textit{Cyropaideia} in a position analogous to that of the accuser-narrator from the \textit{Memorabilia}. The narrator of the \textit{Memorabilia} accuses the accuser-narrator of a biased and untrue account of Socrates' life; I will accuse the narrator of the \textit{Cyropaideia}...

\textsuperscript{298} Mem., A.2.12 ff.  
\textsuperscript{299} Mem., A.2.56 ff.  
\textsuperscript{300} Mem., A.2.49 ff.  
\textsuperscript{301} Mem., A.1.4. ff.

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of telling a similarly unreliable story about Cyrus. The narrator of the *Memorabilia* uses four different methods for rejecting the accuser-narrator's account and proving it false; for my part, I adopt the narrator of the *Memorabilia*’s four methods as Xenophontic models for dealing with a narrator who is unreliable.

The situation the narrator of the *Memorabilia* is responding to at the beginning of the text may be broken down into its structural components: a man has told a (kind of) biography of a third party to an audience. What he says to the audience is not the full biography of the third party, of course, but it is a partial biography that hits on the relevant details of the third party’s life. The story-teller, the accuser-narrator, has a specific political motivation in telling this story: he believes that Socrates is harmful to Athenian society. The accuser-narrator’s prosecution is, then, a form of biography: he tells the audience about Socrates’ life in such a way as to show that Socrates has committed the crimes he is accused of. The accuser-narrator’s story is not completely fictional but is based on facts: he cannot tell the jury, for example, that Socrates was one of the Thirty or that he personally executed Athenian citizens during the tyranny—his story would not be believed. Whatever individual jurors may think of Socrates, they knew that Socrates wasn’t a member of the Thirty and that he did not stalk the Piraeus

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302 It is an open question whether the narrator of the *Memorabilia* believes that the accuser consciously or unconsciously altered the truth about Socrates. Two things, although certainly not definitive, lead me to suspect that the *Memorabilia*’s narrator believed that it was unconscious. Unlike Socrates in the *Apology*, the *Memorabilia*’s narrator does not allege that the accuser caused the witnesses against Socrates to perjure themselves (*Apology*, 24). Secondly, the vast majority of the accusations the accuser made against Socrates, as can be understood from the *Memorabilia*’s narrator’s reactions, are matters of interpretation and suggestive innuendo; that is to say, the accuser did not allege a wildly unrealistic or invented account of Socrates’ life, but accused him of things such as teaching tyranny when claiming to teach virtue. Both of these suggest that Socrates’ accuser unconsciously, rather than consciously, twisted the facts of Socrates’ life into something vile; he argued in good faith but was wrong. The *Memorabilia*’s narrator’s disagreements with the accuser are not a matter of what Socrates *did and said*, but concern what Socrates’ deeds and actions *mean*. 

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drenched in the blood of the innocent. Thus the story that the accuser-narrator tells must be based on what Socrates actually did. For example, we can see, from the *Memorabilia*’s narrator’s defense of Socrates, that the accuser-narrator, in his narration of Socrates’ life, mentioned Socrates’ *daimon* and his association with Alcibiades and Critias. Yet, as the *Memorabilia*’s narrator will teach us, the accuser-narrator misused these details to provide misleading evidence of Socrates’ rejection of Athenian gods and his corruption of the young. The story the accuser-narrator tells in the courtroom, the (partial) biography of Socrates’ life, was thus created and shaped by the partisan hostility of the accuser-narrator: he took the fabula of Socrates’ life and narrated it through the lens of his deep antipathy for Socrates. In his bias, he took Socrates’ beneficial statements about ignorance and education and turned them into praise of tyranny; he presented Socrates’ reliance on divination as hatred for Athenian religion. Socrates’ fabula, a sequence of events lacking inherent interpretation, becomes a scathing biographical narrative that proved Socrates’ crimes against Athens. Although this narrative is not presented in the *Memorabilia*, the accuser-narrator’s biased biography of Socrates, or at least the points of especial bias in his presentation, can be reconstructed from the *Memorabilia*’s narrator’s rebuttals. The *Memorabilia*’s narrator rejects this hostile narrative by (re)interpreting the fabula of Socrates’ life to prove his innocence. When the accuser-narrator’s interpretation depicts support for tyranny, the *Memorabilia*’s narrator’s shows a desire to educate the ignorant. When the accuser-narrator points to a close bond with Critias, the *Memorabilia*’s narrator uses the same facts to show that no such bond existed. The *Memorabilia*’s narrator turns the accuser-narrator’s methods against him to reject his
arguments. I will not evaluate the quality or the persuasiveness of the arguments of the
Memorabilia’s narrator, but merely analyze how he responds to the unreliable narration
the accuser-narrator exhibited during Socrates’ trial.  

This is to say, the Memorabilia’s narrator attributes his motivation in composing
the text to the speech of the accuser-narrator. He desires to correct the incorrect account
of Socrates’ life advanced by the accuser-narrator during the trial. Since the
Memorabilia’s narrator claims to be responding to the accuser-narrator’s prosecution, I
argue that when he defends, for example, Socrates’ idiosyncratic terminology concerning
divination, his daimon, he is implicitly responding to a particular allegation made by
the accuser-narrator during the trial, even though the accuser-narrator’s narration does not
appear in the Memorabilia. Whether the Memorabilia’s narrator is actually responding
to key points in the accuser-narrator’s narration or making it up as he goes along is
irrelevant. Because the narrator of the Memorabilia’s claims that he is responding to the
unreliable narration of the accuser-narrator, I analyze how he responds to the narration of

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303 Socrates may be guilty of the charges on which he was convicted, as he probably was; in this section,
all I am interested in is how the Memorabilia’s narrator responds to the unreliable narration of the
accuser-narrator.
304 Mem., A.1.1.
305 Mem., A.1.4.
306 Gray sees something similar happening here. She says (2004b) that “Memorabilia’s anonymous
internal primary narrator embarks on his tale because he wonders what arguments persuaded the jurors
to condemn a man like Socrates. The first part of the work (I.1-2) refutes the charges with arguments in
defensive courtroom mode, confronting the opposition (from I.2.9 onwards) and illustrating some points
with dialogues (I.2.29-46); while the rest (I.3.1-4.8) offers a sequence of dialogues, framed and
sometimes interspersed with narrative, as well as some plainer reports, such as the account of the limit
of Socrates’ instruction (4.7), which serve as more positive proofs of Socrates’ virtuous instruction of
others” (380). My emphasis. She later categorizes this section of the work as “refutation of the charges,
followed by positive proof of Socrates’ virtue in a sequence of conversations” (381). This is precisely
the behavior I am focusing on in my analysis of this section of the Memorabilia: the narrator sees that
the accuser-narrator has said untrue things about Socrates in the course of proving to the court that he
deserved to be sentenced to death; he responds to this as if he is in the courtroom himself, as Gray
notes, by offering up a number of proofs that disprove the accuser-narrator’s version of events. Whether
Socrates is guilty or not, whether the Memorabilia’s narrator is right to defend him or not—these are
irrelevant. What I am interested in is how he chooses to respond to the accuser-narrator’s prosecution.
this figure. I am interested in how the Memorabilia’s narrator responds to what he claims to be responding to, not the quality or validity of his arguments.

The narrator’s defense of Socrates makes use of several different methods. He compares Socrates’ public and private words and deeds to the Socrates created in court; he compares the obviously positive effects of Socrates’ company to Socrates’ corrupting influence argued by his accusers; he uses logical arguments, depending on common sense and reason, to detach Socrates from his association with his problem students, Alcibiades and Critias; finally, he (re)interprets certain Socratic sayings that superficially appear to support tyranny in order to prove that, esoterically, they did not.

The narrator balances the deeds of Socrates’ life against the accusations made at his trial. Even though Socrates was convicted of religious crimes, the narrator rejects this accusation by appealing to Socrates’ public and private deeds: “θύων τε γὰρ φανερός ἦν πολλάκις μὲν οἶκοι, πολλάκις δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν κοινῶν τής πόλεως βωμῶν, καὶ μαντικῇ χρώμενος οὐκ ἀφανὴς ἦν (He offered sacrifices constantly, and made no secret of it, now in his home, now at the altars of the state temples, and he made use of divination with as little secrecy).”

Moreover, Socrates spent so little time by himself that he couldn’t have organized secret anti-Athenian religious cults:

Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἐκείνος γε ἀεὶ μὲν ἦν ἐν τῷ φανερῷ· πρῶτος γὰρ εἰς τοὺς περιπάτους καὶ τὰ γυμνάσια ἦς καὶ πληθούσης ἁγοράς ἐκεί φανερός ἦν, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἀεὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ἦς ὅπου πλείστοις μέλλοι συνέσθεθαι· καὶ ἔλεγε μὲν ὡς τὸ πολύ, τοῖς δὲ βουλομένοις ἐξήν ἀκοῦειν.

Socrates lived ever in the open; for early in the morning he went to the public promenades and training-grounds; in the forenoon he was seen in the market; and the rest of the day he passed just where most people were to be met: he was generally talking and anyone might listen.

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307 Mem., A.1.2.
308 Mem., A.1.10.
The narrator thus appeals to the common knowledge Athenians had of Socrates to refute this charge. Another example of this strategy is the narrator’s use of Critias’ open hostility to Socrates when he was one of the Thirty: this well-known story—Critias tries to criminalize the Socratic method—emphasizes how out of sympathy Socrates was with his former student and contradicts the accusation that they were still colluding at the time of the Board. 309 Thus Socrates was not an anti-social figure, but always comported himself in public and private in a just and honorable way, even when it made him unpopular—as everyone knows. The story of when “βουλεύσας γάρ ποτὲ καὶ τὸν βουλευτικὸν ὄρκον ὀμόσας […] οὐκ ἠθέλησεν ἐπιψηφίσαι, ὀργιζομένου μὲν αὐτῷ τοῦ δήμου, πολλῶν δὲ καὶ δυνατῶν ἀπειλούντων (he was on the Council and had taken the counsellor’s oath […] and he refused the [illegal] motion in spite of popular rancour and the threats of many powerful persons)” proves his devotion to Athenian law even in the face of overwhelming popular pressure. 310 The narrator concludes the section rejecting the allegations of religious crimes by saying,

Θαυμάζω οὖν ὅπως ποτὲ ἐπείσθησαν Αθηναῖοι Σωκράτην περὶ θεοὺς μὴ σωφρονεῖν, τὸν ἄσεβές μὲν οὐδὲν ποτὲ περὶ τῶν θεῶν οὔτ' εἰπόντα οὔτε πράξαντα, τοιαῦτα δὲ καὶ λέγοντα καὶ πράττοντα περὶ θεῶν λέγοντα καὶ πράττοντα ἐις τὸν ἄσεβέστατον.

I wonder, then, how the Athenians can have been persuaded that Socrates was a freethinker, when he never said or did anything contrary to sound religion, and his utterances about the gods and his behavior towards them were the words and actions of a man who is truly religious and deserves to be thought so. 311

Thus the Memorabilia’s narrator uses Socrates’ well-known public words and deeds to

309 Mem., A.2.39.
310 Mem., A.1.18.
311 Mem., A.1.20.
undermine the figure presented in court: trial-Socrates is incompatible with historical-Socrates. The narrator supports this approach with its natural concomitant: the beneficial effects of Socrates’ company.

The narrator praises the effects of Socrates’ company: he is accused of having a corrupting influence on his followers, yet the narrator points out that his followers flourished as a result of spending time with him. The narrator claims that Socrates’ virtues led him to be a good role model for all who followed him:

he cured these vices in many, by putting into them a desire for goodness, and by giving them confidence that self-discipline would make them gentlemen. To be sure he never professed to teach this; but, by letting his own light shine, he led his disciples to hope that they through imitation of him would attain to such excellence.312

Although he never claimed to teach men to become kaloikagathoi, his positive effects were obvious:

Many of his companions were counselled by him to do this or not to do that in accordance with the warnings of the deity: and those who followed his advice prospered, and those who rejected it had cause for regret.313

The narrator finally notes that his students followed him

312 Mem., A.2.2-3.
313 Mem., A.1.4.
not that they might shine in the courts or the assembly, but that they might become gentlemen, and be able to do their duty by house and household, and relatives and friends, and city and citizens. Of these not one, in his youth or old age, did evil or incurred censure.\textsuperscript{314}

In every respect, therefore, keeping company with Socrates and listening to his advice produced happier and more successful followers. Thus the \textit{Memorabilia}'s narrator shows us that just as Socrates’ actions \textit{seem} to be good, the effects of his company on his friends confirm that his actions \textit{are} good. Men who spent time with Socrates did not become corrupted but became better men. Thus if the reader should not believe the benefits of Socrates’ words, the beneficial effect he had on his friends should be convincing. Of course, there are always exceptions: for Socrates, they are Alcibiades and Critias.

The narrator cannot but acknowledge that the association between Socrates, Critias, and Alcibiades appears to provide damning evidence against Socrates. After associating with him they entered politics, now competent at persuasion yet also corrupt. Socrates seems to share the responsibility for what they did. The narrator refuses to defend the two, but argues that Socrates bears no responsibility for their crimes.\textsuperscript{315}

Although “ἐγενέσθην μὲν δὴ τὼ ἄνδρε τούτω φύσει φιλοτιμοτάτω (Ambition was the very life-blood of both),” and although they followed Socrates because they saw that “τοῖς δὲ διαλεγομένοις αὐτῷ πάσι χρώμενον ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ὅπως βούλοιτο (in argument he could do what he liked with any disputant)” Socrates’ presence had a powerful effect on them: “κἀκεῖνω σωφρονοῦντε, ἔστε Σωκράτει συνήστην, οὐ φοβουμένω μὴ ζημιοῖντο ἢ παίοιντο ὑπὸ Σωκράτους, ἀλλ’ οἰσμένῳ τότε κράτιστον εἶναι τοῦτο πράττειν (even

\textsuperscript{314} \textit{Mem.}, A.2.48. \\
\textsuperscript{315} \textit{Mem.}, A.2.13.
those two were prudent so long as they were with Socrates, not from fear of fine or blow, but because at that time they really believed in prudent conduct). Thus, however long the young men stayed with Socrates, he made them good. Even still, one might object—surely the accuser did—that “τὸν Σωκράτην μὴ πρότερον τὰ πολιτικὰ διδάσκειν τοὺς συνόντας ἢ σωφρονεῖν (Socrates should have taught his companions prudence before politics).” The narrator uses a series of common sense arguments and analogies to deflect Socrates from this responsibility: he says,

I notice that as those who do not train the body cannot perform the functions proper to the body, so those who do not train the soul cannot perform the functions of the soul: for they cannot do what they ought to do nor avoid what they ought not to do. For this cause fathers try to keep their sons, even if they are prudent lads, out of bad company...

It is no more fair to blame Socrates for their subsequent crimes, into which they were seduced by vicious companions, than it is for a “οἱ γε πατέρες αὐτοὶ συνόντες τοῖς υἱῶσι, τῶν παιδῶν πλημμελούντων, οὐκ αἰτίαν ἔχουσιν, ἐὰν αὐτοὶ σωφρονῶσιν (father, whose son bears a good character so long as he is with one master, but goes wrong after he has attached himself to another, [to throw] the blame on the earlier teacher.” The narrator uses this common sense to expose the hypocrisy of the accuser’s arguments. Fathers blame Socrates for their sons going bad after they left him; yet these fathers would not condemn themselves to death for this, even though (according to their own arguments)

316 Mem., A.2.14; A.2.14; A.2.18.
317 Mem., A.2.17.
318 Mem., A.2.19-20.
319 Mem., A.2.27.
they bear as much ‘blame’ as Socrates does for what happened to their sons. These temporarily-virtuous boys become evil men, but it is not Socrates’ fault.

Finally, the narrator partakes in some revisionist reinterpretations of Socratic philosophy to prove that it is not, as accused, harmful to society. Socrates’ accuser, during the trial, brought up the allegation that

Ἀλλὰ Σωκράτης γ’, ἔφη ὁ κατήγορος, τοὺς πατέρας προπηλακίζειν ἐδίδασκε, πείθων μὲν τοὺς συνόντας αὐτῷ σοφωτέρους ποιεῖν τῶν πατέρων, φάσκων δὲ κατὰ νόμον έξεῖναι παρανοίας ἑλόντι καὶ τὸν παρέρα δῆσαι, τεκμηρίῳ τούτῳ χρώμενος, ὡς τὸν ἁμαθέστερον ὑπὸ τοῦ σοφωτέρου νόμιμον εἴη δεδέσθαι.

Socrates taught sons to treat their fathers with contempt: he persuaded them that he made his companions wiser than their fathers: he said that the law allowed a son to put his father in prison if he convinced a jury that he was insane; and this was a proof that it was lawful for the wiser to keep the more ignorant in gaol.  

This accusation is not new; Aristophanes’ *Clouds* depicts the similar behavior of a son beating his own father ‘justifiably.’

The accuser-narrator here focuses on Socrates’ words, saying that he said that “the law allowed a son to put his father in prison if he convinced a jury that he was insane; and this was a proof that it was lawful for the wiser to keep the more ignorant in gaol.” The accuser claims Socrates was making an argument by analogy: if the mentally ill can legally be imprisoned by their sons, then the unintelligent can just as legally be imprisoned by their more intelligent (Socratic) sons. Of course, this casts Socrates’ argument in a vividly anti-Athenian light, challenging not only the rights of the father over his sons, but also the foundation of democratic society. The accuser combines a basic principle of Socratic philosophy—it is better to be educated than ignorant—with the implication that Socrates intended to establish a rigidly

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320 Mem., A.2.49.
321 Clouds, 1321-1475.
322 Mem., A.2.49.
hierarchical meritocratic society, not dissimilar to that of the *Republic*, and one in which the losers were imprisoned.

The *Memorabilia*’s narrator agrees that Socrates discussed the law that allowed sons to imprison their fathers in the case of mental illness, but he rejects the accuser-narrator’s interpretation of Socrates’ words by presenting his own interpretation. He says,

Σωκράτης δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀμαθίας ἕνεκα δεσμεύοντα δικαίως ἂν καὶ αὐτὸν ᾤετο δεδέσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπισταμένων ἄ τὴν ἀμαθίαν ἐπίσταται· καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἐνεκα πολλάκις ἐσκόπει, τί διαφέρει μανίας ἀμαθία· καὶ τοὺς μὲν μαινομένους ᾤετο συμφερόντως ἂν δεδέσθαι καὶ ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τοῖς φίλοις, τοὺς δὲ μὴ ἐπισταμένους τὰ δέοντα δικαίως ἂν μανθάνειν παρὰ τῶν ἐπισταμένων.

In reality Socrates held that, if you clap fetters on a man for his ignorance, you deserve to be kept in gaol yourself by those whose knowledge is greater than your own: and such reasoning led him frequently to consider the difference between Madness and Ignorance. That madmen should be kept in prison was expedient, he thought, both for themselves and for their friends: but those who are ignorant of what they ought to know deserve to learn from those who know it. 323

The narrator expresses the nuances of Socrates’ thought suppressed by the accuser-narrator: Socrates did say that sons had the right to imprison their fathers if they were adjudicated incompetent by a jury, but the analogous argument, that the ignorant should rightly be imprisoned by their mental betters, is invalid. Socrates said that if you believes this “you deserve to be kept in gaol yourself by those whose knowledge is greater than your own.” 324 There is only one ‘most intelligent and educated’ person in the world, so if the accuser-narrator’s analysis of Socrates’ argument is taken to its natural conclusion, every person in the world, less the smartest, should be imprisoned. It is, of course, farcical to attribute this to Socrates. Rather, Socrates used his consideration of the law allowing sons to imprison their fathers as a jumping-off point for a consideration of the “difference between Madness and Ignorance.” 325 His conclusion, that it is better for a

323 *Mem.*, A.2.50.
324 *Mem.*, A.2.50.
325 *Mem.*, A.2.50.
mentally ill man to be imprisoned for his own safety, because he cannot be taught, but it is better for the ignorant man to be taught, because he can be taught, proves that his intention in raising this topic is to show the benefit, and necessity, of education. It had nothing to do with Socrates’ secret desire to overthrow the social order of Athens for his own benefit—to say so completely misses his point.

The accuser-narrator also attacked Socrates through his use of poetry, picking an instance of his use of Hesiod to again prove his tyrannical tendencies.

"Εφη δ' αὐτόν ὁ κατήγορος καὶ τῶν ἐνδοξοτάτων ποιητῶν ἐκλεχόμενον τά πονηρότατα καὶ τούτωσι μαρτύριοις χρώμενοι τοῖς συνόντας κακούργους τε εἶναι καὶ τυραννικούς. Ἡσιόδου μὲν τὸ ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος, ἀεργήθη δὲ τ' ὄνειδος:

τοῦτο δὴ λέγειν αὐτόν, ὡς ὁ ποιητὴς κελεύει μηδενὸς ἔργου μητ' ἀδίκου μητ' α

Again, his accuser alleged that he selected from the most famous poets the most immoral passages, and used them as evidence in teaching his companions to be tyrrants and malefactors: for example, Hesiod’s line:

"No work is a disgrace, but idleness is a disgrace."

He was charged with explaining this line as an injunction to refrain from no work, dishonest or disgraceful, but to do anything for gain. 326

The accuser-narrator has taken one of the poetic citations Socrates has used out of context and, again, interprets it in the worst possible way. The line from Hesiod, the equivalent of the modern 'idle hands are the tool of the devil,' has an innocent meaning in the original context.

τῷ δὲ θεοὶ νεμεσῶσι καὶ ἀνέρες ὃς κεν ἀεργὸς ζῷη, κηρήνεσσι καθούρος εἰκέλος ὀργὴν, οἳ τε μελισσὰς κάματον τρύχουσιν ἄργοι ἔσθοντες. εἰ δὲ ἔργα φίλ' ἔστω μέτριους πλήθουσι καλαι. ἐκ ἔργων δ' ἄνδρες πολύμηλοι τ' ἄργανοι τε, καὶ τ' ἐργαζόμενος πολύ φίλτερος οὐχιανάτοισιν. ἐργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος, ἀεργῆ δὲ τ' ὄνειδος. εἰ δὲ κεν ἀνθράκα, τάχα σε ζηλώσει ἀεργὸς πλουτεῦντα· πλούτῳ δ' ἀρετὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ. δαίμονι δ' οἷος ἔησθα, τὸ ἐργάζεσθαι ἄμεινον, εἰ κεν ἀπ' ἄλλωσιν κτεάνων ἀέσιφρον αὐτὸν ἐς ἔργον τρέψας μελετᾷς βίου, ὡς σε κελεύω.

"Both gods and men are angry with a man who lives idle, for in nature he is like the stingless drones who waste the labor of the bees, eating without working; but let it be your care to order your work properly, that

326 Mem., A.2.56.
in the right season your barns may be full of victual. Through work men grow rich in flocks and substance, and working they are much better loved by the immortals. *Work is no disgrace: it is idleness which is a disgrace.* But if you work, the idle will soon envy you as you grow rich, for fame and renown attend on wealth. And whatever be your lot, work is best for you, if you turn your misguided mind away from other men’s property to your work and attend to your livelihood as I bid you.\(^{327}\)

From the original context of the line, it is clear that the accuser-narrator is accusing Socrates of taking a line from an authoritative classical poet, reversing its meaning, and reusing it for his own nefarious purposes (ironically, not unlike what the accuser-narrator is doing to Socrates’ words himself). Hesiod encourages his brother to focus on his own business, to work hard, and to ignore the jealousy of neighbors. Lazy idleness upsets “Both gods and men” and hard work will lead to a man becoming “rich in flocks and substance, and working they are much better loved by the immortals.”\(^{328}\) Yet the accuser-narrator, in claiming that Socrates meant by this to do all “work, dishonest or disgraceful, [...] to do anything for gain,” suggests that Socrates deliberately ignores the moral component of Hesiod’s verse—to do *good* work—and takes the line at its most literal meaning—to do *any* work—in order, by co-opting Hesiod’s authority, to encourage his followers to establish a tyranny.\(^{329}\)

The *Memorabilia*’s narrator rebuts this twisted interpretation of Socrates’ words with a simple and straightforward reinterpretation of Socrates’ use of this verse. He says,

\[\text{Σωκράτης δ’ ἐπεὶ διομολογήσαιτο τὸ μὲν ἐργάτην εἶναι ὠφέλιμόν τε ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, τὸ δὲ ἄργον βλαβερόν τε καὶ κακόν, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐργάζεσθαι ἀγαθόν, τὸ δ’ ἄργειν κακόν, τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθὸν τι ποιοῦντας ἐργάζεσθαι τε ἐρημή καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, τοὺς δὲ κυβερνοῦντας ἢ τι ἄλλο πονηρὸν καὶ ἐπιζήμιον ποιοῦντας ἀγροὺς ἀπεκάλει. ἐκ δὲ τούτων ὀρθὸς ἄργειν τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶ

\[^{327}\] Hesiod, 304-15.
\[^{328}\] Hesiod, 304; 308-9.
\[^{329}\] Mem., A.2.56.
Now, though Socrates would fully agree that it is a benefit and a blessing to a man to be a worker, and a disadvantage and an evil to be an idler — that work, in fact, is a blessing, idleness an evil — “working,” “being a worker,” meant to him doing good work; but gambling and any occupation that is immoral and leads to loss he called idling. When thus interpreted there is nothing amiss with the line: “No work is a disgrace, but idleness is a disgrace.”

The narrator puts Socrates’ use of this verse back in the context of Socratic philosophy, and thereby shows how it might be correctly understood. Socrates agrees with Hesiod that “it is a benefit and a blessing to a man to be a worker,” but the narrator, in order to show this, needs to clarify what Socrates meant by ‘work.’ For Socrates, “τοὺς μὲν ἀγαθόν τι ποιοῦντας ἐργάζεσθαι τε ἔφη καὶ ἐργάτας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι (‘working,’ ‘being a worker,’ meant to him doing good work; but gambling and any occupation that is immoral and leads to loss he called idling).” Thus the meaning of the word ‘work’ that the accuser-narrator attributed to Socrates is inconsistent with Socrates’ vocabulary and typical use of language. When Socrates said ‘work’ he meant ‘doing good work,’ doing bad work he did not call work at all, but he called idling. Thus he was attempting to persuade his students to avoid the very thing the accuser-narrator accuses him of by quoting this line of Hesiod: he co-opts Hesiod’s authority in order to encourage his followers to virtue. We see the narrator again reinterpreting Socrates’ use of language in order to show how the accuser-narrator has misinterpreted Socrates’ language in a hostile manner. In this example, we see that the narrator-accuser’s interpretation of Socrates’ use of this verse is neither consistent with Socratic philosophy or even Socrates’ basic use of language. The accuser-narrator’s interpretation does not make sense when placed in the context of Socrates’ general life and behavior.

330 Mem., A.2.57.
331 Mem., A.2.57.
332 Mem., A.2.57.
These are the *Memorabilia’s* narrator’s four approaches to countering the accusations against Socrates that were proved to the satisfaction of the jury. The rest of the *Memorabilia* is spent giving examples of how Socrates was beneficial to his friends and city, but does not specifically address the accuser’s charges. I will return to the *Memorabilia’s* narrator’s tools for rejecting unreliable narration when I turn toward the unreliability of the narrator of the *Cyropaideia*.

**Unreliable Narration**

In this chapter I argue that the narrator of the *Cyropaideia* is unreliable; he is similar to the *Memorabilia’s* accuser-narrator, whom we have just discussed. The *Memorabilia’s* accuser-narrator came to know Socrates’ biography and shaped the details of his life into a narrative that proved Socrates’ crimes and guilt to the satisfaction of the Athenian jury. The *Memorabilia’s* narrator provides one model for refuting such a biased presentation of historical facts. I follow the narrator of the *Memorabilia’s* methods in my discussion of the narrator of the *Cyropaideia*. In this chapter I argue, based on the internal inconsistencies, contradictions, and omissions found in the narrator’s account of Cyrus’ life, that the account put forward in the *Cyropaideia* is demonstrably unreliable and biased in favor of the narrator’s goal—stated in the introduction—of offering Cyrus’ political methods as excellent and deserving of imitation. In doing so, like the narrator of the *Memorabilia*, I rely upon the stated facts of Cyrus’ life in order to argue that the narrator’s presentation is biased. Although I focus on the unreliability of the narrator in this chapter, I apply all the *Memorabilia’s* narrator’s methods to Cyrus’ and his allies’ words and deeds throughout my dissertation.
Before I discuss the unreliability of the narrator, I must address the fictional non-fiction of the Cyropaideia. Although there is some disagreement on this issue,\(^{333}\) it is my position that the Cyropaideia in no uncertain terms presents itself (sive Xenophon-as-author presents it) as fictional.\(^{334}\) From the insistence in the introduction that Cyrus captured Egypt, to the invention of ‘historical’ characters such as Cyaxares from whole cloth, to the ahistorically complete collapse of the Persian empire after Cyrus’ death, the Cyropaideia clearly presents a Persian history which is similar to, but is plainly not the

\(^{333}\) Although modern scholars agree that the Cyropaideia is not a historical account (e.g. Danzig 2009, 271; Gera 1993, 1-2), there is little agreement about what it actually is. For Gera, what differentiates Xenophon from Ctesias and Herodotus is that they “wrote history rather than biography, and included an account of Cyrus as only a part of their work(6).” Despite this, she juxtaposes the facts of Cyrus’ life as seen in the Cyropaideia with comparable scenes in various historical accounts, including Herodotus (e.g., 130), Ctesias (e.g., 157), and Persian oral traditions (13 ff.). Due (1989) sees the genre of the Cyropaideia as similar to, but not, history (60). Gray (2011) seems to suggest that it is a work of fiction (1). Nadon (2001) toys with the idea of whether this is fiction or non-fiction, a biography, a history, or a political treatise (27-28). Tatum (1989) at least is explicit: there is a “gap between the political and historical world he lived in and the romantically successful but fictional world of the Cyropaedia” (224). Luccioni (1948) says that “La Cyropédie n’est ni une histoire […] ni un pur roman, mais un ouvrage qui tient des deux, un roman historique” (213). Azoulay (2000) notes that the Cyropaideia “est rebelle aux cadres canoniques; elle prend tour à tour les formes du roman historique, de la description exotique, de l’utopie politique, du bréviaire pour soldats, du traité pédagogique ou encore de l’oeuvre de propagande” (1). He notes that the history of Cyrus is described “avec une grande liberté spéculative (2),” and adds that “La hardiesse de la reconstruction <<historique>> est patenté” (2, nt.2). Hägg (2012) says that “it is clear, right from the introduction, that its main topic is leadership and government, not the life of the historical King Cyrus the Great of Persia (died 530 BC)” (51). Stadter (1991) uses a Bakhtinian reading of the text to argue that if “the narrative employs a historical setting only to create a utopian vision of ideal human behavior, then the 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” (491). Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010) say of Ctesias that he skillfully combines fiction with history through “exaggeration, romance, adventure, first-hand observations, hearsay, dialogue and reported-speech, speculations on the nature of absolute rulership, stories of excutions, murder, intrigues, torture and observations on national and international events (7).” They call this a “decidedly melodramatic, almost poetic, use of narrative storytelling (7).” Although describing Ctesias, these points could equally be applied to the Cyropaideia.

\(^{334}\) What I do not find to be relevant for this topic is the question of where, how, and why Xenophon’s account of the history of Persia in the Cyropaideia differs from actual history, the accounts of Herodotus and Ctesias, and even from Xenophon’s own account in the Anabasis. This question has been a topic of very good discussions in Bodil Due (1989) and, especially, in Deborah Gera (1993) and I do not think that I have much to contribute to this conversation, as it has been well discussed and I am not an Achaemenidist. Briant (2002) and Kuhrt (1996) and (2007) both possess more recent discussions of Persian history and Cyrus’ life from the Persian historical perspective.
same as, the 'real' Persian history presented in authors such as Herodotus and Ctesias.\textsuperscript{335}

The insistence, early in the text, that Cyrus captures Egypt, a fact that anyone with a passing familiarity with history would know is untrue, quickly hints to most readers that the history discussed in the \textit{Cyropaideia} is not 'real' history.\textsuperscript{336} Luccioni adds that “La preuve que Xénophon connaissait la véritable histoire de Cyrus et de la Perse, et que, s’il l’a présentée tout autrement c’est de propos délibéré, nous est fournie par l’Anabase;” he points to \textit{Anabasis} G.4.8, wherein the \textit{Anabasis’} narrator describes an event in Cyrus’ war against Media, as proof of this distinction.\textsuperscript{337} Yet we must also realize that the narrator is not self-conscious: he is not aware that he is a character in a fictional work. He believes that he is—and presents himself as—a historian who has composed an historical and non-fictional work that presents an authoritative account of historical facts.\textsuperscript{338}

\textsuperscript{335} Carlier (2010), 361. Gera (1993) discusses this issue in depth throughout her book. Many of the differences she sees between historical accounts of Cyrus (primarily Herodotus and Ctesias) and Xenophon’s she attributes to literary or philosophical motivations. For example, she explains the peculiar tensions exhibited among Cyrus, Astyages, and Mandane as the consequences of Xenophon’s adaptation of Herodotus’ account of the three and his attempt to differentiate his characters from Herodotus’ (29; 77). She uses Xenophon’s and Herodotus’ scenes of Cyrus attempting to interpret dreams, successfully in Xenophon, unsuccessfully in Herodotus, to argue that Xenophon’s Cyrus is a more respectable and intelligent leader than Herodotus’ version (119). Gera argues once that when Cyrus is seen playing at cupbearer for Astyages “Xenophon is, perhaps, referring obliquely to the Ctesian tale, demonstrating how such a (false) story could have arisen” (157).

\textsuperscript{336} Other possibilities have been suggested, such as that Xenophon is presenting a more authoritative (or at least different) version of Persian history preserved in Persian oral tradition he came to know from his time in Persia (Gera 1993, 13-22; 116-117). Yet the lack of agreement with Ctesias, who was better positioned (and for longer) than Xenophon to learn Persian oral and historical accounts of Cyrus (for example, Ctesias does not mention Cyaxares), and the failure of scholars to be able to attach the historical oddities presented in the \textit{Cyropaideia} with historical events (for example, Gera 1993, 264, concludes that “there is no simple way to identify the two Assyrian rulers of the \textit{Cyropaedia} with any pair of historical Babylonian kings.”), suggests that this text is fictional. If we perceive the \textit{Cyropaideia} as a historical account, perhaps an attempt to correct Herodotus and Ctesias as Gera suggests (284), then we must accept that Xenophon stands alone without any backers as one of the most awful historians of history whose grip on historical facts was at best feeble. Yet the fact that, of the politically important characters in the \textit{Cyropaideia}, Cyaxares, Cyaxares’ daughter, the Old Assyrian king, the Young Assyrian king, the Armenian king, Pantheia, and Abradatas all seem to be Xenophon’s inventions in the \textit{Cyropaideia}, leads one to believe that a text with characters who so diverge from the historical record must be fictional.

\textsuperscript{337} Luccioni (1948), 213, nt. 70.

\textsuperscript{338} Due (1989) calls the style of the work “similar to that of historiography” (36) and argues that “Xenophon assimilates the \textit{Cyropaedia} to historical writing” (31) in a number of ways. She singles out
introduction, the narrator says that, because Cyrus was excellent,

ἐσκεψάμεθα τίς ποτ’ ὄν γενεάν καὶ ποίαν τινὰ φύσιν ἐχων καὶ ποία τινὶ παιδευθείς παιδεία τοσοῦτον διήνεγκεν εἰς τὸ ἄρχειν ἀνθρώπων. ὅσα οὖν καὶ ἐπυθόμεθα καὶ ᾐσθῆσθαι δοκοῦμεν περὶ αὐτοῦ, ταῦτα πειρασόμεθα διηγήσασθαι.

we examined who he was by birth, what his nature was, and with what education he was brought up, such that he so excelled in ruling human beings. Whatever we have learned, therefore, and think we have perceived about him, we shall try to relate.339

In other words, the narrator read historical accounts, for example, of Pantheia, Abradatas, and Cyaxares in his preparation for composing this book.340 These accounts do not exist and have never existed—Cyaxares, Pantheia, and Abradatas only appear in the Cyropaideia (and later citations of the text)—but the narrator has read them.341 We are, thus, dealing with a fictional work that does not know it is fictional and a narrator who believes he is presenting a historical account of the past: for the narrator, the events he

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339 Cyr., A.1.6.
340 Does the narrator of the Cyropaideia present himself as the writer of the Cyropaideia? Although the narrator never explicitly claims that he is writing—he uses the ambiguous term “διηγήσασθαι” at A.1.6 and later the equally ambiguous phrase “ὁς δ’ ἄλληθη λέγω ἄρξομαι διδάσκων ἐκ τῶν θείων” (H.8.2) when explicitly discussing his project—I believe there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that he at least sees himself as the writer of this text. He claims to have on his own originated the idea for the project (A.1.1 ff.). He says he completed the research in preparation for composing this text (A.1.6) in solitary labor. He anticipates matters in Book A that he discusses in Book H (e.g. A.3.2), which bespeaks of some amount of preparation. He is a consistent character (although sometimes consistent in his inconsistencies) as I argue in this chapter, and Xenophon-the-author never speaks. Yet, it is true that the narrator never claims to be writing the Cyropaideia. So I must leave this question as unproven.
341 The narrator even—very rarely—debates the conclusions ‘other people’ have come to concerning Cyrus (e.g. H.2.10-12). These rivals are, however, invariably anonymous.
discusses are historical and real: the limited knowledge he possesses as a fictional character, his lack of self-awareness that he is a fictional character, prevents him from knowing what the readers know, that his world, his history, and his account of his world’s history is fictional, not real. The narrator’s belief that he is non-fictional and that his history is non-fictional will have important implications, which I discuss below, for the way we perceive his relationship with the ‘historical’ past he engages with. Yet this also explains why I treat the narrator as if he is composing a historical account. As with Xenophon’s authorial anonymity, I find it productive to, even if only initially, engage with characters on their own terms. In this case, the narrator, a fictional character in a fictional text, insists that he is a non-fictional character composing a well-researched work of historical non-fiction.\footnote{Gray (2004b) notes that Xenophon's narrators are anonymous. In respect to the Socratic texts, she argues that “Theoretically Xenophon might have chosen to call his narrator 'Xenophon'. Instead, as in the Anabasis, he introduces the character Xenophon as a dramatized 'other', in order to secure an impression of objectivity and hence persuasive force. Indeed, he even allows Socrates to criticize this character for being ‘foolish’ […]. Since Xenophon was probably too young to remember the party described in Symposium (for which the dramatic date is 422 BC), he cannot be identified as the narrator of this work either. The narrators of Memorabilia and Oeconomicus might be among those silent bystanders who are mentioned as witnesses to the conversations […]. in Symposium, he could be one of the named guests, referring to himself in the third person, or an anonymous guest. The memories are fiction if they are credited to the author, but could still be the genuine memories of this 'other'” (377). Grey (2004c) does not speculate so specifically when discussing the anonymity of the narrator of the Cyropaideia, but argues that he can be seen as a historian or an encomiast (391), who “is not dramatized: we hear no name, or any other personal information. What we can deduce, however, is that he is an external narrator, who is removed in time from the event he recounts” (392). As Gray points out, Xenophon cannot possibly be the narrator of (at least) certain of his texts. Nowhere does any of Xenophon's narrators claim to be the same person who narrated another Xenophontic text. What is problematic is that, despite this, she argues that ultimately these disparate narrators, different in time, place, and identity, all present positions representative of Xenophon's own position (e.g., Gray 2004c, 401). I would suggest that, instead, a focus on the differences among these narrators in regard to political and ethical behavior may prove fruitful.}
The narrator of the *Cyropaideia* is a character who is distinct from Xenophon not only in respect to his philosophical and political leanings, which divergence I emphasized in Chapter One, but also in respect to his knowledge of the history of the Persian empire. A variety of a-historical details in the *Cyropaideia* have been noted by modern scholars: for example, Gera points out that it is impossible to identify the old Assyrian king and new Assyrian king with any historical Babylonian kings and Nadon argues that paleo-Persia has little in common with the historical state.\(^343\) These may, however, be dismissed as examples of Xenophon’s poor knowledge of history. Yet one detail in the *Anabasis*, that pointed out by Luccioni as noted above, proves that Xenophon’s knowledge of history diverges from what the narrator of the *Cyropaideia* knows. In the course of their retreat, the Greek mercenaries happen past “a large deserted city, and it was inhabited in ancient times by the Medes […] This city was besieged by the king of the Persians at the time when the Persians were seeking to wrest from the Medes their empire, but he could in no way capture it.”\(^344\) Luccioni argues that this is evidence that the *Cyropaideia* is not meant to be seen as historical, but this passage from the *Anabasis* has greater repercussions than this. In the *Anabasis* Xenophon writes of a Herodotean Persian history in which Persia and Media battle for dominance in the Middle East, not one in which Persia, aided by Media, battles with Assyria.\(^345\) The narrator of the *Anabasis*, and hence Xenophon, is aware that Media was not peacefully incorporated into Persia but as the

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\(^344\) *Ana.*, Γ.4.7-8.
\(^345\) *Ana.*, Γ.4.8.11: “This city was besieged by the king of the Persians at the time when the Persians were seeking to wrest from the Medes their empire, but he could in no way capture it. A cloud, however, overspread the sun and hid it from sight until the inhabitants abandoned their city; and thus it was taken.” This clearly, as Luccioni 213, nt 70 points out, fundamentally contradicts the version of history advanced in the *Cyropaideia.*
result of a war. Moreover, as Gera points out, “Our Cyaxares, the son of Astyages and Cyrus’ maternal uncle, is found only in the *Cyropaedia*, and one of his chief functions is to serve as a link in the quiet transfer of power.”[346] Because Xenophon knows, as is shown in the *Anabasis*, that Persia conquered Media, we can be certain that he invented Cyaxares, as Gera states. The narrator, however, from the introduction, argues that history played out differently: he says of Cyrus that “Cyrus, after finding the nations in Asia in just this independent condition, set out with a little army of Persians and became the leader of the Medes, who were willing that he do so.”[347] The narrator of the *Cyropaideia* not only maintains that Cyaxares did exist, but served to peacefully transition the throne of Media to Cyrus; the narrator of the *Anabasis* maintains that Cyrus seized the throne of Media through battle. Not only does this serve to reinforce the a-historicity of the *Cyropaideia* but emphasizes the differences in knowledge between Xenophon, who has shown that he knows the ’real,’ Herodotean, history of Persia, and the narrator of the *Cyropaideia*, whose knowledge of history is fundamentally different. My approach to the narrator in this text is informed by Bal’s theory of the focalizor and its role in literature.[348] Bal argues that the fundamental difference between a fabula, the core plot components upon which a story is based prior to the application of narration, and a story, even one with minimal or no (visible) narration, is that narrators *always* contribute some part of themselves, however small, to their story. Even when ’the

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[348] Bal (1997) emphasizes the benefit of the terms focalizor and focalization over terms like ’narrative perspective’ or ’narrator’s point of view’ because it is the only term that distinguishes between “the vision through which the elements are presented and, on the other, the identity of the voice that is verbalizing that vision. To put it more simply: [the other terms] do not make a distinction between those who see and those who speak” (143).
narrator’ never speaks and is never mentioned, “A point of view is chosen, a certain way of seeing things, a certain angle, whether ’real’ historical facts are concerned or fictitious events.”\textsuperscript{349} Thus even the invisible narrator leaves its imprint on its text: “Perception depends on so many factors that striving for objectivity is pointless.”\textsuperscript{350} As a result of this, any narrative—anything beyond a fabula—has some minimum degree of bias and preference as a result of the personality and preferences of the (even invisible) narrator.

She goes on to distinguish between two types of narrator, the ’Character focalizor,’ a narrator who “participates in the fabula as an actor,” and the ’External focalizor,’ who is “external, non-character-bound,” “situated outside the fabula.”\textsuperscript{351} The narrator of the \textit{Cyropaideia} is thus an external focalizor. She rejects the belief that, perhaps unlike character focalizors, external focalizors can be unbiased. Rather, she argues that because both character focalizors, whom one tends to suspect of some degree of bias, and external focalizors, whom one might naturally believe can be sufficiently removed from the text to be unbiased, are responsible for the focalization—and because they focalize what the reader reads—“we are presented with a certain, far from innocent interpretation of the elements” of the fabula.\textsuperscript{352} That is to say, whether we consider a character or external focalizor—even a seemingly disinterested or unbiased external focalizor—we must

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{349} Bal (1997), 142. She elsewhere says that even in a text like \textit{Of Old People}, wherein “a great many different characters act as focalizor,” and it appears that bias is absent, “the characters do not carry an equal load; some focalize often, others only a little, some do not focalize at all” (149). As a result, “The focalizor’s bias is, then, not absent, since there is no such thing as ’objectivity,’ but it remains implicit” (149).
  \item \textsuperscript{350} Bal (1997), 142.
  \item \textsuperscript{351} Bal (1997), 148; 148.
  \item \textsuperscript{352} Bal (1997), 150. Bal adds that “The narrative can then appear objective, because the events are not presented from the point of view of the characters” (149). As Booth (1961) puts it in the case of the external personality-less focalizor, which he calls the ’undramatized observer narrator,’ “When there is no ’I,’ as in ’The Killers,’ the inexperienced reader may make the mistake of thinking that the story comes to him unmediated” (152).
\end{itemize}
realize that he contributes some degree of bias, personal perspective, or interpretation, however slight, to the story he presents the reader. Finally, Bal adds that “If the focalizor coincides with the character, that character will have an advantage over the other characters. The reader watches with the character’s eyes and will, in principle, be inclined to accept the vision presented by that character.” This suggests that understanding how the biases of the narrator impact our understanding of the events of the text, because his voice carries additional authority inasmuch as it is the voice of the narrator. His perspective can disproportionately alter the reader’s understanding of the text. Thus the voice of the narrator is powerful; yet, every narrator is biased. Despite this, not every (biased) narrator is unreliable. In my following discussion, in which I argue for the unreliability of the *Cyropaideia*’s narrator, I use the model provided by the rhetorical approach first described by Wayne Booth, rather than the cognitive approach advocated by Ansgar Nünning.  

According to Booth, a narrator whom the reader cannot rely upon is not necessarily an unreliable narrator. Booth notes that “It is true that most of the great reliable narrators indulge in large amounts of incidental irony, and they are thus ’unreliable’ in the sense of being potentially deceptive. But difficult irony is not sufficient to make a narrator unreliable. Nor is unreliability ordinarily a matter of lying...” Rather, a narrator is unreliable if he transmits inaccurate or misleading information—about the plot or about himself, without realizing that it is inaccurate information. Booth calls this

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353 Bal (1997), 146.
354 If nothing else, I find that the cognitive approach, which readily overlooks the role of the author by focusing primarily on the reaction of the (individual) reader to any particular text, is incompatible with my approach to the *Cyropaideia*.
“inconscience; the narrator is mistaken, or he believes himself to have qualities which the author denies him. Or, as in Huckleberry Finn, the narrator claims to be naturally wicked while the author silently praises his virtues behind his back.”

Thus an unreliable narrator may deliberately deceive the reader, but is not unreliable on account of this: a narrator is unreliable when he deceives or misleads himself without realizing it. The reader may or may not be initially fooled alongside the narrator. Phelan believes that Booth’s definitions are insufficient. He summarizes the two ways that, according to Booth, a narrator may be unreliable. The first is ‘underreporting,’ wherein the narrator is “intentionally deceptive.” Phelan places this on what he calls the “axis of ethics:” that is to say, when the narrator differs from the implied author in ethical terms. The second is when the narrator is ‘underreading,’ which is placed on the “axis of events,” wherein the narrator differs from the implied author in his knowledge of what happens in the text. In addition to these two, Phelan proposes a third source of unreliability, a form of underreading, wherein the narrator “does not consciously know—or at least is not to admit to himself—what we infer about his personal interest.” This he places on the “axis of knowledge and perception,” to which he assigns the “Naive narration such as we find in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn [which] is typically unreliable along this axis,” which has been attributed to Huck’s “lack of ’cultural literacy.’” Thus we understand that a narrator may be unreliable in three ways: in knowledge of events, in interpretation

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356 Booth (1961), 159. Original emphasis. As Hansen (2007) paraphrases: “the unreliable narrator was defined by its deviating moral standard compared to that of the implied author” (227).
357 Phelan (2005), 33.
358 Phelan (2005), 34.
359 Phelan (2005), 33.
360 Phelan (2005), 33.
361 Phelan (2005), 34.
362 Phelan (2005), 34; 34 nt. 3; 34 nt. 3.
of events, and in knowledge of himself.

In addition to Phelan’s three ways a narrator may be unreliable, Hansen sets down the four ways in which a narrator’s unreliability may manifest itself. The first is “intranarrational unreliability,” which he calls the “‘classical’ definition.” In this case a narrator undermines his own reliability through “‘verbal tics’—small interjections and comments that hint at an uncertainty in the narrator’s relating of the events—or unresolved self-contradictions:” he proposes the gradually self-evident insanity of the narrator of Poe’s *The Tell-Tale Heart* as an example of this. The second way in which a narrator’s account can be undermined is through “internarrational unreliability,” in which “a narrator’s version of events is contrasted by another or several other narrators’ versions:” the second narrator may be another person, the same person after time has passed, or could even be embedded in the first narrator’s speech. But in general, this contradiction “comes into being by the framing of other voices and a non-correspondence with what is taking form as the factual story...either because they are a greater authority, or because they serve as independent but agreeing witnesses.” The third type of unreliability is “intertextual unreliability,” wherein characters, “based on manifest character types that, on behalf of their former existence, in their configuration or paratextual mentioning...already direct the reader towards their unreliability.” In other words, “The reader’s identification of a character-narrator as shaped over a specific, recognizable type that would normally act unreliably, will let him or her pursue this

aspect in the reading. That the expectation is not necessarily honored is obvious..."³⁶⁸

Thus the epigram at the beginning of *Moll Flanders* primes the reader to be skeptical towards her reliability.³⁶⁹ The fourth possibility is “extratextual unreliability,” which depends on “the reader’s direct implementation of own values or knowledge in the textual world.”³⁷⁰ Hansen admits that this is ambiguous, but that examples such as “Patrick Bateman’s misunderstanding of ‘Hip to be square’ in *American Psycho,*” a character who misses the irony in an obviously ironic and well-known song, shows that this can be “a totally stable feature and on a much more local basis.”³⁷¹ Thus “it is possible for the text to postulate a clear resemblance with [the] factual object-world and thereby borrow a behavioral pattern, a situation, or an object from here, leaving it to the reader to complete its existence in the text.”³⁷² Thus we have four ways of determining whether a narrator is unreliable: when he contradicts himself, when he is contradicted by other narrators, when he contradicts expectations based in literature, or when he contradicts common (real) human experiences.

I apply a combination of Booth’s, Phelan’s, and Hansen’s discussions of the concept of the unreliable narrator, along with the *Memorabilia*’s narrator’s reaction to an unreliable narrator, to the narrator of the *Cyropaideia*. Although Phelan finds Booth’s

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³⁶⁹ Hansen (2007), 242. The full title of *Moll Flanders* is “The Fortunes & Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders &C. Who was born in Newgate, and during a Life of continu’d Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Years a Whore, five times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother), Twelve Years a Thief, Eight Years a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv’d Honest, and dies a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums.” (Defoe 2007, 3). As the reader’s first encounter with the character of Moll Flanders, this epigram, which details her various crimes and punishments, should certainly prime the reader to anticipate that Moll Flanders is of a certain sort of character.
definition in some respects lacking, he does approve of his schematic for engaging with a
narrator who is unreliable. Phelan’s description of this approach is helpful: he describes it
as “(1) determine through evidence either in the passage or in the larger context of the
narrative that unreliability exists; (2) specify the kind of unreliability it is—about facts,
values, or both; (3) link the unreliability to inferences about the narrator as character.”
I apply these stages of Booth’s schematic to the narrator of the *Cyropaideia*. I argue that
the narrator is unreliable based on contradictions and detectable omissions in his report,
which I respond to on the model of the *Memorabilia*’s narrator. I then determine, by
means of Hansen’s definitions of the types of unreliability, that the *Cyropaideia*’s narrator
is unreliable in respect to at least two of his four criteria. I then draw inferences about the
narrator as a character as a result of these types of unreliability.

**The Narrator of the *Cyropaideia***

Although the narrator of the *Cyropaideia* has been universally accepted as
reliable, there are many instances in which, I argue, the consequences of his biases and
underlying motives are detectable in the text. Often the stories he tells are noticeably
shaped by his own motives and perspective. I discuss several of these here, although I
return to the question of the narrator’s unreliability throughout my discussion of the text.
This unreliability is primarily manifested in two ways: first, the narrator frequently
intrudes himself into the text by volunteering an opinion or providing an interpretation of
a particular passage. The narrator’s intercessions are, I argue, attempts to guide the reader

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373 Phelan (2005), 34. There is a fourth step, “(4) reflect on the kind of communion established among
implied author, narrator, and authorial audience” (34) that I do not follow in this section. This is a
question I engage with in my last chapter. In regard to step three, Bal (1997) notes, similar to Phelan's
third point, that “the image a focalizor presents of an object says something about the focalizor itself”
(150).
to a particular understanding of, or a particular reaction to, certain passages. The passages that prompt the narrator’s involvement tend to be examples of Cyrus’ more problematic behavior, especially in his childhood. When Cyrus acts immoderately, cruelly, without empathy, or with an obvious lust for power, then the narrator imposes a particular interpretation that attempts to defuse any tension the reader may have perceived. His favorite sort of intervention is to suggest that Cyrus, when he acts viciously, is joking and providing happiness to his interlocutors. The second way the narrator’s unreliability manifests itself is in silence: there are a number of times in the course of this text when it is possible, if never obvious, for the reader to realize from contextual material that an event of considerable importance has occurred about which the narrator remains silent. Although this is a question of omission, I argue that in the two most significant cases the narrator’s decision to remain silent is motivated by the same bias as his intercessions into the text.

The narrator frequently intercedes before or after Cyrus’ dinner parties; for whatever reason, Cyrus’ conversations at dinner frequently expose his behavior as problematic or aggressive. One example of this scene can be seen during one of Cyrus’ dinner parties prior to his usurpation of Cyaxares. The narrator primes the reader to expect a certain levity by introducing the scene by saying “Now when he entertained in his tent, Cyrus always took care that discussions would be introduced that were both very charming and also motivating toward the good.” In the course of this conversation,

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374 Another example is the narrator’s dismissive language following Cyrus’ attempt to bring about Sakas’ execution during his first dinner party (that the reader sees). Although a hostile Cyrus attempts, without empathy, to replace Sakas as court chamberlain—going so far as to accuse the slave of a capital crime, the narrator dismisses the seriousness of the scene with the casual notice “τοσαύτας μὲν αὐτοῖς εὐθυμίας παρεῖχεν ἐπὶ τῷ δείπνῳ (Such amusement did he afford them at meals)” (A.3.12).

375 *Cyr.*, B.2.1.
Cyrus (or 'everyone’) is indeed said to laugh or jest five times.\textsuperscript{376} At the end of the conversation, the narrator says “Such things, both laughable and serious, were said in the tent.”\textsuperscript{377} The reader might expect, given this consistent insistence on levity in this scene, that the conversation might be lighthearted. Yet, in the course of this conversation, Cyrus and his lieutenants twice mock the Persian commoners for stupidity,\textsuperscript{378} mock into silence the one lieutenant who objects to this attitude,\textsuperscript{379} and plan how to cheat the commoners\textsuperscript{380} out of the financial rewards they should earn on this campaign.\textsuperscript{381} The meal ends on a sour note when one lieutenant mocks his dinner companions to his face for being ugly.\textsuperscript{382} The mood of the dinner is nasty and aggressive—social and hierarchical superiors humidate, disdain, and abuse their ‘inferiors’\textsuperscript{383}—yet the narrator throughout diminishes

\textsuperscript{376} \textit{Cyr.}, B.2.5; B.2.10; B.2.11; B.2.16; B.2.28. Scholars generally agree with the narrator’s interpretation of this scene. Due (1989) says that Cyrus “and others are teasing a certain Aglaitadas, whom we are told is a very serious person” (68-9); Tatum (1989) says that Aglaitadas is “finally jollied into a smile” (200); Gray (2011) says that “they asked one another questions that it was pleasant to answer at their meals and parties, and that they indulged in joking that was pleasant, respectable, and gave no offence” (345). Gera (1993) finds the jokes at Sambaulas’ expense (B.3.1) to be examples of “rough humor” (166) but seems to believe them not inappropriate.

\textsuperscript{377} \textit{Cyr.}, B.3.1

\textsuperscript{378} \textit{Cyr.}, B.2.2-5; B.2.6-9. Gera (1993) notes that “While [Cyrus’] question appears at first sight to invite a theoretical discussion concerning the value of education […] it is actually designed to let the \textit{διόμοτιμοι} complain openly about the new soldiers. The sudden promotion of these men has, naturally enough, caused a great deal of tension […] In fact, only one of Cyrus’ officers, Sambaulas, has anything good to say about the new recruits at our party” (161).

\textsuperscript{379} \textit{Cyr.}, B.2.11-16.


\textsuperscript{381} \textit{Cyr.}, B.2.17-27.

\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Cyr.}, B.2.28-31.

\textsuperscript{383} Gera (1993)’s description of Hystaspas’ story reflects this: she says that Hystaspas, when faced by a socially awkward commoner, “could barely control his laughter at the man’s discomfiture, and the listeners at Cyrus’ party naturally laughed at the tale as well” (161). Gera also notes that “Once again Cyrus and his guests laugh at the tale and the Persian leader ironically praises the new recruits’ responsiveness and discipline” (162). This is laughter that harshly distinguishes the sophisticated and elite \textit{homotimoi} from the brutish commoners. Marchewka (2011) sees the stories the men tell about their subordinates as a “comedy of characters” (123) which emphasize the effects of ignorance and the lack of education (123-4). Marchewka is right but does not consider the class-based implications of this behavior.
this impression by insisting repeatedly that it was “very charming” and “laughable.” The narrator’s interpretation of the scene rings false because he views and interprets the scene from only one perspective: Cyrus’. It is through his inability or disinclination to consider the scene from the perspective of Cyrus’ subordinates who are mocked, humiliated, and taken advantage of that the narrator is able to claim that the scene is funny and charming.

The narrator makes a similar intercession soon afterward: when Cyrus and his mother are debating whether he should return to Persia after his short stay in Media—she is concerned that he might be corrupted by Median justice—Cyrus makes a number of problematic arguments in an attempt to convince his mother to allow him to remain in Media. Cyrus says he wants to remain in Media to become an excellent horseman, but his mother raises the question of whether he will not become corrupted by his time in Astyages’ court. Cyrus’ response, that he is already an expert in justice, to which he testifies by recounting a particular beating he received for advancing a distinctly un-Persian concept of justice, should not necessarily reassure the reader that Cyrus cannot become corrupted for two reasons. First, a ten year-old child insisting that he is already an expert in the concept of justice suggests a certain arrogance, or over-confidence, that might cause the reader to doubt the wisdom of Cyrus’ words. Second, Cyrus’ account

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384 Cyr., B.2.1; B.3.1.
385 Gray (2011) is right in seeing Mandane as “very concerned for the education of her son in justice” (261), even if Mandane does not play a large role in the text.
386 Cyr., A.3.15; A.3.16.
388 Danzig (2009) fails to notice any irony in this, arguing that “It would surely be perplexing if in demonstrating his perfect knowledge Cyrus were to select an anecdote which reveals his lack of perfect knowledge” (287). In the context of a young child boasting about his perfect knowledge, I would suggest that Cyrus’ ironic failure to prove his boasts should be expected, not perplexing. On the resonance of this scene with the scene in Herodotus in which Cyrus, playing as king, beats his
of his lesson in Persian justice does not necessarily teach the reader (or Mandane) the lesson that Cyrus thinks it does. He had been appointed practice-judge, had judged in favor of a big boy who had stolen a small boy’s too-big shirt, and was then beaten by his teacher because Cyrus did not understand that “ὅπωτε δὲ κρίναι δέοι ποτέρου ὁ χιτὼν εἴη (one must judge to whom the tunic belongs),” since a judge does not determine “τοῦ ἂρμοττοντος (the fitting)” but “κτῆσις δικαία (just possession).”

Cyrus claims that this has taught him “τά γε δίκαια παντάπασιν (at least in what justice is);” yet it also leaves open the possibility that Cyrus is not convinced that this is justice and that he has just learned how to conceal, for now, his own appreciation of justice—the fitting—under the facade of Persian justice—just possession. The problematic aspect of his attitude is amplified as Cyrus responds to his mother’s justified worries about how Median behavior might acculture Cyrus into behaving in an unjust and anti-Persian manner. Cyrus dismisses her complaints by claiming that he could not possibly learn pleonexia from Astyages, because Astyages “δεινότερός ἐστιν [...] διδάσκειν μεῖον ἢ πλέον ἔχειν· ἢ οὐχ ὀρθῷς, ἐφ᾽ ὅτι καὶ Μήδους ἅπαντας δεδίδαχεν αὑτοῦ μεῖον ἔχειν (is more clever at teaching one to have less than to have more. Or do you not see that he has taught all the Medes to have less than himself)?”

Cyrus thus claims that he has been inoculated to the Median sort of justice by his rigorous education in the School and, flippantly, by his grandfather’s tyrannical attitude toward possessions. The attitude he expresses here is

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390 Cyr., A.3.17.
391 Cyr., A.3.18.
392 Tatum (1989) says of this that “A joke at his own expense does no harm, especially if it enables him to do as he pleases” (105). Tatum later pointedly notes that “Xenophon does not say whether or not Mandane laughed at this” (106).
problematic because it expresses his arrogance towards wisdom—Cyrus knows everything already—and hints at a lack of commitment to Persian justice on his part—his later behavior suggests that Cyrus really wanted to stay because he enjoyed the opportunities provided to a clever manipulator by the hierarchy of the Median court. This is one of the first hints the reader receives of Cyrus’ truly tyrannical nature—it is an important passage. The narrator’s interpretation, however, does not reflect the seriousness of this revelation.

The narrator attempts to dismiss any concerns the reader might have, to encourage the reader to view this passage as mere childish babbling, by concluding this conversation with his mother with the phrase, “τοιαῦτα μὲν δὴ πολλὰ ἐλάλει ὁ Κῦρος.” The word λαλέω, although it can simply mean ‘to speak,’ more generally means ‘to babble’ or ‘to chatter.’ The use of his word—this is childish babbling that can be dismissed—encourages the reader to view what Cyrus says as the meaningless babbling of a child. Yet in the event, Cyrus will as an adult discard the Persian concept of justice, that he here claims he prefers, in exchange for the tyrannical-Median concept of justice that he once claimed was beaten out of him. Tatum notes that “What [Cyrus] has done is reveal how readily he can abandon the norms of one society for another when it suits his purposes. Learning about justice is a serious business among the Persians, and Cyrus has turned the whole enterprise into a joke.” As before, the narrator attempts to play down the

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393 Nadon (2001), 50.
394 In the LSJ, the primary definition is “talk, chat, prattle.” Danzig (2009) notes this is dismissive, saying that “Although Xenophon describes this scene as an example of young Cyrus’ ‘chatter’ […], it would be a mistake to dismiss it as devoid of serious content” (275).
396 Tatum (1989), 106. Gera (1993) sees this scene as less serious; claiming that Cyrus’ arguments are “clever” (77), she seems convinced when Cyrus “dismisses his mother’s fears that his grandfather will teach him to be excessively acquisitive” (77). She associates this content and form of this scene with the
seriousness this passage through dismissive language that attempts to reduce the perceived seriousness of what Cyrus has done in order to encourage the reader to overlook the serious problems contained within Cyrus’ words.

On top of the narrator’s tendency to dismiss the seriousness of Cyrus’ problematic statements, the narrator will speak hypocritically in order to always approve of what Cyrus says and does. This hypocrisy is often due to Cyrus’ own inconsistent behavior.397

For example, the narrator takes the opportunity afforded by the Persian capture of the Assyrian camp to draw a hard distinction between the virtue of the Persians under Cyrus’ command and the obvious effeminate decadence of the Assyrian soldiers. In capturing the slowest-moving refugees fleeing from the Assyrian camp, the Median horsemen had seized

\[\text{γυναικῶν τῶν βελτίστων τῶν μὲν γνησίων, τῶν δὲ καὶ παλλακίδων διὰ τὸ κάλλος συμπεριαγομένων, ταῦτας ἐπιμέλειας προσήγουν. πάντες γὰρ ἐτι καὶ νόν οἱ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν στρατευόμενοι ἔχοντες τὰ πλείστων ἀξία στρατεύονται, λέγοντες ὅτι καὶ τῶν μάλλον μάχοντ' ἄν εἰ τὰ φύλλα τα παρεῖσθ' τούτοις γάρ φασίν ἀνάγκην εἶναι προθύμως ἀλέξειν. ἴσως μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἔχει, ἴσως δὲ καὶ ποιοῦσιν αὐτὰ τῇ ἡδονῇ}\]

conversation between Perikles and Alcibiades in the Memorabilia (A.2.40-6), pointing out that a Socrates-figure dominates neither scene (77); despite this, she does not note that her argument implicitly associates the young Cyrus with the young Alcibiades. This association should deeply trouble any reader of the Memorabilia.

397 There has been virtually no scholarly discussion of this passage in which we see Cyrus enslave and distribute free women to the Persian soldiers, much less how problematic it is from the perspective of Persian moderation, even much less the narrator’s several hypocritical reactions to the distribution of women. Due (1989) (implicitly) notes—approvingly—that the enslaved women are distributed to the Persians (59, note 31), and (implicitly) criticizes Cyaxares for (allegedly) wanting an enslaved women (59). Gera (1993) does include Pantheia as part of the “booty set aside for Cyrus” (221), which, again implicitly, includes the other enslaved women in the category of booty distributed to the Persian army. Nadon (2001), Rasmussen (2009), and Tatum (1989) do not address the scene. Gray (2011) goes so far as to say that Xenophon “has Cyrus impose on the subject nations only the philosophical form of slavery that comes from having their appetites indulged, rather than the whips and chains associated with other Persian kings in Herodotus” (283), which ignores the fate of these women and the capital punishment levied against some of the Assyrian slaves Cyrus captured (Δ.5.5-6). Field (2012), however, sees the implications of Cyrus’ actions. She says, “the full story of the plunder that so motivates his armies is gradually brought to the surface […] Xenophon often speaks only euphemistically about the fate of vanquished women (see 4.1.9, 4.2.32, 4.4.4, 4.5.3, 4.4.7, 4.5.39, not so euphemistically at 3.3.67), but the juxtaposition of Cyrus’ injunction against plunder of this kind (4.2.25-26), and the subsequent description of all the women captured by the Medes and Hyrcanians (4.3.2) brings the ugly truth to the surface” (729).
women of the highest rank, some of them wedded wives, other concubines who were taken about because of their beauty; and they were bringing them in, for all those who campaign in Asia still take along on the campaign what is most valuable, saying that they would fight more if what is dearest should be present, for they profess that necessity obliges one to defend them zealously. Perhaps this is so, but perhaps they also do this because they take delight in the pleasure.398

This not-infrequently happens to Asian kings in Greek literature, whether historical—such as Artaxerxes’ capture of Cyrus the Younger’s concubine at Cunaxa—or literary—for example, Chaireas’ seizure of Statira, the Great King’s wife, in Chaireas and Callihroe.399 The narrator here sneers in response to the behavior of the Assyrians: he concludes this paragraph by stating “Perhaps this is so, but perhaps they also do this because they take delight in the pleasure.”400 Thus the narrator draws a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them:’ Cyrus’ virtuous army does not function how the shameful Assyrians do. The Assyrians claim that they fight better while being observed by their wives and concubines, yet Cyrus’ manly men do not require such encouragement.401 On top of this, the narrator clearly believes even this emasculating claim to be only part of the truth: the Assyrians are lying when they claim that this is the only reason they bring their women on campaign. They cannot divorce themselves from pleasure. It is the sign of a nation of pleasure seekers, of sex-mad decadent maniacs who fall far short of Persian moderation. The narrator sneers at their weakness: the implication is that they are not, as a nation, as fit to rule as the Persians.

Yet despite the narrator’s obvious hostility towards this custom of ‘the Asians,’ once Cyrus approves of identical behavior, the narrator approves of it as well, without

398 Cyr., Δ.3.1-2.
399 Ana., Α.10.2.; Chaireas and Callihroe, 7.6 (in Reardon 1989).
400 Cyr., Δ.3.2.
401 While Cyaxares’ Medes were accompanied by their slaves, there is never any evidence put forward that they were traditionally accompanied by women in any legal situation, whether wives or concubines.
any indication that he is acting hypocritically. There are two later instances which involve
women accompanying Cyrus’ soldiers; in the first of which, the narrator preserves an
approving silence, overlooking the fact that not long before he had harshly criticized the
practice. The same women, those captured by the Medes, those who prompted the
narrator to criticize their presence in the Assyrian army, are soon after distributed to the
Persian soldiers and even to Cyrus himself.\footnote{402} One might expect some comment from the
narrator on how Cyrus allows women to be distributed to his soldiers, since he had
sneered at this practice mere paragraphs before. The Assyrians even had the excuse, even
if the narrator disparages it, that they believed the presence of their beloved women in the
army compelled them to fight better. Yet the Persians cannot make even this excuse: for
them, these women are sex slaves and we can hardly accept that they come to love these
women so immediately that it causes them to fight harder. This leaves the reader to
suspect, based on the narrator’s sneers, that the Persians enjoy owning these women
solely for pleasure, the very practice the narrator had sneered at. Yet the narrator remains
silent, thereby implicitly approving of the behavior of Cyrus and the Persians. When the
Assyrians are accompanied by their beloved wives, the narrator claims it as a symptom of
their devotion to pleasure; when the Persians are accompanied by the exact same women,
now sex slaves instead of wives, the narrator remains silent. Hypocritical in his silence
here, the narrator later even speaks in favor of it.

After the settlement in Babylon, Cyrus and his closest lieutenants hold a
symposium at which he rewards them for their service. Among the presents is an amount
of women’s fashion accessories; he takes the “γυναικείον κόσμον, καὶ ἐκέλευσε τῇ
402 \textit{Cyr.}, Δ.6.11-Ε.1.1.
γυναίκι δοῦναι, ὅτι ἀνδρείως συνεστρατεύετο τῷ ἀνδρὶ (feminine adornment and told Tigranes to give it to his wife, because she had courageously campaigned along with her husband).”\(^{403}\) Not only does this contradict the narrator’s first statement about women accompanying their husbands—here Tigranes’ wife is to be praised for her courage; previously the narrator criticized the same behavior as a sign of decadent indulgence in pleasure—but this praise is even relayed in the narrator’s voice: this recommends to the reader that the actions of Tigranes’ wife are to be seen as genuinely courageous.\(^{404}\) It is a compete contradiction of the narrator’s first statement: the reader is now told by the narrator that Tigranes’ wife is brave and that she is a model for imitation. Previously the narrator had sneered at a man who would allow his wife to accompany him since such behavior was vicious; here the practice is approved of without any reference to his previous condescension.

Thus, because the narrator always approves of what Cyrus has done and always criticizes Cyrus’ opponents, the narrator contradicts himself twice. The reader, if he notices these contradictions, is left with the impression that the narrator is being hypocritical, applying one standard of behavior to Cyrus and his men and yet applying another, partisan, standard to those who oppose Cyrus. For a Socratic, such relativistic justice should be troubling. Either the narrator is hoping the reader will not notice this contradiction, or, what is more likely, he has not noticed this contradiction at all in his devotion to Cyrus. Whatever Cyrus does is good: in this case the narrator does not think

\(^{403}\) _Cyr._, H.4.24.

\(^{404}\) Bal (1997)146. I discuss this above, but Bal’s general point seems to be that when something is presented from the perspective of the/a narrator, it obtains a certain degree of authority that it otherwise would not have (if, for example, it were presented from the perspective of another character).
beyond this fact. Thus far we have seen the narrator act unreliably in two ways: he imposes his own interpretations in order to put a positive spin on Cyrus’ behavior; secondly, his devotion to Cyrus leads him to contradict himself.

In addition to his intercessions into the text, the narrator falls silent over certain critical events that, based on contextual details, have likely happened. Despite the probability, if not certainty, that these events have happened, the narrator does now draw attention to them in his narrative. The mysterious death of the old Assyrian king is likely the first of these events to come to the attention of the reader.\(^\text{405}\) The narrator’s most important omission is that he does not discuss, after an initial suggestive, yet vague, introduction, who started the war between Assyria and Media. Yet what the reader believes to be the origin of this war is crucial: Cyrus’ basic justification for seizing Assyria and assassinating the new Assyrian king is based on a certain understanding of how the war began. In the following section, I discuss a number of problematic details that undermine Cyrus and the narrator’s version of how this war began; it is at first a seemingly straightforward issue that, on closer inspection, becomes at best murky and at worst deliberately obscured by the narrator. I argue that, based on incidental details revealed by the narrator, we at least cannot be certain that the Assyrians started this war and, at worst, that the Medes and Persians were in fact the (accidental) aggressors.

\(^{405}\) In the briefest possible precis, the Old Assyrian king is seen to be alive prior to (Γ.3.44) and (probably) during (Γ.3.68) the battle against Cyaxares’ army, yet the narrator announces, in the aftermath of the battle, that “the Assyrians, since both their ruler and with him nearly all the best troops were dead, all were despondent” (Δ.1.8). Clearly the Old Assyrian king was killed during the battle, but the narrator never mentions the details of his death. My conclusion, that if the Persians (or the Armenians, Cyrus’ functional subordinates) killed the Old Assyrian king, the narrator would have crowed about it, and that if the Assyrians had in some bizarre crime killed their own king, the narrator would have perpetually condemned them for it, leaves only the possibility that the Medes killed the Old Assyrian king and that the narrator remained silent about this in order to avoid praising Cyaxares who was about to be dispossessed.
through a combination of a failure in Cyaxares’ intelligence-gathering and Cyrus’ constitutional aggressiveness.

Among Cyrus’ justifications for his protracted invasion of Assyria, the most important is that the Assyrians, through invading Media, made themselves the aggressors of this conflict. Cyrus’ invasion and confiscation of their land was a just reprisal for what they had wanted, and intended, to do to Media. Not only is this his primary justification for his invasion, but this justification is repeated over and over by Cyrus and his allies. Cyrus’ basic position is that unprovoked and unjustified invasions are unjust and the Assyrian king, by virtue of his tyrannical invasion of Media, deserves severe punishment for his crimes. Thus Cyrus justifies his subjugation of the Assyrians and their allies: in other words, he justifies virtually everything he does up to the point that he crowns himself king in Babylon by blaming the Assyrians for beginning the war. As Tatum puts it, “the Assyrian war enables the romantic empire of Cyrus to flourish easily...

406 No modern scholar has objected to this position. Gera (1993) refers to the old Assyrian king as “one of the villains of the Cyropaedia” (113). Due (1989) states that “The enemies of Cyrus and Cyaxares are doing something morally wrong...when they assault another country” (160). Ambler (2001) says that Cyrus’ archenemy is the king of Assyria, and he is so wicked, and especially so envious, that he can never be expected to acknowledge the worth of anyone else” (9). Nadon (2001) states that the “alliance intended to secure the mutual safety and independence of Persia and Media thus also serves to facilitate the Assyrian king’s imperial ambitions,” although he adds that the Assyrian king fear of the combined power of Persia and Media was “altogether justified” (55). Azoulay (2000) describes him as “l’adversaire principal, le mauvais roi assyrien” (2). Carlier (2010), who is generally skeptical of Cyrus, mentions that “Xenophon clearly shows that the brutality and the unpopularity of the Assyrian king made his work much easier: as much as his own qualities, it is the contrast with the enemy leader that was the decisive factor in the defections” (343). Tatum (1989) refers to the Assyrian’s actions as “an invasion of Persian and Median territory” (120). Tatum’s position is remarkable, given that the Assyrians never came closer to Media than a six day march within their own territory: he is even aware of this, as he dismisses the war he claims the Assyrians started as “a war that never was” (93), yet still condemns them for it.

407 For example, Cyrus justifies stealing from the Assyrians as just because the Assyrians started the war (A.5.13); Cyrus claims the pending Assyrian invasion of Media as the justification for the Median invasion of Assyria (G.3.14); some Medes join Cyrus’ army because he had seemed to defend Media against the invasion of the Assyrian (Δ.2.10); and Gobryas argues that the invasion of Assyria must be taken to its conclusion because the Assyrian “has not paid retribution for the injustices he tried to do to you” (ξ.1.11).
[The Assyrians] are supremely bad, but so vaguely present at the very margins of the text that they serve mainly as the polar opposite of Cyrus, evil rulers from whose example everyone may happily flee. They turn Cyrus’ campaign into a quest, somewhat like the great adventure that gives literary form to later romance. Yet, that the Assyrians are portrayed as such comically evil monsters need not mean that they actually are monsters: it is possible that the new Assyrian king is a nuanced figure portrayed as a monster for political and personal reasons by the narrator, Cyrus, Cyaxares, Gobryas, and Gadatas, among others. Despite the importance Cyrus places on this justification, a close examination of particular details involved in the development of the plot over the first three books severely undermines this claim. The end result of this examination, as I argue, is that, in the most generous interpretation, Cyrus’ claims of the moral high ground in this war are excessively shaky and possibly even based on mistaken, perhaps fictitious, justifications.

The first the reader hears of the pending Assyrian invasion is from the narrator of the Cyropaideia. The narrator’s description of the Assyrian king’s intentions and preparations not only makes the invasion of Media seem inevitable but casts them in the worst possible light.

ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων βασιλεὺς κατεστραμμένος μὲν πάντας Σύρους, φύλον πάμπολυ, ὑπήκοον δὲ πεποιημένος τὸν Ἀραβίων βασιλέα, ὑπηκόους δὲ ἔχων ἠδη καὶ Ὑρκανίους, πολιορκῶν δὲ καὶ Βακτρίους,

408 Tatum (1989), 93-4. Due (1989) has a similar point. She says that Xenophon is able to avoid the “problems concerning the moral or immoral character of founding or exerting the power of an empire” (160-1) because “in the main part of the work Xenophon chooses to describe Cyrus’ wars as belonging together as parts of the same defence-action. Croesus and the Assyrian king are allies, it is their joint forces which make the assault and which have to be beaten” (161). She also says that “it is right and just to defend yourself and your country against aggressors” (160). Cf. Nadon (2001), 43. Higgsens (1977) says, even more strongly, that “Cyrus’ winning of more and seeking for advantage does not violate justice. He neither seeks out, nor initiates any of his wars, and he begins his career of campaigning only after an invitation from the Medes, who have been first wronged by others” (47). Whether the Assyrians actually are aggressors is crucially important.

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The king of Assyria, having subdued all the Syrians, a very large nation, having made the king of Arabia his subject, having the Hyrcanians as subjects already and besieging the Bactrians as well, believed that if he should reduce the Medes, he would easily come to rule over all those in the area, for their tribe seemed to be the strongest of all those nearby. He thus sent messengers around to all those beneath him, and to Croesus the king of the Lydians, to the king of the Cappadocians, to both Phrygias, to the Paphlagonians and Indians, to the Carians and Cilicians. In part, he slandered the Medes and Persians, saying that these nations were great, strong, and united towards the same end, that they had made marriages with each other, and that they would be likely, unless someone should reduce them first, to come to each of the other nations and subdue them in turn. Some, being persuaded even by these arguments, made an alliance with him; others were persuaded by gifts and money, for in these he abounded.

The narrator makes two relevant claims in this passage: he claims that the Assyrian king is preparing to invade Media unprovoked, and he argues that the public justification given, that the Assyrian king was worried about Median ambitions, is utterly untrue. Let us start with the latter claim: the narrator rejects the Assyrian king’s claim to have subdued some of his neighbors and allied with some others in order to defend himself and the rest of the region from the aggression of the Medes as slanderous. Yet, this is not prima facie slanderous. Although the narrator attributes the cause of the war here to the Assyrian’s ambitions and rejects his stated motivation of protecting himself from Median aggression, information provided elsewhere undermines this. Here the narrator criticizes the Assyrian king for subduing neighbors and making alliances with others, but the reader has already seen that the Medes have been doing precisely the same thing: Astyages, prior to his death, had subdued Armenia and compelled them to supply...
him with soldiers and tribute; Astyages had also formed a military alliance with Persia. We must admit that not only the Assyrians but the Medes as well have been allying with or subduing their neighbors. Whether the Assyrians or Medes started this arms race is unclear, but the timing of the Medes’ actions—Persia and Media have been allied for at least thirty years, at least since the marriage of Cambyses and Mandane, and Armenia was conquered by Astyages, who died at some point in the ten years prior to this recent build-up of Assyrian troops—suggests that the Medes may have been responsible for this tension. Assyria has gathered more allies than Media, but that does not mean they started this arms race, only that they were more successful at it. Additional details allow us to confirm that the previous thirty years of relations between Assyria and Media had not been peaceful, which again undermines the narrator’s implication that the Assyrian king’s behavior was unprovoked.

There had been a period of intermittent warfare between Media and Assyria stretching back for more than, one suspects substantially more than, ten years prior to the Assyrian king’s mustering of soldiers. There is, first of all, the skirmish between the Assyrians and Medes that precipitates Cyrus’ departure from Media: it took place at the

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410 Cyrus explicitly asks the Armenian king this during his trial: “When you were conquered by [Astyages], did you agree that you would pay tribute and send an army wherever he directed, and that you would not have fortifications” (Γ.1.10)? The alliance with Persia is implicit from the beginning (the Persian king being married to the Median princess, A.3.1) but is seen in action when Cyaxares summons the Persians to fight for him in response to his intelligence from Assyria (A.5.4). Note that the Assyrian king even singles out Astyages’ marriage alliance with Persia as particularly dangerous (A.5.3).

411 Cyrr., A.5.2. Astyages’ death and the Assyrian king’s buildup of troops are depicted as sequential—“In the progress of time...Astyages died...The king of Assyria...believed that if he should reduce the Medes, he would easily come to rule over all those in the area” (A.5.2)—but there is no indication of how much time separates the two events. Due (1989) argues that Cyrus must be around 26 years of age when appointed general of the Persian army (42), which is a fair estimate, although his parents’ marriage (and the plans for the marriage and resultant treaty) must have taken place more than 26 years before. Hägg (2012) says the year of battles takes place at “about his twenty-seventh” (53) year.
end of his tenure in Media, which places it somewhere around ten years prior to the muster of the Assyrians. The narrator says,

When [Cyrus] was about fifteen or sixteen years old, the son of the king of the Assyrians, who was about to get married, desired to have a hunt of his own at this time. So, hearing that there was a great deal of game in the borderlands between themselves and the Medians, and that it had not been hunted because of the war, he desired to go out to this spot...When evening came, a garrison of cavalry and infantry arrived from the city to relieve its predecessor, so it seemed to him that a great army was now on hand, for there were two garrisons of guards together, and he himself had come with many cavalry and infantry troops. He thus deliberated that it would be very good to take plunder from the Median territory, and he believed both that this deed would appear more brilliant than the hunt and that there would be a great abundance of victims for sacrifice.

The narrator describes the Assyrian prince’s behavior, yet nothing in his description suggests that what the prince does is abnormal. Neither the prince nor the narrator seem to suspect that such a hostile action might provoke the Median king into declaring war on Assyria. The Assyrian garrison, presumably one of many along the Medo-Assyrian border, when doubled, amounts to “a great army;” this suggests that there were a considerable amount of soldiers protecting the Assyrian border—the Assyrian border was not protected when Cyaxares breaks the peace with Assyria by invading it. That the Assyrian prince did not fear worsening his nation’s relationship with Media through a celebratory razzia, that the Assyrian border was unusually highly guarded, that the narrator notes that the borderland between Assyria and Media “had not been hunted because of the war,” all suggest that Media and Assyria were, ten years prior to the

412 Cyr., A.4.16-17.
413 Cyr., Γ.3.23.
muster of the Assyrians, at war and had been at war for some time. Indeed, it is even likely that the Persians had participated in this war on the side of the Medes, for when Cyrus first comes with his army to Media he says to Cyaxares that the bulk of his army is comprised of those who “πρόσθεν ἐφοίτων πρὸς ὑμᾶς μισθοφόροι (used to come to you even before as mercenaries).” Media had previously called upon the Persians to aid them in battles more than once (the imperfect tense, and literal meaning, of ἐφοίτων suggest that this had been a frequent occurrence) before. Admittedly, the Medes’ intentions in summoning the Persian commoners is not stated, and they need not have fought the Assyrians every time—they could have been used against the Armenians, for instance. The context of the political relationship between Media and Assyria seems to be clear, even if the narrator never directly addresses it: Media and Assyria had been intermittently at war for more than the previous ten years, and the Medes had previously involved their ally, Persia, and their subject nation, Armenia, in fighting the Assyrians in this period. Political tensions were clearly high between these two fierce enemies and neighbors.

Thus we see that the narrator, in criticizing the Assyrian king for mustering his troops, calls attention to only those aspects of the regional political context that are flattering to Media, Cyrus’ ally. By choosing to focus on only certain aspects of the political context, the narrator makes the Assyrian’s build-up of troops and war appear to be an unprovoked and aggressive action against the peaceful Medes. Yet this is clearly a misleading presentation of the situation. The Medes and Assyrians had been at war at least once before in the last ten years—and we never learn who started that war—and the

414 Cyr., B.1.2.
Assyrian’s policy of gathering allies through war and treaty is matched by, if not in imitation of, similar behavior on the part of the Medes. The narrator’s refusal, or failure, to connect the dots on the Median side creates the impression that the Assyrians are at fault. Should the reader realize that both Medes and Assyrians have been acting identically, it becomes hypocritical to blame only the Assyrians for this behavior.

There is another aspect to the narrator’s summary of the Assyrian king’s preparations that is problematic. In the narrator’s presentation of the situation, two contradictory claims about the Assyrian king’s motivations are presented: he says that the king

ἐνόμιζεν, εἰ τοὺς Μήδους ἀσθένεις ποιήσειε, πάντων γε τὸν πέρις ῥοδίους ἄρξειν· ἰσχυρότατον γὰρ τὸν ἐγγύς φύλον τοῦτο εἴδοκε εἶναι. οὕτω δὲ διαπέμπει πρὸς τε τοὺς ὑπ’ αὐτὸν πάντας [...] τὰ μὲν καὶ διαβάλλον τοὺς Μήδους καὶ Πέρσας, λέγων ώς μεγάλα τ’ εἶθι ταῦτα ἐθνη καὶ ἱσχυρὰ καὶ συνεστηκότα εἰς ταῦτα, καὶ ἐπιγαμίας ἀλλήλοις πεποιημένοι εἶεν, καὶ κινδυνεύσοιεν, εἰ μὴ τις αὐτοὺς φθάσας ἁσθένεις, ἐπὶ ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐκαστρέψαςθαι.

believed that if he should reduce the Medes, he would easily come to rule over all those in the area, for their tribe seemed to be the strongest of all those nearby. He thus sent messengers around to all those beneath him... In part, he slandered the Medes and Persians, saying that these nations were great, strong, and united towards the same end, that they had made marriages with each other, and that they would be likely, unless someone should reduce them first, to come to each of the other nations and subdue them in turn.415

We are given two contradictory motivations: the Assyrian king, the narrator asserts, privately believed that if he should overthrow the Medes, “he would easily come to rule over all those in the area.”416 The Assyrian king says, however, that he was concerned about the growing power of the Medes and feared that “unless someone should reduce them first, [they would] come to each of the other nations and subdue them in turn.”417

The message the Assyrian king sends to his subjects and allies is defensive in nature: he

415 Cyr., A.5.2-3.
416 Cyr., A.5.2.
417 Cyr., A.5.3.
wants to protect his own country from growing Median aggression. The narrator assures us that this is a lie, however, because this mustering of armies was motivated by the old Assyrian king’s vicious and ambitious nature. There is something incredible here: the narrator is not omniscient, yet he claims to have special access to the private and personal thoughts of Cyrus’ mortal enemy. He can no more know the the genuine motivation behind the Assyrian king’s actions than anyone can possibly know the true motivation of anyone else. Yet the narrator’s claim to have such politically damning information should cause the reader to be especially suspicious. We may believe that the narrator imposes on the Assyrian king what he believes to be the king’s genuine motivation, but we should not believe that the narrator is necessarily accurate in this attribution.

Thus the narrator’s assertion that the old Assyrian king was going to war with Media because he “believed that if he should reduce the Medes, he would easily come to rule over all those in the area, for their tribe seemed to be the strongest of all those nearby” not only implicitly claims access to knowledge he cannot possess but puts the Assyrian’s actions in the worst possible light. The narrator’s interpolation not only contradicts the Assyrian’s stated intentions in gathering his army, but it also whitewashes similar behavior by the Medes. That the Assyrian king wanted to dominate the whole of the Middle East is not impossible, of course (although I will debate this below when discussing the Assyrian king’s final speech). Yet the narrator condemns the Assyrian king for doing certain things—gathering allies through war and diplomacy in order to rival his powerful neighbor—that the Medes do as well. Thus even the first mention of the coming war between the Medes and the Assyrians that will play such an crucial role in justifying

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418 Cyr., A.5.2.
Cyrus’ behavior is a biased and misleading presentation of the situation that encourages the reader to side against the aggressive and vicious Assyrians and side with Cyaxares and Cyrus, their virtuous and peaceful victims. It imposes an uncertain and biased interpretation of the king’s actions under the pretext of conveying accurate and certain information.

The narrator’s account is again undermined because he ties his announcement of the Assyrian’s perfidious preparations to what he claims is Cyaxares’ reception of accurate and certain intelligence information that confirms the narrator’s allegations. Yet it is later—incidentally—revealed that Cyaxares’ “accurate” intelligence reports are faulty. The narrator, immediately after he authoritatively lists the allies and subject nations mustered by the Assyrian, notes that “Κυαξάρης δὲ ὁ τοῦ Ἀστυάγους παῖς ἐπεὶ ἤσθάνετο τὴν τ’ ἐπιβουλὴν καὶ τὴν παρασκευὴν τῶν συνισταμένων ἐφ’ ἑαυτόν, αὐτός τε εὐθέως ὃσα ἐδύνατο ἀντιπαρεσκευάζετο καὶ εἰς Πέρσας ἔπεμπε (When Astyages’ son Cyaxares perceived this design and the preparation of those uniting against him, he both immediately made such counterpreparations as he could himself, and he sent messages to the Persians).”

The implication is that Cyaxares is working with accurate information of the Assyrian’s mobilization: this accurate information confirms the narrator’s claim that the invasion is inevitable. Yet this is twice undermined at later points. First, Cyaxares himself reveals to Cyrus that rather than reacting to definite information, he is merely responding to rumors. When Cyrus arrives in Media, he asks Cyaxares how he can be certain the Assyrians will attack. Cyaxares replies that “; Ὅτι [...] πολλοὶ ἥκοντες αὐτόθεν ἄλλος ἄλλον τρόπον πάντες ταὐτὸ λέγουσιν (Because...many people have

419 Cyr., A.5.4.
arrived here from over there [in Assyria], and all say the same thing, though some in one way and some in another).”

Neither we nor Cyaxares should be absolutely certain that the Assyrians have mustered their army, that they intend to attack anyone, or that their target is Media. To put this another way: the Assyrian king has neither declared war upon nor sent any hostile messages to Media. Cyaxares and Cyrus rely upon the words of people from “over there,” although it is unclear whether the informants are soldiers who have defected, traveling merchants, farmers, or other sorts of people. Certainly Cyaxares’ counter-preparations are prudent and sensible, but it is noteworthy that neither Cyaxares nor Cyrus ever attempts to communicate with the Assyrian king. They view the war as inevitable: perhaps this is why they do not attempt to prevent the invasion through diplomacy. Yet the Anabasis’ account of Cyrus the Younger’s fake targets that concealed the true goal of his campaign should cause us to be skeptical of such rumors.

Perhaps the Assyrian spread the rumor that he would invade Media to cover for a planned invasion of Egypt. A consequence of this diplomatic silence is that there is no

420 Cyrr., B.1.4.
421 What are their motivations in coming to Media? If they are farmers or other private citizens, can their ‘authoritative’ information about what the Assyrian king is planning be trusted? If they are soldiers, can their motives in defecting and revealing this information to Cyaxares be trusted?
422 As Cyrus says in response to Cyaxares appraisal of the situation, “Then we must contend against these men” (B.1.4). Higgens (1977) notes that “[Cyrus] is concerned, as general, with one thing, waging the war, and his soldiers are to turn their attention to this and this only, for he has learned, Xenophon says, that those are best who turn their minds from many things to the one work at issue” (50). I think this is a more or less accurate description of Cyrus’ focus on war: there is no room for second thoughts or diplomacy.
423 He gathered a large army of his own troops intended to overthrow his brother under the pretense of warring with Tissaphernes (A.1.8); he gathered armies of Greek mercenaries by supporting Clearchus’ campaign against Thrace (A.1.9), by supporting Aristippus’ campaign in Thessaly (A.1.10), by instructing Proxenus to prepare an army to attack the Pisidians (A.1.11), and by instructing Sophaenetus and Socrates to prepare an army to campaign in the Ionian islands (A.1.11). Although the Greeks began to suspect that civil war was his goal by the time they reached Tarsus (A.3.1), Clearchus’ lies and bribes kept most loyal (A.3.20-21) until they arrived at Thapsacus on the Euphrates where Cyrus revealed the truth (A.4.11). For months he had pretended to war on Tissaphernes in Asia Minor while actually preparing an invasion of Mesopotamia.
communication between Cyaxares and the Assyrian king from the moment of mobilization until the Assyrian king lies dead on the battlefield. This silence allows the rumors of the Assyrian’s pending invasion to be effectively confirmed, since no information to the contrary is ever provided. Despite Cyaxares’ confidence, let us not be equally certain that the invasion is imminent. For, although the narrator leads the reader to believe that Cyaxares believed that war was inevitable due to accurate intelligence, later events reveal that Cyaxares’ information was never independently confirmed.

Although the identity of the informants who come to Cyaxares is never revealed, nor is their motivation in informing on the Assyrians, Cyaxares believes that his reckoning of the Assyrian invasion force is accurate. Cyrus, after realizing that war in inevitable, asks Cyaxares for a detailed description of the Assyrian army so that they can better prepare themselves to meet it. Cyaxares is precise in his catalogue of Assyrians and their allies: the Lydians will bring fifty thousand soldiers, the Greater Phrygians 48,000, the Cappadocians 36,000, the Arabs more than 10,100, the Hellespontine Phrygians 16,000, and the Assyrians themselves 22,000 cavalry and charioteers in addition to “πεζοῦς [...] παμπόλλους (very many infantry soldiers).”

The Carians, Cilicians, and Paphlagonians refuse to participate, although they had been sent for. Although Cyaxares admits a mild degree of uncertainty—“τοὺς μέντοι Ἑλληνας τοὺς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ οὐδὲν πω σαφὲς λέγεται εἰ ἕπονται (Nothing is yet said clearly, however, as to whether the Greeks who dwell in Asia will come)—the precision with the number of troops each nation will bring again creates the impression of accurate knowledge of the

424 Cyr., B.1.5.
425 Cyr., B.1.5.
426 Cyr., B.1.5.
situation. War appears inevitable.

Despite his single admitted uncertainty concerning the Greek contribution, the overall accuracy of Cyaxares’ intelligence appraisal is later contested. Cyaxares’ comprehensive list of the Assyrian’s allies is not, in fact, comprehensive: the Hyrcanians, who after defecting quickly become the most important Perso-Mede allies, are not included in Cyaxares’ report.\footnote{Cyaxares’ catalogue of the Assyrian army does not even agree with the narrator’s own catalogue: he is unaware of the Hyrcanian and Syrian forces within the Assyrian camp (A.5.2-3).} Even though Cyaxares’ intelligence reports are unaware of them, the Hyrcanians played a crucial role in the Assyrian army:

\textit{διὸ καὶ ἐχρῶντο αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τοῖς Σκιρίταις, οὐδὲν φειδόμενοι αὐτῶν οὔτ’ ἐν πόνοις οὔτ’ ἐν κινδύνοις· καὶ δὴ καὶ τότε ὑπεθυραλαξεὶν ἐκέλευσον αὐτοὺς ὡς χιλίους ἱππέας ὑπερετάς, ὡσεὶ τι διπεσθέν δεινὸν εἶ, ἐκεῖνοι πρὸ αὐτῶν τοῦτ’ ἐχοίειν.}

the Assyrians used them just as the Lacedaemonians use the Sciritae, sparing them neither labors nor risks. And thus on this occasion they commanded them, being about a thousand cavalry, to guard the rear, so that if anything terrible should come from that direction, they would get it first.\footnote{Cyr., Δ.2.1.}

Despite the hostility of the narrator’s analysis of the Assyrian use of the Hyrcanians—he implies they are used as cannon fodder\footnote{Despite the condemnation implicit in the narrator’s words, Cyrus begins to use the Hyrcanians just like the Assyrian used them immediately after their defection (Δ.2.27).}—it is clear that they were actually used to scout the extremes of the army, since as good riders they could escape and report on any danger they encountered.\footnote{This is not to say, of course, that such a position is without danger. It is likely that it was Hyrcanians who kept blundering into the deceptively placed fires around the Perso-Mede camp, with fatal results, in the run-up to the battle (Γ.3.25).} If Cyaxares’ intelligence report overlooks the Hyrcanians, perhaps the most important of the Assyrian allies, it suggests that the intelligence he gathered was less accurate than Cyaxares ever admits. There is not another catalogue of the Assyrian army once it and the Perso-Mede army meet, so Cyaxares’ overall estimate of their size and composition cannot be confirmed or rejected.\footnote{The reader is, in fact, presented with another catalogue of the Assyrian army, but it is not until a}
independent information proves Cyaxares’ intelligence report inaccurate.

Another detail that undermines the inevitability of a wicked Assyrian invasion of Media is that the Assyrians never, and never appear to intend to, invade Media. After Cyrus’ arrival in Media and the tense high-level discussions about the pending Assyrian invasion, the urgency of the situation vanishes almost immediately. A considerable if indefinite amount of time passes before the reader is reminded of the impending invasion of the Assyrians. After his initial meeting with Cyaxares, Cyrus equips the Persian commoners, after obtaining their consent, in the equipment of heavy infantrymen.\textsuperscript{432} While the narrator does mention the looming invasion immediately after Cyrus’ speech, it is the last mention of the invasion for some time and signifies that the focus of the text is about to shift: “During the time that the enemy was said to be approaching but had not yet arrived, Cyrus tried to exercise and bring strength to the bodies of his troops, to teach tactics, and to whet their souls for warlike [deeds].”\textsuperscript{433} This last reminder of the invasion is followed by an extended tangent in which Cyrus acclimatizes the commoners to their new equipment;\textsuperscript{434} he invents and judges martial competitions;\textsuperscript{435} he reorganizes his army;\textsuperscript{436} he exercises them;\textsuperscript{437} he holds dinner parties;\textsuperscript{438} and he discusses philosophy and politics.\textsuperscript{439} This lengthy period focused on training and organization is followed by Cyrus’

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{432} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.19.
\item \textsuperscript{433} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.20.
\item \textsuperscript{434} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.21.
\item \textsuperscript{435} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.22.
\item \textsuperscript{436} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.25.
\item \textsuperscript{437} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.29.
\item \textsuperscript{438} \textit{Cyr.}, B.1.30.
\item \textsuperscript{439} \textit{Cyr.}, B.2.1-31.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
attempt to reorganize the system of payments in the Persian army so that rewards are distributed according to merit (Cyrus believes will ensure that his favorites, his two-thousand homotimoi, receive the vast majority of the loot his army seizes). Although in proposing this new scheme for disbursing rewards he starts by saying “Men, friends, our contest is at hand, for our enemies are approaching,”—this is only the second mention of the pending Assyrian invasion after Cyrus’ arrival in Media—it is clear from the extended period of continued peace that follows this speech that Cyrus’ warning is not genuine but a tactic meant to pressure the Persian commoners to vote for his proposal. His speech is followed by more dinner parties, more innovation in training, and more dinner parties. This tedious period is thankfully interrupted—after a period of more training—by the arrival of Indian ambassadors who had been tasked by their king with investigating the war—the Indian king himself cannot decide who is at fault. In other words, enough time had passed from when the Assyrian king had sent messengers to India—and Cyaxares had summoned Cyrus—for the messengers to travel to India, the Indian king to prepare a response, and for the Indian fact-finding team to complete the return trip to the Medo-Assyrian border.

440 Cyr., B.2.21.  
441 Cyr., B.3.2.  
443 Cyr., B.3.17.  
444 Cyr., B.3.18.  
445 Cyr., B.3.21.  
446 Cyr., B.3.22.  
447 Cyr., B.4.1.  
448 Cyr., B.4.7.  
449 The Assyrian king sent ambassadors to India at A.5.3. To give a comparison, Cyrus sends ambassadors to India when he is in Armenia (Γ.2.29), after which point he returns to the Median army, waits for at least a week, helps defeat the Assyrian army, usurps the Median army from Cyaxares, captures the Assyrian camp, reconsolidates his army, marches to Gobryas’ fortress and rests, marches past Babylon to the western environs of Assyria where he goes to Gadatas’ fortress, returns all the way back to Media,
Indian delegation departs for Assyria, this period of inaction thankfully ends—not, however, due to the arrival of the Assyrian invasion. Rather, Cyrus talks Cyaxares into allowing him to invade Armenia (currently revolting against Media) to compel them to fulfill their military obligations to Cyaxares. One of the justifications Cyrus offers to Cyaxares for this invasion is that so much time has passed since he arrived from Persia that he has spent all his money and is concerned about becoming too much of a burden on Cyaxares’ purse. The amount of time that passes during Cyrus’ invasion of Armenia is unclear, but Cyrus spends at least two days hunting, followed by one day of invasion, another day of judicial trials, another day dealing with the Chaldeans, followed by Cyrus’ return (of undefined length) to Cyaxares. The section of the Cyropaideia stretching from Cyrus’ arrival in Media to his invasion of Armenia is probably the most tedious and slow-moving in the text. I apologize for the extended list of what happens in this period, but it is to emphasize how much time passes between Cyrus’ initial muster and when the war between the Assyrians and Medes begins to heat up. Despite the sense of urgency created upon Cyrus’ arrival in Media, it is not until Cyrus returns from Armenia to Cyaxares at Book G.3 that focus shifts back to the pending Assyrian invasion.

Yet, horrifyingly, upon Cyrus’ return from Armenia, there is still no indication that

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has an extended meeting/reconciliation with Cyaxares, and reconsolidates his army again, before the response from India arrives (§2.1). It is clear that it takes a considerable amount of time for messengers to reach India and return.

450 Cyr., B.4.11.

451 Cyrus hunts at B.4.20; he invades at B.4.31-2; he tries the Armenian king starting at Γ.1.9; he begins to deal with the Chaldeans at Γ.2.1; he returns to Armenia at Γ.3.2; he finally begins to return to Cyaxares at Γ.3.5.

452 Although lacking in the action and motion that categorizes much of the Cyropaideia, Nadon (2001) has argues that this section is fundamentally important because the administrative changes Cyrus introduces in this section permanently alter the Persian constitution and way of life (61-86). Reisert (2009) sees similarly important changes enacted here (303-4).
the promised invasion of the Assyrians will ever happen. Cyrus, growing frustrated with inaction and increasingly concerned that his men might burn out due to over-preparation,\textsuperscript{453} goes to Cyaxares in order to recommend that the Mede should seize the initiative by invading Assyria.\textsuperscript{454} The justification that he gives to Cyaxares is that by moving the army into Assyria they will avoid damaging Cyaxares’ own land through foraging; in addition he claims that such initiative will make their soldiers braver.\textsuperscript{455} Despite this, we know from what the narrator has said\textsuperscript{456} that Cyrus actually hopes that moving into Assyria will bring about the conflict with the Assyrian army sooner, that it will, in effect, fast-forward the war. Cyrus is just as impatient at the reader at the Assyrians’ delay in invading Media.

Thus, without confirmation that the Assyrians will actually invade and without any reports since the initial Assyrian defectors,\textsuperscript{457} the army “διέβη τὰ ὅρια (crossed the borders)” into Assyria and

\begin{quote}
εὐθὺς τοὺς μὲν πεζοὺς προαγαγόντες οὐ πολλὴν ὁδὸν ἐστρατοπεδεύοντο, τοῖς δὲ ἵπποις καταδρομὴν ποιησάμενοι περιεβάλοντο πολλὴν καὶ παντοίαν λείαν. καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν δὲ μεταστρατοπεδεύομενοι καὶ ἔχοντες ἄφθονα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια καὶ δῃοῦντες τὴν χώραν ἀνέμενον τοὺς πολεμίους.
\end{quote}

led the infantry forward a short distance and made camp, and with the cavalry they made raids and captured vast and varied booty. And after this, while changing their camp, having what they required in abundance, and ravaging the country, they awaited the enemy.\textsuperscript{458}

The “vast and varied” booty the Perso-Medes capture, incidentally, hints that the Assyrian citizens had absolutely no expectation that war was coming, because even those who

\begin{itemize}
    \item[453] \textit{Cyr.}, Γ.3.9.
    \item[454] \textit{Cyr.}, Γ.3.13.
    \item[455] \textit{Cyr.}, Γ.3.14-5; Γ.3.18,
    \item[456] \textit{Cyr.}, Γ.3.10, the narrator says that Cyrus “desired to take some action against the enemy now, knowing that rulers’ noble preparations often are made otherwise by their hesitation.”
    \item[457] \textit{Cyr.} Β.1.4.
    \item[458] \textit{Cyr.}, Γ.3.22-3.
\end{itemize}
lived along the border with Media had not secured their possessions in case of invasion; where, also, are the armies of Assyrian garrisons along their border that were previously there in times of war? The Assyrian civilians were absolutely unprepared for war with Media. Yet finally—finally!—after these months of waiting for the Assyrians, there is the first real news: some days or weeks after the Perso-Mede invasion, and ravaging, of Assyria, the Assyrians “ἐλέγοντο οὐκέτι δέχ' ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν ἀπέχειν (were said to be not ten days distant).” Even at this point, battle cannot come soon enough for Cyrus. He says to Cyaxares “ὥρα δὴ ἀπαντᾶν καὶ μήτε τοῖς πολεμίοις δοκεῖν μήτε τοῖς ἡμετέροις φοβουμένους μὴ ἀντιπροσιέναι, ἀλλὰ δῆλοι ὦμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἄκοντες μαχούμεθα (it is time to go to meet them, and not to seem either to the enemy or to our own troops to be afraid of going out in opposition).” Cyrus speaks of preventing cowardice but still wants the battle to happen as soon as possible. The Perso-Medes subsequently advance daily—presumably for five days—and meet the Assyrians a six day march (including the first day’s march across the border crossing into Assyria) within the borders of Assyria. I have presented the events of the Cyropaideia in this section in such fine detail because all of these incidental facts—none of which are called attention to by the narrator—taken together they paint a considerably different picture of the origin of this war than the one put forward by Cyrus, Cyaxares, and the narrator. The facts allow the very real possibility that Cyrus, impatient at waiting, provokes Cyaxares into invading Assyria on faulty information—that is to say, Cyaxares and Cyrus are, in fact, the aggressors in this war.

We are thus presented with a problem in interpreting the events of the text: as the

459 Cyr., A.4.16-17.
reader advances through the events leading up to the battle against the Assyrians, Cyrus,
Cyaxares, and the narrator present a particular interpretation of these events. Yet I have
argued that what the narrator, Cyrus, and Cyaxares claim the reader has seen is not
completely confirmed by what the reader has actually seen. Cyaxares and the narrator
claim that there the intelligence information that has come to Media proves the Assyrian
king is intending to invade Media, yet a closer look reveals that the intelligence
information Cyaxares presents is not based on definite information, is later proved to be
at least partially inaccurate, and is not even consistent with the narrator’s version of
events. Although Cyrus’ arrival results in a tense conversation that creates the impression
that the Assyrian invasion is underway, and although Cyrus repeats to his men over the
following period that the Assyrians are coming, the extended period of inaction that
follows again suggests that Cyaxares, Cyrus, and the narrator are not aware of the whole
truth: what is the Assyrian king doing in this period? It is difficult to accept that takes the
Assyrian so many months to assemble his army, which action initiates the Media’s hostile
maneuvering, in order to invade Media. Could we, for example, believe that it took
Croesus or the Phrygians (the most distant Assyrian allies) considerably longer to march
to Babylon as it took for the Assyrian messengers to make a round-trip to India? This
extended period of complete inaction, sprinkled by Cyrus’ attempts to keep his men
focused and well-trained, allows the possibility to creep in that the reason the Assyrian
invasion had not yet arrived is that the Assyrians never planned to invade Media, that the
intelligence reports were mistaken or a ruse to assuage the concerns of another Assyrian
neighbor. Whatever we may believe about these previous points, we cannot deny that,
when Cyrus talks Cyaxares into crossing over into Assyria and looting, the Perso-Mede army intentionally or unintentionally makes themselves the aggressors of this conflict since they invade Assyria without explicit provocation or threat. That they are able to continue looting Assyria unchallenged until, after a further wait, the Assyrian army appears an eleven-day march from the Medo-Assyrian border suggests that the Assyrian king’s troop movements are reactive, not part of his initial plan. Taken together, these events suggest that, despite what Cyrus, Cyaxares, and the narrator consistently claim and fundamentally depend upon as justification for their war and later full invasion of Assyria, the Assyrians did not begin this war. One final detail supports this interpretation: the Assyrian king’s speech to his troops before the battle.

The Assyrian king’s speech to his troops before the battle supports this interpretation of what occurred. Once the armies draw opposite each other, the Assyrian king gives a speech to his men prior to the battle. He says,

Ἀνδρεὶς Ἀσσύριοι, νῦν δεὶ ἀνδρὰς ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι· νῦν γὰρ ὑπὲρ ψυχῶν τῶν ὑμετέρων ἁγών καὶ ὑπὲρ γῆς ἐν ᾧ ἔφυτε καὶ [περὶ] οἴκων ἐν ᾧ ἔφυτε καὶ κακοτικῶν τε καὶ τέκνων καὶ περὶ πάντων ἃν πέσασθε ἁγαθόν. νικήσαντες μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντων τοῦτον ὑμῶν ὑμετέρων ὑμῶν καὶ ἄναστι πάντα τοῖς πολεμίοις; ἀνθρώπων ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐτράφηται, ὑπὲρ γυναικῶν τε καὶ τέκνων καὶ περὶ πάντων ὧν πέπασθε ἁγαθῶν. νικήσαντες μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντων τοῦτον ὑμῶν ὑμετέρων ὑμῶν καὶ ἄναστι πάντα τοῖς πολεμίοις; ἀνθρώπων ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐτράφηται, ὑπὲρ γυναικῶν τε καὶ τέκνων καὶ περὶ πάντων ὧν πέπασθε ἁγαθῶν. νικήσαντες μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντων τοῦτον ὑμῶν ὑμετέρων ὑμῶν καὶ ἄναστι πάντα τοῖς πολεμίοις; δοκεῖτε ὅτι τὰ κακοτικὰ ὕπατε καὶ τὸν τοῦτον ἀνθρώπον τοῖς πολεμίοις; ἐν ᾧ ἔφυτε καὶ περὶ οἴκων ἐν ᾧ ἔφυτε καὶ κακοτικῶν τε καὶ τέκνων καὶ περὶ πάντων ἃν πέσασθε ἁγαθόν. νικήσαντες μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντων τοῦτον ὑμῶν ὑμετέρων ὑμῶν καὶ ἄναστι πάντα τοῖς πολεμίοις; δοκεῖτε ὅτι τὰ κακοτικὰ ὕπατε καὶ τὸν τοῦτον ἀνθρώπον τοῖς πολεμίοις; ἐν ᾧ ἔφυτε καὶ περὶ οἴκων ἐν ᾧ ἔφυτε καὶ κακοτικῶν τε καὶ τέκνων καὶ περὶ πάντων ἃν πέσασθε ἁγαθόν. νικήσαντες μὲν γὰρ ἅπαντων τοῦτον ὑμῶν ὑμετέρων ὑμῶν καὶ ἄναστι πάντα τοῖς πολεμίοις; δοκεῖτε ὅτι τὰ κακοτικὰ ὕπατε καὶ τὸν τοῦτον ἀνθρώπον τοῖς πολεμίοις; τίς γὰρ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι οἱ μὲν νικῶντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῷζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνοντες σῴζονται, οἱ δὲ νικηταίνο...
This is not the speech of an invader.⁴⁶³ Although the Assyrian king does, towards the end of his speech, offer the men who stand firm against the enemy the possibility of personal profit—Cyrus’ go-to motivation for his own men—the Assyrian king’s first thoughts are on protecting what the Assyrians already possess. The Assyrian dwells on the horrifying consequences of being defeated by the Perso-Mede army: he hopes to rally his troops to victory by reminding them that if they lose the battle they will also lose their lives, their land, their parental houses (implying the loss of parents as well), their wives, and their children. The Assyrian king’s thoughts turn more and more inward, moving from the battlefield, to Assyrian farms, to Assyrian cities, and then within Assyrian houses, where the defenseless Assyrian women and children will hide from the raping and pillaging of the Perso-Medes.⁴⁶⁴ The Assyrian king does not try to spur on his soldiers by emphasizing the spoils they could gain from defeating the Perso-Mede army and looting the Median camp,⁴⁶⁵ nor does he speak of the riches they could accumulate if they captured the capital of Media and sacked it.⁴⁶⁶ Rather, he promises them that if they prove victorious in this battle they will be rewarded with remaining “lords over all these things [their family,
fields, and houses] just as before." These thoughts are defensive. Moreover, he continues to dwell on defeat. He says to his men an obvious thing, that they would be fools if they wanted to win, to live, or to earn some money yet choose to run from battle: they would increase their chances of losing the battle, increase their chances of dying, and decrease their chances of making money. The Assyrian king, in emphasizing this point, comes as close as he ever does to thoughts of plundering Media: he says, "For who does not know that victors both save what belongs to themselves and take in addition what belongs to the defeated, while the defeated at the same time throw away themselves and everything that belongs to themselves?" In this sentence, the Assyrian king both revisits a previous point—that the Assyrian soldiers must fight valiantly in order to "save what belongs to themselves," and adds a new aspect to his argument—if his soldiers win, they will be able to take things from the defeated Perso-Medes. Yet it is unclear whether he means the riches that could be obtained from the Median camp (now deep within Assyria) or he means the riches that will be obtained from the Median cities they will be able to conquer if they win this victory. Even though he briefly brings up the idea

467 Cyp., Γ.3.44.
468 Tatum (1989) reads this appeal differently: he understands the king’s appeal, which I understand as an appeal to love of country and family, as an appeal “to his army’s self-interest” (92). He later notes, “It is a perfect speech for a tyrant” (93). Tatum (1989) continues, “Since the Assyrian king rules by fear, the only way he knows how to inspire his army is by trying to make them fear defeat so much they will desire victory all the more” (93). Problematically, Cyrus, who says to his men things like “We must now know well that we are in a situation such that if we should go soft, we would obtain all the harshest things” (Δ.2.21), makes use of the same arguments as the Assyrian king. Tatum (1989) does not, however, see Cyrus’ words as tyrannical (204). For her part, Gera (1993) does not see the Assyrian’s speech as fundamentally vicious: she says that it “is not a bad example of pre-battle exhortation—it is rhetorical, appeals to the deepest emotions of his audience, and resembles to a great extent the kind of speeches Cyrus normally makes” (113). She goes so far as to say that the Assyrian king’s “attitude towards victory, defeat, and flight displayed here by the Assyrian king differs in no way from Cyrus’ own outlook” (112), and concludes that “Cyrus, it seems, is no more humane or noble than his foe, and any exhortation of his would simply echo the sentiments expressed here by the Assyrian king” (112).

469 Cyp., Γ.3.45.
470 Cyp., Γ.3.45.
of profit, he ends his speech on the same dour note, again reiterating that defeat for the Assyrians means the loss of all they possess.\textsuperscript{471} Despite, then, the ambiguity of the Assyrian king’s intentions in the last sentence of his speech, the overall thrust is clear: protect what you possess, men of Assyria, for this other army, if you lose, will take away everything you own. Not only is this speech the speech of a man defending his homeland from invaders, but it is strikingly different than Cyrus’ similar, but aggressive and offensively-minded, speech to his own soldiers.

Even though Cyrus is allegedly defending against an Assyrian invasion, the tone of his speech to the Persians, noticeably similar to the Assyrian’s in content, reveals him to be far more aggressive than the Assyrian king. Cyrus gives a motivational speech to his men in the extended period of downtime when they are waiting for the invasion of the Assyrians.

\textit{Ἄνδρες φίλοι, ὁ μὲν ἀγών ἐγγὺς ἡμῖν· προσέρχονται γὰρ οἱ πολέμιοι. τὰ δ’ ἀθλα τῆς νίκης, ἢν μὲν ἡμεῖς νικῶμεν (τούτο γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν δεῖ), δῆλον ὅτι οἱ τε πολέμιοι ἡμέτεροι καὶ τὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἁγαθὰ πάντα· ἢν δὲ ἡμεῖς αὐτὸς νικῶμεν—καὶ οὕτω τὰ τῶν νικῶμεν πάντα τοῖς νικῶσιν ἀεὶ ἀθλα πρόκειται. οὕτω δὴ, ἔφη, δὲι ὡς ἕκαστο πολέμιοι καὶ τὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἁγαθὰ πάντα· εἰ μὴ αὐτός τις προθυμήσεται, ὡς, εἰ μὴ αὐτός τε πριν μὴ ἔσωμεν τῶν τῶν θεῶν, ταχὺ πολλά καὶ καλά διαπράπτονται:}

Men, friends, our contest is at hand, for our enemies are approaching. It is clear that the prizes of victory—if we conquer (and one must always say this and make it so)—are that the enemies and all their goods things become ours. If, on the other hand, we are conquered, even so all the belongings of the conquered are always set before the conqueror as prizes. You thus must know that human beings who are partners in war swiftly accomplish many noble things when each of them has in himself this thought: Unless each is himself zealous, nothing that must occur will occur.\textsuperscript{472}

If we compare this speech to that of the Assyrian king, we see that they roughly discuss the same topics: both men recommend the benefits of victory to their army and do so in financial terms; they both also consider the consequences of defeat in similar terms. Yet

\textsuperscript{471} \textit{Cyr., Γ.3.45.}
\textsuperscript{472} \textit{Cyr., Β.3.2-3.}
there are significant differences in the tone of each leader. The Assyrian king speaks first of what the Assyrians in general will lose if they are defeated—“for now the contest is over your lives...”\(^{473}\)—while Cyrus’ first thought is of the lucrative possibilities offered by the prospect of victory—“It is clear that the prizes of victory... are that the enemies and all their goods things become ours.”\(^{474}\) The Assyrian, dwelling on what will be lost in the case of defeat, lingers over the personal and familiar, mentioning the “land in which you were born..., the houses in which you were raised..., your women and children...”\(^{475}\) He focuses on the human and the personal, reminding his soldiers of the love they feel for their country, their homes, and their families. Cyrus, however, never moves beyond the thought of inanimate possessions: in the case of victory they will gain “all [the enemy’s] goods things,” and in the case of defeat all “the belongings of the conquered are always set before the conqueror as prizes.”\(^{476}\) Cyrus’ mind—as he wants the minds’ of his soldiers to be—is fixated on future gain: no thought is wasted on the possibility, if the Persians and Medes lose the coming battle against the Assyrians, that Persia itself might be at risk. Cyrus does not consider the soldiers’ love of their country or families but talks only of financial profit and loss. Cyrus is constantly looking outward, looking into the purses of his neighbors, looking to see what they possess that someday he may take from them. The Assyrian king is the opposite: he is looking into his own purse, seeing what he and his men currently possess and that they may lose if they are defeated in the coming battle. The differences between the two men are striking: the Assyrian king is afraid of

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\(^{473}\) *Cyr.,* Γ.3.44.

\(^{474}\) *Cyr.,* Β.3.2.

\(^{475}\) *Cyr.,* Γ.3.44.

\(^{476}\) *Cyr.,* Β.3.2; Β.3.2.
losing what he already possesses, while Cyrus is excited about gaining what his neighbors possess. Although the two leaders touch on similar issues in their speeches, the differences in their attitudes and expectations are clear. Cyrus, not the Assyrian, speaks like an invader.

The question of whether the Perso-Medes or the Assyrians are responsible for this war is at least ambiguous, although as I have argued the weight of the evidence suggests that the Perso-Mede army, through a combination of Cyrus’ aggression and Cyaxares’ imperfect intelligence-gathering, became accidentally responsible for initiating the war and became, in effect, the aggressors. In the overall context of the Cyropaideia, this is crucial because so much of Cyrus’ justification for his actions rests on the fact that the Assyrians were the unprovoked, reckless aggressors and were owed punitive retribution for what they unsuccessfully attempted.

Yet the narrator’s (lack of an active) role in this is significant: although he transmits all the information to the reader required to undermine his own (and Cyrus’) assertion that the Assyrians were responsible, he is unable or unwilling to see the implications of this information himself. After his first positive assertion that the Assyrians were responsible for starting the war, he does not address the question again. Although this silence allows the skeptical reader to combine various incidental details mentioned by the narrator into a story that contradicts what the narrator claims is true, it also allows the reader to become more familiar with the narrator as a person. Uncertainty about who bears responsibility for the war is incompatible with the narrator’s depiction of Cyrus’ campaign, a righteous and justified attempt to bring justice and vengeance to the
Assyrian dynasty who had committed so many crimes. Although it is possible that the narrator understood the implications of these events and didn’t emphasize them in an attempt to deceive his readers, the narrator’s typical reaction to contradictory events is to explain away the contradictions through personal intercessions, as we have seen. Although not impossible, the narrator’s lack of any response makes it less likely that he understood these events. It is more likely that the narrator is unaware of the implications of the events I emphasized above; such behavior would be consistent with the narrator’s tendency to view and depict everything Cyrus does as good. But, more importantly, by failing to draw the reader’s attention to these events, perhaps by failing to notice their importance himself, the narrator provides another example of his limited horizons, his inability to look beyond what Cyrus approves of and says. It is another example of his unreliability.

Characterizing the Narrator’s Unreliability

I have discussed three ways in which it is possible to see that the narrator of the Cyropaideia is unreliable. In the cases of Cyrus’ verbal assault on Sakas and his attempt to manipulate his mother into allowing him to remain in Media, I have argued that in both cases the narrator puts forward his own positive interpretation of events which effectively preempts any inclination on the part of the reader to see the negative implications of Cyrus’ actions. In this respect, he behaves much like the accuser-narrator of Socrates’

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477 Sandridge (2012), for example, explicitly discards interpretations of the text because they do not agree with the narrator’s words. He says that “It is thus conceivable that Xenophon meant to fashion his Cyrus with similar gestures, making him into someone who succeeds at winning over others by pretending sympathy and rehearsing all the smiles, handshakes, toasts, and benefactions that can charm others without any sincere good will on the part of the performer.” (40). This is, thus far, my argument. He continues: “It is unlikely, however, given our direct window into Cyrus’ emotional states, that
trial, who takes the unnarrated 'neutral' fabulae of Socrates’ life and presents them with a hostile interpretation. That the narrator’s interpretation is undermined by Cyrus’ behavior makes these both examples of what Hansen calls internarrational unreliability: the cheery interpretation of the Cyropaideia’s narrator is contradicted by the problematic nature of Cyrus’ words and actions. In the case of the narrator’s hypocrisy regarding women accompanying their men on campaign, I emphasized three contradictory actions on the part of the narrator: at first, the narrator condemns the presence of women within a military camp as ’Asian’ because, it seems, there were no women in the Persian camp. He thereby distinguishes the manly Persians from the Asiatic Assyrians. The narrator then remains silent when Cyrus casually allows women to be distributed to the Persians, even though this action, if the reader remembers the narrator’s first statement, undermines the positive and virtuous image of the Persians the narrator has developed. Finally, the narrator speaks approvingly of Tigranes being accompanied by his wife in the Persian camp, which directly contradicts the narrator’s initial scorn for the practice. This is an example of what Hansen calls intranarrational unreliability, in which the narrator leaves unresolved contradictions in his account. In this case, it is the narrator’s dedication to Cyrus, his desire to always approve of what Cyrus does, that leads him into this hypocritical contradiction. Another example of this is the narrator’s silence on key issues: I argued that his silence reflects his unwillingness to discuss, or perhaps inability to notice, issues that contradict the overall message of his text. I argued that the narrator remained silent about, or simply did not notice, this ambiguity because it undermined the basic justification for Cyrus’ invasion of Assyria. If it were revealed that Cyrus and

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Xenophon means to portray him with such pretenses” (40).
Cyaxares accidentally made themselves the aggressors of this conflict, it would undermine the narrator’s entire project. Thus in my discussion of the narrator’s willingness to interpose (mis)leading interpretations on the text, his unresolved contradictions, and his occasional moments of silence over crucial events that contradict his argument, I have argued that the narrator is demonstrably unreliable; his unreliability is both intranarrational and internarrational. The most important questions remain: why is the narrator unreliable in this manner and what does it tell us about him?

If we consider the narrator’s thought process, stated in the introduction to the *Cyropaideia*, that led to him composing this account of Cyrus, we can provide a satisfactory answer for these questions. According to the narrator, a thought “ποθ’ ἤμιν ἐγένετο ὅσαι δημοκρατίαι κατελύθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλως πως βουλομένων πολιτεύεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν δημοκρατίᾳ (once occurred to us: How many democracies have been brought down by those who wished the governing to be done in some other way)...”478 and how many monarchies, tyrannies, and oligarchies had fallen for similar reasons. The narrator goes on to say that, as a result of this universal political instability, “οὕτως ἐγιγνώσκομεν περὶ αὐτῶν, ὡς ἀνθρώπῳ πεφυκότι πάντων τῶν ἄλλων ῥᾷον εἴη ζώων ἢ ἀνθρώπων ἄρχειν (we inclined to this judgment about them: It is easier, given his nature, for a human being to rule all the other kinds of animals than to rule human beings).”479 Yet a further thought struck him: “ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐνενοήσαμεν ὅτι Κῦρος ἐγένετο Πέρσης, ὃς παμπόλλους μὲν ἀνθρώπους ἐκτήσατο πειθομένους αὑτῷ [...] ἐκ τούτου δὴ ἣναγκαζόμεθα μετανοεῖν μὴ οὔτε τῶν ἀδυνάτων οὔτε τῶν χαλεπῶν ἔργων ἢ τὸ

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478 *Cyr.*, A.1.1.
479 *Cyr.*, A.1.3.
ἀνθρώπων ἄρχειν, ἣν τις ἐπισταμένως τοῦτο πράττῃ (But when we reflected that there was Cyrus, a Persian, who acquired very many people [...], all obedient to himself, we were compelled to change our minds to the view that ruling human beings does not belong among those tasks that are impossible, or even among those that are difficult, if one does it with knowledge).”

After a brief summary of Cyrus’ amazing achievements, the narrator says that

ἡμεῖς μὲν δὴ ὡς ἄξιον ὄντα θαυμάζεσθαι τὸν ἄνδρα ἐσκεψάμεθα τίς ποτ’ ὢν γενεὰν καὶ ποίαν τινὰ φύσιν ἔχον καὶ ποία τινι παιδευθείς παιδείας τοσοῦτον διήνεγκεν εἰς τὸ ἄρχειν ἄνθρωπων. ὅσα οὖν καὶ ἐπιθυμόμεθα καὶ ἠσθῆσθαι δοκοῦμεν περὶ αὐτοῦ, ταῦτα πειρασόμεθα διηγήσασθαι

So on the grounds that this man was worthy of wonder, we examined who he was by birth, what his nature was, and with what education he was brought up, such that he so excelled in ruling human beings. Whatever we have learned, therefore, and think we have perceived about him, we shall try to relate.

This delineates a specific sequence of events that is crucial to understanding the narrator’s biases in this text: the narrator first was struck by the horrible political instability of human societies; he suddenly remembered, from prior knowledge, how amazing Cyrus was at ruling men; this realization encouraged the narrator to subsequently study Cyrus’ life in preparation for composing the Cyropaideia in order to teach other people about how to rule successfully. After his research and preparations, the narrator then composed the Cyropaideia. In other words, the narrator was already convinced, based on prior knowledge, of Cyrus’ excellence and virtue before (re)familiarizing himself with Cyrus’ life. The success of Cyrus’ life, the excellent empire he created, his skill and perfection at ruling other people: all of these thoughts

480 Cyr., A.1.3.
481 Cyr., A.1.6.
482 I emphasize the prior knowledge of Cyrus that the narrator possessed because it is crucial for understanding why he approached the issue of Cyrus from his particular point of view. He had been convinced, by someone or some text, that Cyrus exemplified leadership so excellent and successful that it had not yet been imitated. It is because of this preconception that he studied Cyrus with an eye on his success; this, as I argue, leads him to overlook contradictions.
were in the narrator’s head as he read and interpreted and reacted to the historical accounts of Cyrus’ life.\textsuperscript{483} The allegedly triumphant ends were what proved to the narrator that Cyrus’ means in arriving at these ends were—must have been—virtuous and excellent. A virtuous and perfect end must have been produced by equally virtuous and perfect means.\textsuperscript{484} To put this another way, if in the course of his research the narrator had become convinced that Cyrus was a fraud, or a scoundrel, or a criminal, it would have defeated the purpose of composing this work: when the narrator sat down to begin to compose the \textit{Cyropaideia}, he must have still believed in Cyrus’ excellence.

If we combine this realization about the narrator’s preparations for composing the \textit{Cyropaideia} with the various inconsistencies I have identified in the text, these manifestations of narratorial unreliability, the motivation behind these inconsistencies may be understood. The narrator, in reading about Cyrus’ life, does so with a certain preconceived notion about the meaning of all his events and sayings: this will all result in a happy ending that should be imitated. Thus when the narrator comes across important historical scenes, scenes that contribute to the characterization of Cyrus or the development of the plot, yet present Cyrus doing or saying something vicious, the narrator-as-reader is presented with two options. He can view the scene, for example Cyrus’ attack on Sakas, as representing a fundamental contradiction to what the narrator believes, that proves wrong his preconceived notions about Cyrus; on the other hand, he can internally play down the importance of these contradictions. He can dismiss

\textsuperscript{483} He even calls Cyrus “worthy of wonder” (A.1.6). This does not speak of a balanced and fair approach. \textsuperscript{484} Compare what Bosworth (1988) says about Callisthenes' history of Alexander the Great: “Callisthenes' account of the consultation of Ammon was clearly a well-known passage and regularly cited as an illustration of partial and interested writing. It fell within the wider context of his general picture of the king, which was widely denounced as flattery. Both Timaeus and Philodemus stated that his historical work amounted to an apotheosis of Alexander, and several of the fragments illustrate the theme” (6).
something horrible or repellant that Cyrus has done as not serious, entertainment, a moment of levity. He can remain silent about important contradictions to the inevitable greatness of the Persians under Cyrus, such as the Medes’ success at killing the old Assyrian king on the battlefield or the problematic and ambiguous question of who started the war between Assyria and Media. He can dwell on other issues: the villainy of the New Assyrian king, the inevitability of the Assyrian invasion, or how Cyrus deserves wonder and awe—all among the narrator’s favorites. By doing so, he forces the story of Cyrus’ life to fit in with the preconceived narrative he had in mind when he approached his research of Cyrus’ life: he doesn’t deny that the Medes killed the Assyrian king, but he doesn’t draw attention to it either. The narrator must have reacted in this way: at the end of his research he still believed that Cyrus was a positive role model deserving of imitation, yet he (partially) abandons this position once he reaches his epilogue. As a result of this, we may conclude that the narrator’s misleading intercessions and omissions, examples of which I have identified above, are manifestations of the narrator’s unreliable interpretation of Cyrus’ actions that he came to in the process of researching the Cyropaideia. Thus these are not lies: the narrator genuinely possesses a misguided appreciation of Cyrus’ virtue at the time of composition. The narrator makes these misleading intercessions and omits what he omits because he has already internally

485 Gera (1993), although she sees the narrator as Xenophon, makes a similar point: she says that “Xenophon often omits or transmutes unsavoury features of the historical Cyrus’ life in the Cyropaedia, and he could well have ignored the entire eunuch question” (288).
486 I discuss the narrator’s change of opinion in my introduction.
487 I would associate this with what I noted above that Phelan (2005) describes as a form of ‘underreading,’ that which occurs when the narrator “does not consciously know—or at least is not to admit to himself—what we infer about his personal interest” (34). The narrator is not aware that he has misread aspects of Cyrus’ life in order to make everything nicely fit into the narrative he previously constructed: it is similar to the “Naive narration” (34, nt. 3) that Phelan (2005) describes as representative of this type of unreliability: the narrator views Cyrus’ actions, somewhat naively, in the best possible way because they fit in with the positive narrative he has already constructed.
adapted the events in Cyrus’ life, those that contradict the his overall impression of Cyrus as a virtuous man, in order to fix them. The narrator presents to the readers the same excuses and justifications that he had already used to justify to himself his continued belief in Cyrus’ virtue. This is why the narrator is unreliable and not maliciously deceptive, to return to Booth’s exactitude with this term: the narrator has, in his biased inconscience, made mistakes and has interpreted problematic aspects of Cyrus’ life in a particular way in order to make all aspects of Cyrus’ life compatible with the preconceived interpretation of Cyrus’ life with which he approached the text. Cyrus is an object of wonder; his actions must be as well. Yet despite his misguided approach, he accidentally or incidentally preserves enough contradictory detail that the reader is able to reconstruct, despite the narrator’s interference, another reading of Cyrus. The narrator is misguided and readily forces contradictions into compatibility with his overarching argument, but he does not maliciously deceive the people; that job is Cyrus’.

In this chapter I have argued that the narrator of the Cyropaideia is not an unbiased or reliable narrator but behaves in a manner similar to that of the accuser-narrator of the Memorabilia. His approach to the ‘historical’ events of Cyrus’ life mimic that of the accuser-narrator, who presented the fabula of Socrates’ life with a particularly hostile interpretation. The narrator of the Cyropaideia interprets certain of Cyrus’ actions in order to present an image of Cyrus as ideal king, a leader consistent with his preconceived notions. Yet inconsistencies, logical improbabilities, and evidence of biases, the contradictions indicative of an unreliable narrator, riddle the text. These contradictions allow his readers to not only realize that he cannot be trusted as a narrator,
but they serve as a starting point for the readers to begin to see through his cheery depiction of Cyrus.

There is an imperative for a reader, upon making this realization, to reinterpret and reread the *Cyropaideia* with a skeptical attitude. This imperative exists for two reasons. The first is that the end results of Cyrus’ life—his empire, his political reforms, his political stability—are harmful even to those whom one would expect to benefit the most: Cyrus’ *entimoi*. Thus, while it may bring some form of stability to Mesopotamia, Cyrus’ political methods creates a horrible dystopian society, worse than all those it replaced: he should not be imitated for this reason. Secondly, Cyrus’ behavior throughout the *Cyropaideia* is presented by the narrator, by Cyrus, and by Cyrus’ followers in positive terms, as an ideal model for imitation. Yet if the narrator cannot be trusted, as I have argued here, and Cyrus and his sycophants cannot be trusted to tell the truth about him either, his behavior demands careful examination. We must not only ask how Cyrus’ empire was vicious but *why* his methods were vicious. He is not a model of imitation but a model of avoidance, an anti-Socrates who, like Critias, is led by his immense skills and immense ambition to the heights of power only for everything to collapse into a bloody mess. Like the *Memorabilia’s* accuser-narrator, the *Cyropaideia’s* narrator, Cyrus, and Cyrus’ followers all present a particular image of Cyrus as positive as the accuser-narrator’s image of Socrates was negative. Now we must, like the challenge implicit in Cyrus’ armor shining like a mirror in the sunlight urges us, look closely at Cyrus’ life to see who he truly was. The narrator contributed much of the blinding shine, but we have learned to squint.

165
In Part One I challenged two traditional interpretations of the *Cyropaideia*: I argued first that Cyrus fails to qualify as a good leader as defined by Socrates in the *Memorabilia* and, second, that the narrator of the *Cyropaideia* is unreliable in his presentation of Cyrus. These past assumptions—that Cyrus is a good leader and the narrator can be trusted—have serious consequences for how readers have historically interpreted the figure of Cyrus. As I argued the narrator does himself, readers have generally interpreted Cyrus’ actions positively and the actions of Cyrus’ opponents negatively, as encouraged by the narrator and Cyrus. Ioannes Tzetzes, who views the *Cyropaideia* strictly as the “Τὴν μὲν τοῦ Κύρου [...] ἱστορίαν,” analyses the characters of Cyrus and Cyaxares.488 His is the perfect example of the interpretive consequences of the reader’s assumptions I challenged in Part One: Cyrus is absolutely perfect and Cyaxares is absolutely vicious. Tzetzes says,

When Asytages died, Cyaxares, his son and Cyrus’ uncle, became king of all the Medes. He was a stupid man and well-practiced in eating and drinking; he enjoyed the shadow and name of monarchy alone. In actual fact, however, Cyrus was the king; in command of the Medes and Persians he undertook battle...

Later, Tzetzes is more specific about Cyrus’ positive qualities:

Cyrus the Persian, the son of Cambyses and Mandane, just as Xenophon the son of Gryllus writes in the *Cyropaideia*, was most handsome in appearance because he was eminent in his beauty. In his soul he was most philanthropic and a lover of stories, and he was sweet, very clever and a giver of great gifts. When sitting in judgment he was the model of straightforward reason; he was holy; he was most chaste; he was

488 Chiliades, 3.98.649-650. The translations of Tzetzes are mine.
489 Chiliades, 1.1.67-72.
the pinnacle of all good things.\textsuperscript{490}

Thus we see the consequences of these assumptions about the \textit{Cyropaideia}: Cyrus is perfect in every way and everything he does is good; Cyaxares is a stupid, vicious brute who cannot look past the next cup and meal (this, although we never see Cyaxares eat). Tzetzes’ extreme interpretations of Cyrus and Cyaxares are, however, echoed to a degree by various modern scholars. In the following three chapters, I apply my new understanding of the \textit{Cyropaideia} to various incidents in Cyrus’ life. The details and minutiae of Cyrus’ life have previously been taken as models for guidance in personal and political life; they are held to present an ideal, sometimes even said to be Socratic, model for human behavior.\textsuperscript{491} Yet if Cyrus is not a good leader, inasmuch as he does not improve the lives of his followers financially or spiritually, then his behavior demands a new investigation. What does Cyrus’ life mean? Where did he, with his great promise, go wrong? What should we make of his treatment of his family, friends, and subordinates? Is anything left for the reader to imitate? In the following chapters, I analyze his treatment of Astyages and Cyaxares in order to provoke a new reading and understanding of the \textit{Cyropaideia}, one in which Cyrus exploits everyone around him solely for his own benefit until, after consuming their usefulness, he discards them.

\textsuperscript{490} \textit{Chiliades}, 3.98.564-570.
\textsuperscript{491} Luccioni (1948), “Certes, l’influence de la morale socratique est indéniable” (215).
Chapter Three: Introduction

Cyrus’ narrative life begins when he arrives at Astyages’ palace, aged about twelve. Until Cyrus visits Media, the narrator treats his life as undifferentiated from the other boys; that the narrator begins to focus on Cyrus when he arrives in Media suggests that whatever happens there is the beginning of what makes Cyrus uniquely qualified to rule. We may suppose that he is unique partly because of his Persian (official) education and partly his (unofficial) Median education. 492

Astyages’ Dinner Party

After being met and greeted by Astyages, Cyrus settles into a routine the narrator passes over in silence—his early days in Media are apparently irrelevant—until the first notable event takes place: Astyages’ dinner party. The section of the Cyropaideia that stretches from A.3.4 to A.3.11 is inchoate at first glance: Cyrus’ focus quickly shifts from topic to topic, criticizing Media, praising Persia, and mocking a Median slave. He plays games with Astyages, prattles about moderation, and teases Sakas, Astyages’ trusted slave. No scholar has previously suggested a unifying theme to all the conversations at

492 Tatum (1989) says that Cyrus’ manipulative victories in Media “are the earliest signs of a young prince who seems to have known almost by instinct how to excel in the art of ruling others” (97-8). Hägg (2012), 59, completely rejects any notion that the young Cyrus manipulates. He says, “This machiavellian reading of Xenophon has little support in the text, particularly in the childhood description, and seems to rest on some anachronistic assumptions. There is no reason to think that Xenophon wants his readers to get a mixed impression of Cyrus, as both eminently honourable and ruthless. When as an adult he deceives the enemy, this belongs to the prerequisites for successful military leadership and does not reflect on his character” (59-60). To respond to his last point, as Tatum (1989) passim and Nadon (2001) passim have noted, as an adult Cyrus not only manipulates his enemies but manipulates and lies to his friends: he uses both his friends and enemies for his own personal benefit. The lies he tells to the commoners in order to convince them to sign up to a money-distribution scheme he knows will primarily benefit the homotimoi (B.2.21; Nadon 2001, 63 ff,) and his manipulative use of Chrysantas as his mouthpiece, whom we see primarily utilized against the commoners (H.4.11), alone lead us to doubt Hägg.
this dinner. Indeed, his conversations remain disconnected until the reader realizes that what Cyrus says at the end of the dinner explains the scene as a whole: he admits that although he just seemed to be teasing Sakas, the Median slave, he wasn’t. On the contrary, “νὴ Δία...μισῶ αὐτόν· πολλάκις γάρ με πρὸς τὸν πάππον ἐπιθυμοῦντα προσδραμεῖν οὗτος ὁ μιαρώτατος ἀποκωλύει (I hate him, by Zeus [...] for often when I desire to run up to my grandfather, this most wretched fellow shuts me out.)” I would suggest that it is not only the latter part of this scene, in which Cyrus’ hostility to Sakas is more open, but that the entirety of Cyrus’ conversation at the dinner is motivated by Cyrus’ hatred of Sakas. Cyrus detests Sakas and his obsession dominates the whole conversation. His hatred stems from Sakas’ job as chamberlain: the slave keeps him from meeting Astyages whenever he wants. Since, due to Cyrus, much of the dinner party prior to this admission had centered on Sakas, I suggest that Cyrus has harbored anger with Sakas during the whole dinner and for some time prior. Moreover, Cyrus does not, in a moment of anger, snap and attack him halfway through this conversation but, due to the consistency in Cyrus’ conversation topics throughout this dinner, the entire conversation amounts to Cyrus’ premeditated attack on the slave.

The narrator begins this dinner by noting that Astyages served luxurious foods to

493 Marchewka (2011) says that this scene intends “to invoke a temporary humorous effect which has to induce the readers to a particular reflexion or to give a teaching” (128). Sandridge (2012) calls Cyrus’ behavior here “lighthearted and ultimately harmless” (22). Higgens (1977) does say that Cyrus “is something of a bully to the hapless senechal Sakas” (46), but he is no more specific than this.

494 Cyr., A.3.11. Compare Cyrus’ hatred here to, for example, the more measured opinion of Lamprokles and his father Socrates in the Memorabilia. Socrates asks, “have you ever considered whether the case of ingratitude is analogous, ingratitude being unjust towards friends, but just towards enemies?” Lamprokles replies, “Indeed I have; and I think that it is always unjust not to show gratitude for a favour from whomsoever it is received, be he friend or enemy.” Socrates responds, “If that is so, must not ingratitude be injustice pure and simple?” (B.2.2-3)? Even in the case of enemies, one must, Socrates seems to suggest, be measured and fair in one’s reply. As we shall see below, Cyrus’ deep hatred of Sakas takes him far beyond a measured and fair response.
Cyrus because he “βουλόμενος τὸν παῖδα ὡς ἥδιστα δειπνεῖν, ἵνα ἦττον τὰ οἴκαδε ποθοῖ (wished the boy to dine as pleasantly as possible so that he might yearn less for what he had left at home.).”

Concerned the boy is homesick he acts kindly to him to cheer him up. Cyrus’ reaction is unanticipated: he criticizes Astyages. He says, “Ὦ πάππε, ὅσα πράγματα ἔχεις ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ, εἰ ἀνάγκη σοι ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ λεκάρια ταῦτα διατείνειν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἀπογεύεσθαι τούτων τῶν παντοδαπῶν βρωμάτων (Grandfather, how many troubles you have at dinner, if it is necessary for you to stretch out your hands to all these little dishes and taste all these different sorts of meat!).”

Astyages asks whether this cuisine is not better than Persian, to which Cyrus responds: “Οὐκ, ὃ πάππε, ἀλλὰ πολὺ ἁπλουστέρα καὶ εὐθυτέρα παρ’ ἡμῖν ἡ ὁδός εστιν ἐπὶ τὸ ἐμπλησθῆναι ἢ παρ’ ὑμῖν· ἡμᾶς μὲν γὰρ ἄγει καὶ κρέα εἰς τοῦτο ἁγεί, ώμες δὲ εἰς μὲν τὸ αὐτὸ ἡμῖν σπεύδετε, πολλούς δὲ τινὰς ἐλεγμοὺς ἄνω καὶ κάτω πλανώμενοι μόλις ἀφικνεῖσθε ὅποι ἡμεῖς πάλαι ἥκομεν. No, grandfather, for the road to satisfaction is much more simple and direct among us than among you, for bread and meat take us to it. You hurry to the same place as we do, yet only after wandering back and forth on many curves do you arrive with difficulty at the point we reached long ago."

This is an unexpected departure from Cyrus’ previous declaration that it is impossible to

495 Cyr., A.3.4. The tone the narrator takes in this scene is that of helpful explanation. He twice intercedes by supplying the reader with 'correct' interpretations of what has transpired. In the first case, he offers an explanation of an issue that has left Cyrus confused: when Cyrus accuses Sakas of stealing wine from the king, the narrator says “Now the cupbearers of the kings, when they present the cup, draw out some of it with a small cup and, putting it into their left hand, swallow it down, so that they might not profit if they have added poison” (A.3.9). While this does clarify Cyrus’ confusing statement, it also serves to distract the reader from Cyrus' accusation. Later, at the end of this conversation, the narrator dismisses any potential critique of Cyrus' behavior by interpreting it as charming (A.3.12). Thus in this scene the narrator’s behavior is consistent with that I identified in Chapter Two: when confronted with something potentially vicious that Cyrus has done, the narrator asserts a reading of the text that presents Cyrus' behavior in the best possible light.

496 Although Due (1989) is aware of the potential threat signified by a scene in which Astyages offers meat to a friend at dinner, she finds no trace here of Herodotus’ Harpagus (121). Gera (1993), however, sees “rather sinister associations, at least for readers of Herodotus: one is immediately reminded of the Thystean feast Astyages arranges...It is interesting, then, that Xenophon also chooses to have his Astyages preside over a dinner party...Xenophon does not allow the memory of Harpagus and son to cast a pall over his proceedings” (155). Gera does not discuss why Xenophon might have a scene with such ominous undertones so early in Cyrus’ time in Media. Gray (2011), speaking of Astyages in general, agrees with Due, saying that he is not “the grandfather who tries to eliminate him as a competitor, but the loving sire” (145).

497 Cyr., A.3.4. At least in this, Cyrus and Socrates are of one mind (Cf. Mem., A.3.5 ff.; B.1.1).

498 Cyr., A.3.4.
compare Persian and Median aesthetics: previously he had claimed that one may wear Persian clothes in Persia and Median clothes in Media without contradicting oneself.

Median food bothers Cyrus although their clothing does not. For Cyrus, whether one eats gourmet food or simple bread, one arrives at satiety. Cyrus also notes the efficiency of the Persian meal when he points out that “you [...] stretch out your hands to all these little dishes.” The logical conclusion is that it is better to eat simply. Cyrus’ argument is strictly utilitarian: since eating simply takes less time and effort, it is better. Cyrus argues that it is more efficient, simpler, and quicker to eat Persian cuisine: Astyages should avoid fancy food, since it is troublesome and time-consuming.

Astyages immediately sees the flaw in Cyrus’ argument: Cyrus ignores pleasure. He points out that Cyrus doesn’t understand that one can enjoy eating food. He says, “Ἀλλ’, ὦ παῖ..., οὐκ ἀχθόμενοι ταῦτα περιπλανώμεθα· γευόμενος δὲ καὶ σύ... γνώσῃ ὅτι ἡδέα ἐστίν (But child, [...] we are not distressed to wander as we do. Taste them, and you too will realize that they are pleasant).” Astyages’ response is persuasive: due to inexperience—he has only ever considered its utilitarian benefit—Cyrus has

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499 When Cyrus first arrived in Media, he was asked whether he found Astyages to be a more handsome man than Cambyses, his father. His response, “Of the Persians, my father is the most handsome by far; of the Medes, however, this grandfather of mine is by far the most handsome” (A.3.2), along with his willingness to dress in Median clothes (A.3.3), suggests that on certain issues (at least beauty) Cyrus believes in a cultural relativism that is troubling from a Socratic perspective. Nadon (2001) says that “Part of Xenophon’s purpose in describing Cyrus’s life in Media is to indicate the difficulties of making such an ascent. During his early days in Media, Cyrus behaves much like any foreigner traveling away from home for the first time; he judges and weighs what he sees by the standards of his native land” (43-4). Nadon (2001) himself later notes that he “does not reject everything he sees in Media” (45) because Cyrus’ attraction to Astyages’ appearance, “an immediate attraction for something both beautiful and foreign, is what draws Cyrus most powerfully into the Median way of life” (46).

500 Cyrr., A.3.4.

501 Gera (1993), 29-30, notes that Cyrus’ rebuttal of Median food is in the form of Socratic dialectic and that it fails, not because Xenophon wants to impugn the Socratic method but because Xenophon wants to emphasize the differences between his and Herodotus’ Astyages.

502 Nadon (2001): “Astyages suspects, and not without reason, that inexperience and Persian prejudice are what keep Cyrus from appreciating how good the food really is” (44).

503 Cyrr., A.3.5.
misunderstood food. Cyrus cannot deny this argument for if he were to taste good food he would be forced to admit that one can eat food for pleasure as well as utility. From Astyages’ perspective, Cyrus doesn’t know what he is missing due to ignorance. He rightly expects that if Cyrus were to taste the food on the table he would be compelled to agree. It would be easy for Cyrus to try the food. Yet he declines to be educated; he prefers to alter his argument instead.

Cyrus cannot reject an experience he refuses to attempt; he instead attempts another argument. He lights upon, however, an argument so specious that Astyages does not address it. In response to Astyages’ statement that nice foods “are pleasant,” Cyrus says,

Αλλὰ καὶ σέ, φάναι τὸν Κῦρον, ὃρῳ, ὃ πάππε, μυσατόμενον ταῦτα τὰ βρώματα, καὶ τὸν Ἀστυάγην ἐπερέσθαι: Καὶ τίνι δὴ σὺ τεκμαιρόμενος, ὃ παῖ, λέγεις; Ὅτι σε, φάναι, ὃρῳ, ὃταν μὲν τοῦ ἄρτου ἄψθαι, εἰς οὐδὲν τὴν χεῖρα ἀποψώμενον, ὃταν δὲ τοῦτον τινὸς θίγῃς, εὐθὺς ἀποκαθαίρει τὴν χεῖρα εἰς τὰ χειρόμακτρα, ὡς πάνυ ἀχθόμενος ὅτι πλέα σοι ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἐγένετο.

'And yet I see that even you, grandfather, are disgusted with these meats,’ he said. And Astyages asked again, 'And on what evidence do you say this, my child?’ 'Because,’ he said, 'I see that you too, whenever you touch your bread, do not wipe your hand on anything; but whenever you touch any of these, you wipe your hand on your napkin as if you were most distressed that it became soiled with them.'

It would be equally reasonable to avoid baths because one must dry oneself after, or, something germane to Cyrus’ life, to avoid hunting because of dust. Cyrus wants the impossible: he is attempting to convince Astyages to give up anything more complicated than bread and water. The argument he chooses would fail to convince not only a pleasure-mad ’Eastern’ tyrant; no adult would abandon meat solely because he has been told that it takes less time and effort to eat bread and greens. Cyrus’ argument is

504 Nadon (2001) says that “Some amount of experience is the necessary precondition for making certain judgments; to reject the unfamiliar out of hand is to constrict one’s horizons unnecessarily” (44).
505 Cyr., A.3.5.
unpersuasive because he wants to manipulate, not alienate, Astyages; it also pertains to
Sakas’ role in the court, as we shall see.

Cyrus is limited in his argumentation because of his relationship to Astyages. The
justifications for simple food that Cyrus would be familiar with, those the School (or
Socrates) made,\textsuperscript{506} are insulting to Astyages.\textsuperscript{507} By arguing that eating simple food would
be healthier, he would imply that Astyages is unhealthy. By claiming that eating simple
food would make Astyages more masculine, he would imply he is effeminate. Thus he is
limited to weak but safe arguments; he makes an indirect appeal to Astyages’ laziness
(you will need to expend less energy wiping your hands with a napkin!) and to his
efficiency (you will spend less time at the dinner table!). Cyrus is unpersuasive, but the
reader must still be uncertain what Cyrus wants to achieve in this conversation. Although
it is possible that Cyrus wants his grandfather to eat better for his own benefit, we can
productively question how \textit{Cyrus} might benefit from this conversion.

Although this is still early in Cyrus’ conversation with his grandfather at this
dinner party and it is as yet difficult to understand Cyrus’ goal, we can consider that
would spend less money on food and become more healthy and moderate.\textsuperscript{508} But an
immediate result of his new diet is that he would spend significantly less time at dinner:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Cyrus twice suggests the amount of time Astyages spends at the table is excessive.\textsuperscript{509}
\end{itemize}

\begin{footnotes}
\item 506 For example, the narrator says that “if someone should think that they eat without pleasure when they
      have only greens with their bread, or drink without pleasure when they drink only water, let him
      remember how pleasant barley cake and bread are to those who hunger to eat, and how pleasant water is
      to one who thirsts to drink” (A.2.11).
\item 507 Nadon (2001): “Such arguments can hardly be offered by a guest, however, not even a favored
      grandchild, and especially when the host is a despot and rather fond of the pleasures of the table” (44-5).
\item 508 The narrator claims that the Persians teach continence in food and drink to their elite children as part of
      their system of legally-enforced moderation (A.2.8)
\item 509 Cyrus first states that “the road to satisfaction is much more simple and direct among us” and then that
      “you arrive with difficulty at the point we reached long ago” (A.3.4).
\end{footnotes}
would suggest that Cyrus does not want his grandfather to improve his health and moderation, but that he wants Astyages to spend less time at dinner. Why Cyrus wants this is made clear, as I noted above, at the end of this dinner: Cyrus hates Sakas, Astyages’ chamberlain and wine-pourer, because he controls Cyrus’ access to Astyages and, thus, has more access. If Astyages ate less, he would spend less time in the dining room and, accordingly, less time with Sakas. It is the straightforward logic of a child.

We do not know what Cyrus planned next because Astyages takes control of the conversation. Although patronized by Astyages, Cyrus reacts skillfully to this unforeseen development and takes his attack on Sakas in another direction.510

It should be unsurprising that Astyages is unconvinced by Cyrus’ critiques of Median food. Instead of listening to what Cyrus says, he remains, as at the beginning of this scene, concerned that Cyrus is homesick (Cyrus’ speech attacking Median customs can hardly have helped reassured him that Cyrus was not missing home). Astyages’ response to Cyrus’ critique of Median sauces and meats is to give him piles of meat, because Cyrus will at least grow big and strong on this type of food. He says, “Εἰ τοίνυν οὕτω γιγνώσκεις, ὦ παῖ, ἀλλὰ κρέα γε εὐωχοῦ, ἵνα νεανίας οἴκαδε ἀπέλθῃς. ἅμα δὲ ταῦτα λέγοντα πολλὰ αὐτῷ παραφέρειν καὶ θήρεια καὶ τῶν ἡμέρων (’If you are so resolved, my child, feast at least upon these meats, so you may go home a vigorous youth.’ As he was saying this, he had a great deal of meat brought to him, of both wild and tame animals.’)511 Astyages did not take Cyrus seriously: Cyrus criticizes Median cuisine, especially the eating of meat; in response, Astyages gives him meat. Even though

510 I suspect that, if Cyrus had not been interrupted, he would have followed up his anti-luxurious food argument with the anti-alcohol argument that he makes towards the end of this conversation (A.3.10-11). It is a thematically similar and seems to be the logical progression of his critique.

511 Cyr., A.3.6.
Astyages is patronizing Cyrus and treating him like the young child he is, Cyrus is not one to pass up an opportunity. Cyrus could not have foreseen the possibility that Astyages would award him piles of meat in the course of their conversation. Astyages has taken control of the conversation; Cyrus’ reaction must be an impromptu detour.

When Astyages awards Cyrus a pile of meat, Cyrus uses it. The narrator says,

καὶ τὸν Κῦρον, ἐπεὶ ἑώρα πολλὰ τὰ κρέα, εἰπεῖν· Ἡ καὶ δίδως, φάναι, ὅ πάππε, πάντα ταῦτά μοι τὰ κρέα ὅ τι ἂν βούλωμαι αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι; Νὴ Δία, φάναι, ὃ παί, ἐγγέγει σοι. ἐνταῦθα θεραπεύεις τὸν Κῦρον λαβόντα τὸν κρεῶν διαδιδόναι τοῖς ἰμφοὶ τὸν πάππον περιεδένοις ἐκάστως. Σοί μὲν τοῦτο ὅτι προθύμοις με ἰππεῖν διδάςκεις, σοὶ δ’ ὅτι μοι παλτὸν ἔδωκας· νῦν γὰρ τοῦτ’ ἔχοι· σοὶ δ’ ὅτι τὸν πάππον καλῶς ἑκάστῳ· τοιαῦτα ἐποίει, ἕως δὲν ἐλαβεῖ κρέα.

When he saw all this meat, Cyrus said, “Are you giving me all this meat, grandfather, to use however I want?” “Yes, my child, by Zeus I am,” he said. Then Cyrus, taking the meat, distributed it to his grandfather’s servants and said to each, “This is for you, because you teach me to ride with enthusiasm; for you, because you gave me a javelin, and now I have it; for you, because you serve my grandfather nobly; for you, because you honor my mother.” He proceeded like this until he distributed all the meat that he received.512

Thus we see the first example of Cyrus’ ‘selflessness.’ On the surface, his actions seem generous because he distributes a valuable gift that he has received to people who have less than him. However, this action is, in actuality, utterly selfish. He acts here as he will later when given gifts (or when he obtains booty): meat in itself is as meaningless to Cyrus as money.514 By giving it away he uses it in two manners: first, he repays nebulous debts he owes to various slaves within Astyages’ household. One slave taught him how to

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512 Cyp., A.3.6-7.
513 Nadon (2001) says that “More hungry for reputation than food, with this act of benevolence, Cyrus takes the first step toward building a loyal band of followers. Moreover, he does so in a manner that establishes an important precedent for his later career; he is most generous with what belongs to others” (45). Gera (1993) notes that this is reminiscent of the “Persian practice of paying subordinates...in food and rations rather than with money” (156), although she does not note that here it is a Median custom. Tatum (1989), however, says that “This action devalues Astyages’ hospitality. Cyrus supplants his grandfather as the host of the gathering, and wins the gratitude of his servants in the bargain” (103). Tatum (1989) is right: Cyrus actions are at least disrespectful to Astyages.
514 Reisert (2009) quite astutely connects this with his Babylonian policy of winning loyalty through gifts and honors proportional to his favor: “These gifts [...] represent the first link in the chains with which Cyrus would bind fast the honour-loving warriors who make possible his rule [...] Cyrus’ gifts of food demonstrate exactly where each courtier stands in relation to the others” (300).
ride, another gave him a javelin, another treats Astyages well, another Mandane. These generous gifts go far beyond what is reasonable. They are slaves: he need not thank them; he could thank them verbally; he could thank them privately. Yet he chooses to publicly and grandiosely reward them—he gives them gifts the king deemed good enough to give his grandson—at a dinner party before Astyages and his court. He tallies their good deeds and repays his debt. The effect of this is more than a simple repayment of debt: in effect, since Cyrus so publicly and generously awards a repayment for a simple debt, these slaves must now find themselves in Cyrus’ debt. Those slaves who had done nothing for him personally, such as the one who treated Astyages well, must especially find themselves in his debt since Cyrus has “repaid” them for doing nothing for him. Simultaneously, however, he also uses this meat to attack Sakas.

Sakas’ exclusion from Cyrus’ list of good slaves is so obvious that Astyages immediately notes it. He says,

Σάκᾳ δέ...τῷ οἰνοχόῳ, ὃν ἐγὼ μάλιστα τιμῶ, οὐδὲν δίδως; ὁ δὲ Σάκας ἄρα καλὸς τε ὢν ἔτυγχαν καὶ τιμὴν ἔχων προσάγειν τοὺς δεομένους Ἀστυάγους καὶ ἀποκωλύειν οὓς μὴ καιρὸς αὐτῷ δοκοίη εἶναι προσάγειν.

‘But to Sakas, my cupbearer, whom I honor most […] do you give nothing?’ Now Sakas happened to be handsome and to have the honor of admitting those who sought Astyages and of excluding such as he did not think it opportune to admit.515

This is the first that the reader has heard of Sakas, but the narrator and Astyages sketch for the reader Sakas’ role in the palace. He serves as Astyages’ chamberlain, the granter of access to Astyages. In addition, Astyages describes him as his ‘cupbearer,’ which is a second role in the court.516 One realizes that Sakas must be an intimate confidant of the

515 Cyr., A.3.8.
516 Gera (1993): “The role assigned here to Sacas is an unusual one, for he combines two separate functions: cupbearer and chief usher to the king” (159).
king. The narrator even adds that Sakas “happened to be handsome.”\(^\text{517}\) This, especially the sentence order—...Sakas, my cupbearer [...] handsome[...], and] admit[s] those who sought Astyages”—\(^\text{518}\) implies that he may be Astyages’ chamberlain and wine-pourer \emph{because} he is handsome.\(^\text{519}\) Astyages may be attracted to Sakas or there may be a sexual relationship between the two men. Why Cyrus singles out Sakas is thus far unclear but we may anticipate that it relates to his role as chamberlain or wine-pourer. Astyages is surprised at Cyrus’ hostility, since he knows of nothing that would cause it.

Cyrus continues to push hard against his grandfather’s relationship with Sakas and goes beyond what the narrator believes is safe for him to say. The narrator says, “καὶ τὸν Κῦρον ἐπερέσθαι προπετῶς ὡς ἂν παῖς μηδέπω ὑποπτήσσων· Δἰὰ τί δή, ὦ πάππε, τούτον οὐτω τιμᾷς (And Cyrus answered rashly, as would a boy not yet afraid. ‘Why, grandfather, do you honor him so?’”),\(^\text{520}\) The narrator implies that Cyrus should not have said this, but does not say why. Of course, it is not safe to ask too many impertinent questions of an absolute monarch, even if he is one’s grandfather. Yet Cyrus’ questioning is now more than impertinent: Cyrus openly criticizes Asytages’ judgment. His hostility to Sakas implies that Astyages’ decision to honor Sakas as chamberlain, cupbearer, and perhaps lover was in error. By attacking Sakas for being so patently terrible, Cyrus implicitly accuses Astyages of either being aware and ignoring Sakas’ bad qualities, or being so oblivious that he cannot see what is in front of his nose. It is likely not coincidental that Cyrus’ further attacks on Sakas accuse him of secret and hidden crimes, crimes that Astyages could not have been aware of, because this allows Cyrus to attack

\(^{517}\) Cyr., A.3.8.  
^{518}\) Cyr., A.3.8.  
^{519}\) Gera (1993), 160.  
^{520}\) Cyr., A.3.8
his grandfather’s favorite without further implying his Astyages bears some responsibility for the crimes.

Cyrus speaks inappropriately to Astyages, but Astyages defuses this tension by responding with a joke, leaving unstated the genuine reason that he values Sakas so highly. The narrator says that “καὶ τὸν Ἀστυάγην σκώψαντα εἶπεῖν· Ὄὐχ ὁρᾶς, φάναι, ὡς καλῶς οἶνοχοεῖ καὶ εὐσχημόνως (Astyages replied jokingly, ‘Do you not see how nobly and gracefully he pours out my wine?’); Astyages’ joke is not meant to seriously answer Cyrus’ question but to diffuse the tension that Cyrus’ criticism caused. Astyages jokes away his relationship with Sakas. For whatever reason that Sakas is trusted, it is not because he pours wine well. A man is appointed to a sensitive position like wine-pourer or chamberlain because he is trusted, not because he is a good wine-pourer. To do the opposite—to appoint a potentially disloyal man who excels at pouring wine—would be reckless: what could better aid an assassination? Astyages jokes when he claims Sakas was appointed wine-pourer because he is good at pouring wine. It is perhaps a sexual joke directed at the adults—Sakas in particular, one might imagine—and should not be taken seriously.

However, either because he doesn’t understand or because it fits into his plan,

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521 Cyr., A.3.8. I suspect that what Astyages says is meant to be taken as a sexual double entendre. Consider the prophecy given to Aegeus by the Delphic oracle in Euripides’ Medea (1997): Aegeus tells Medea that the oracle ordered him “Not to unloose the wineskin’s hanging foot... M: Before you do what, or arrive at what land? A: Before I come again to the hearth of my fathers” (Euripides in Morwood 1997, 19). This is a double entendre too clever for Aegeus to understand, although Pittheus will understand it. While I do not suggest that Xenophon was specifically alluding to Euripides, it is a use of the image of wine pouring from a wine-skin as a graphic allusion to sex (Cf. Archilochus fr. 119 in Gerber 1999). Astyages seems to be using a similar sort of wine-pouring metaphor for sex: it is a joke directed at the audience and intended to be over the head of the young Cyrus, just as the oracle’s use of the metaphor went over Aegeus’ head.

522 In Ctesias (2010), Cyrus is appointed chief winepourer to Astyages because he pours wine so well (160): the consequences Astyages suffers as a result show why doing so was a mistake (164).
Cyrus accepts his grandfather’s joke as the literal truth. His response is unexpected:

Cyrus says,

Κέλευσον δή, φάναι, ὦ πάππε, τὸν Σάκαν καὶ ἐμοὶ δοῦναι τὸ ἔκπωμα, ἵνα κἀγὼ καλῶς σοι πιεῖν ἐγχέας ἀνακτήσωμαι σε, ἢν δύνωμαι.

'Order Sakas to give me the cup, grandfather,' he said, 'that I too, by nobly pouring wine for you to drink, may win you over if I can.' And he ordered him to give it.\textsuperscript{523}

Cyrus is not jesting: since Astyages said—jokingly—that he honors Sakas so highly because he pours wine so well, Cyrus decides to show that he can pour wine as well as Sakas to prove that he deserves as much honor.\textsuperscript{524} This is later revealed to be his explicit motivation: to be precise, Cyrus is not upset because Sakas is honored by Astyages, but because he believes that he is held in less honor than Sakas. Although this seems improbable—so far, Cyrus has been given opulent gifts of clothes, horses, and jewelry and has been allotted a place of honor at the king’s table—, Cyrus does believe that he is less honored than Sakas, who has received no presents, who is a slave, and who waits upon Astyages. Cyrus’ view of honor is not conventional.

If Cyrus does not base the perception of his honor within Media on how well he is treated then he must base his belief on something else. The only thing this could be, and the only other known difference between Sakas and Cyrus, is that Sakas holds the offices of wine-pourer and chamberlain while Cyrus is a prince without portfolio. This would suggest that Cyrus bases his perception of the honor any man holds not on how well he is

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\textsuperscript{523} Cyr., A.3.9.
\textsuperscript{524} Gera (1993) says that “it seems to be a variation on—if not an explanation of—one part of Ctesias’ version of how Cyrus rose to power” (157). She says “By having his young Cyrus only play at pouring wine, Xenophon is, perhaps, referring obliquely to the Ctesian tale, demonstrating how such a (false) story could have arisen: since Cyrus once jestingly poured wine for his grandfather Astyages, he was later thought to be the king’s cupbearer. If this is the case, then Xenophon is once again using Astyages’ lively dinner-party to establish the ‘true’ relationship between the Mede despot and his grandson and to counter or explain away other versions of the Astyages-Cyrus tale” (157).
treated, how many gifts he is given, what position he has at the table, or even what the
king says, but on what level of access a man has been granted to the king and his royal
power. Thus Cyrus’ attempt here is not to win honor for himself in some abstract way or
to win presents, but, by mimicking Sakas, “by nobly pouring wine for you to drink,” he is
attempting to obtain Sakas’ office and, accordingly, access to the king. In other words, he
wants to be appointed to Sakas’ position as wine-pourer and, because Cyrus thinks it is
attached, to his position as chamberlain: only through access can he gain power. Let us
remember that Cyrus plots to supplant Sakas for the rest of this scene.

After being given permission to pour wine, Cyrus proceeds to do so:

Cyrus, they say, taking the cup, rinsed it so well, as he had seen Sakas do, made such a serious face, and
brought and presented it to his grandfather so gracefully that he afforded much laughter to his mother and
Astyages.525

While this scene testifies to Cyrus’ skill at mimicry, it also shows that Cyrus has been
watching Sakas closely for some time. His imitation of Sakas’ wine-pouring habits is so
uncanny, apparently, that his mother and grandfather burst into laughter.526 While the act
of pouring wine is not inherently difficult, Cyrus does not just imitate Sakas’ act of
pouring wine but the whole of Sakas’ routine: he knows that between rounds of wine the
wine cup must be rinsed out; he knows that the wine cup is filled not in the center of the
room but at a side-table where the wine is stored; he knows that the wine cup must be

525 Cyr., A.3.9.
526 This echoes when Hephaistos pours wine for the gods at the end of Book A (595-600) of the Iliad; the
scene, however, is inverted: in the Iliad, the gods sit unhappily at table because they had been quarreling
and are made to laugh by Hephaistos. In this case, though, the family at the Median table laughed and
joked until after Cyrus pours out the wine.
carried with grace to the table lest it spill. Again, none of this is impossible to guess, but it is not all obvious either. Cyrus has been paying close enough attention to Sakas that he knows precisely how each aspect of the ritual is done. Cyrus has been angrily staring at the slave for some time, plotting and planning his attack. Cyrus’ attack is premeditated and, according to Cyrus’ understanding of the rules of the court, his plot has succeeded! He deserves Sakas’ office and access because he pours wine as well as Sakas.527 However, because he is a child and his elders do not take him seriously, this attempted usurpation is laughed away despite Cyrus’ genuine attempt to undermine the authority of Astyages’ favorite slave.

Cyrus begins to taunt Sakas. The narrator says that, after Astyages and Mandane start to laugh, “καὶ αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν Κῦρον ἐκγελάσαντα ἀναπηδῆσαι πρὸς τὸν πάππον καὶ φιλοῦντα (Cyrus himself laughed out loud, leaped up onto his grandfather, kissed him... ).”528 Cyrus’ reaction to Astyages’ laughter, his condescension, is telling: he laughs (it must be at Sakas), jumps on Astyages, and kisses him. His laughter signals a further challenge to Sakas, something that he is unable to defend against. As much as his hugging and kissing of Astyages is appropriate for a grandson, when Cyrus does so it has a malicious aspect. Whatever Sakas’ relationship with Astyages, Cyrus proves that his relationship with Astyages is infinitely closer and more permanent. He is family: he can hug and kiss and sit on Astyages in public while Sakas is not and cannot. Cyrus’ kissing

527 My understanding of this scene may be similar to that of Marchewka (2011). She says, “The most expressive is the scene in which the boy mimics the chief cupbearer Sacas. Wasted by the aversion to Sacas, since he kept him away from the grandfather, he decided to discredit him in the Astyages’s eyes and to prove that not only he could equal him but even outdid. [...] —he threatened Sacas. And in fact, he so truly copied all the cupbearer’s actions, together with his solemn and serious face [...], that he managed to entertain his mother and grandfather” (129). Despite this understanding, she sees only humor and amusement in the scene (129). Hägg (2012) sees this scene as humorous and didactic (58).
528 Cyr., A.3.9.
of Astyages is a fierce blow directed at Sakas, expressing Cyrus’ familial and close relationship with Astyages, which Sakas can never supplant.

Cyrus follows up this action with words that support this interpretation: after he jumps up on his grandfather, the young prince taunts the slave, saying “Ὦ Σάκα, ἀπόλωλας· ἐκβαλῶ σε ἐκ τῆς τιμῆς· τά τε γὰρ ἄλλα, φάναι, σοῦ κάλλιον οἰνοχοήσω καὶ οὐκ ἐκπίομαι αὐτὸς τὸν οἶνον (Sakas, you are done for; I will cast you out of honor, for I will both pour the wine more nobly than you in other respects and I will not drink of the wine myself.).”

Cyrus explicitly links his successful pouring of the wine with his expectation that he will replace Sakas. This is not a game for Cyrus: he is serious about replacing Sakas and is triumphantly happy because he believes that he has fulfilled the only requirement for becoming the king’s wine-pourer and chamberlain. However, Cyrus, perhaps to reinforce his argument, also seems to accuse Sakas of embezzlement: he accuses Sakas of stealing wine from the king: “...I will cast you out of honor, for […] I will not drink of the wine myself.” The reader cannot know what this means until the narrator intervenes.

After Cyrus’ accusation, the narrator must clarify the situation: Sakas has not been stealing wine, but has simply been doing his job. He says,

οἱ δ’ ἄρα τῶν βασιλέων οἰνοχόοι, ἐπειδὰν διδῶσι τὴν φιάλην, ἀρύσαντες ἀπ’ αὐτῆς τῷ κυάθῳ εἰς τὴν ἀριστερὰν χεῖρα ἐγχεάμενοι καταρροφοῦσι, τοῦ δὴ εἰ φάρμακα ἐγχέοιεν μὴ λυσιτελεῖν αὐτοῖς.

Now the cupbearers of the kings, when they present the cup, draw out some of it with a small cup and, putting it into their left hand, swallow it down, so that they might not profit if they have added poison.

The true meaning of Cyrus’ allegation and the narrator’s words are not initially clear and

529 Cyr., A.3.9.
530 Cyr., A.3.9.
531 Cyr., A.3.9.
are not made so until Cyrus later makes a second allegation against Sakas. At first, Cyrus seems to accuse Sakas of stealing from Astyages. Although this is not true, as the narrator states, Cyrus’ actions are dubiously honorable. If Cyrus has believed for weeks or months that Sakas was stealing, why did he wait until this point to reveal his allegations? In crafting his attack on Sakas, he made the decision to delay the accusation until it was most beneficial to himself, allowing Sakas (so Cyrus believed) to keep robbing Astyages for however long Cyrus delayed his accusation. Cyrus’ attack on Sakas is not complete, though.

Astyages’ response shows that he is still amused and doesn’t take Cyrus seriously. The narrator says, “ἐκ τούτου δὴ ὁ Ἀστυάγης ἐπισκώπτων, Καὶ τί δὴ, ἔφη, ὦ Κῦρε, τάλλα μιμούμενος τὸν Σάκαν οὐ κατερρόφησας τοῦ οἴνου (Upon this Astyages said jokingly, ‘Cyrus, since you imitated Sakas in other respects, why did you not swallow some of the wine?’);”532 Astyages dismisses Cyrus’ accusation with a joke because he, of course, knows the real reason that Sakas drinks the wine. He does not respond to Cyrus’ accusation of theft but rather asks why Cyrus does not drink the wine himself. Astyages so far does not register that Cyrus’ attack on Sakas is serious. He rather seems to be angling for another funny statement from his grandson.

Cyrus’ response to Astyages’ joking question is not at all what Astyages expected: it raises the stakes in this conversation to such a degree of seriousness that Astyages can no longer view his words as humorous:

Ὅτι, ἔφη, νὴ Δία ἐδεδοίκειν μὴ ἐν τῷ κρατῆρι φάρμακα μεμιγμένα εἴη. Καὶ γὰρ ὅτε εἰστίσασας σὺ τοὺς φίλους ἐν τοῖς γενεθλίοις, σαφῶς κατέμαθον φάρμακα ὑμῖν αὐτὸν ἐγχέαντα.

“Because, by Zeus,” he said, “I was afraid that there might have been some poison mixed in the cup, for

532 Cyr., A.3.10.
when you entertained your friends on your birthday, I learned quite clearly that he had added some poison for you all.\textsuperscript{533}

Cyrus has now crossed a line: he has accused Sakas of attempting to assassinate Astyages. Cyrus remains as deadly serious as he has been all along, which Astyages, as we shall see, has just realized. If Astyages were to believe Cyrus, Sakas would likely be executed as a failed assassin of the king. Cyrus has gone so far as provoking Sakas’ execution in order to supplant him. Cyrus’ accusation has been interpreted as the consequence of a child’s naivete, but it is my position that Cyrus is deliberately attempting to eliminate a political rival.\textsuperscript{534} The viciousness of Cyrus’ actions runs deeper than this, though.

If the reader reconsiders Cyrus’ allegation against Sakas, an awkward thought occurs. If Cyrus believed that Sakas poisoned the wine on Astyages’ birthday, why did Cyrus not report it then? He let Astyages and his friends drink poisoned wine all evening yet did not intervene. Cyrus said nothing in the intervening period of days or weeks, a period in which Sakas served Astyages’ ‘poisoned’ wine potentially dozens of times. Cyrus even delays announcing that the wine is poisoned until late in the dinner party this evening. Astyages has been drinking wine during dinner and Cyrus even fills Astyages’ cup with poisoned wine \textit{himself} before he makes his accusation. Cyrus’ mother has been drinking the same wine. Cyrus is using the same method here that he used before when

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{533} \textit{Cyr.}, A.3.10.
\item \textsuperscript{534} The traditional position is that Cyrus is naively attempting to help his grandfather. Tatum (1989) calls Cyrus an “innocent child” (103) in making this accusation. Hägg (2012)’s interpretation represents the traditional position. He says, “Along with the humorous application of the boy’s perspective, the description also has a moral, as often related to a ruler’s right behaviour. Cyrus is not simply too young to know what drinking is, believing the whole company to have been poisoned; more importantly, he has been brought up at the more austere Persian court, where his father the king ‘just quenches his thirst and suffers no harm’” (58).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
he accused Sakas of stealing. In that instance he had eventually made his accusation of theft against Sakas after sitting on the information for some time, to wait until the most beneficial opportunity to accuse Sakas. Cyrus poisons his grandfather personally to drive his point home.

Cyrus has finally caused Astyages to take him seriously: Astyages asks, in response to this accusation, “Καὶ πῶς δὴ σὺ τοῦτο... ὃ παῖ, κατέγνως (And how, my child [...] did you come to know this?)”535 Cyrus has caused a pall of seriousness to fall over the conversation: this is the first time since the beginning of A.1.8 that Astyages has spoken without the adverb 'jokingly.'536 Nobody laughs or jokes again for the rest of dinner: the mood becomes grim and serious. Cyrus answers his grandfather with a description of the effects of the poison that are clearly symptoms of intoxication:

Because, by Zeus, I saw you all making mistakes, both in your judgments and with your bodies, for in the first place, you yourselves were doing such things as you do not allow us boys to do, for you all shouted at the same time, and you did not comprehend each other at all. Then you sang very ridiculously, and even though you did not listen to the singer, you all swore that he sang most excellently. Then, after each spoke of his own strength, when you stood up to dance, far from dancing in time with the rhythm, you were not even able to stand up straight. You all forgot yourselves entirely, you that you were king, the others that you were their ruler. Then I learned for the first time that what you were practicing was that liberty of speech; at least you were never silent.537

In my analysis of Cyrus’ description of drunkenness I will focus on what Cyrus attempts

535 Cyr., A.1.10
536 Marchewka (2011) notes that “With the particular charm and understanding of the 12-year old boy’s mentality, Xenophon created a picture of the Astyages’s symposium, in which the leading role was played by the little Cyrus. In the subsequent scenes we observe how he entertained his grandfather and the other table companions” (128).
537 Cyr., A.3.10.
to accomplish through his insulting and humiliating portrayal of Astyages’ actions on his birthday.\textsuperscript{538} Of all that transpired that night, Cyrus focuses on the humiliating aspects of Astyages’ behavior in order to shame him into punishing Sakas. It is a crucial component of his attack.

First, Cyrus does seem to be genuinely ignorant of the existence of alcohol, an argument that I will make in more detail below. As a result, his description of and attack on drunkenness come from the fresh eyes of a boy who sees it for the first time and is repulsed by it, assuming that his grandfather was poisoned and not enjoying himself. He concentrates on the faults and errors it causes in the ‘poisoned’ man. He emphasizes to Astyages, from his un-poisoned perspective, how shamefully he acted to prove to Astyages that he was poisoned and that the poison is harmful. This is not a tangent, but central to Cyrus’ attack on Sakas. The errors he stresses mostly involve a failure in moderation: rather than behaving as he should, Astyages and his friends acted in a manner far below their typically serious nature. Cyrus says, “you all shouted at the same time,” and “you sang very ridiculously, and even though you did not listen to the singer, you all swore that he sang most excellently.”\textsuperscript{539} They did “such things as you do not allow us boys to do:”\textsuperscript{540} they acted like over-stimulated children. Cyrus presents the first two symptoms of the poison as violations of (adult) friendship: if friends in normal circumstances were to shout over each other constantly, it would be seen as disrespectful. Only a person who disrespected his friends would persistently shout them down so his own opinion could be heard. Moreover, if a man sang poorly and his friends all swore

\textsuperscript{538} Gera (1993) says that “Once again young Cyrus lectures his grandfather on a favorite theme of Xenophon’s, the ill effects of excessive drinking” (158).

\textsuperscript{539} Cyr., A.3.10.

\textsuperscript{540} Cyr., A.3.10.
that he was singing well, they would lead him into disaster.\textsuperscript{541} What if this man, who had been falsely told he sang most excellently, was thus so encouraged that he sang in public? He would make a fool of himself, and it would be his friends’ fault. Thus the first two deleterious effects of Sakas’ poison are that it makes the poisoned men violate the rules of friendship: they shout at, disrespect, ignore, and lie to their friends. Sakas’ wine is initially, as Cyrus describes it, a social poison.

However, the errors are not limited to norms of friendship: Cyrus, in his criticism of the poison, points out other consequences. He says, “Then, after each spoke of his own strength...”\textsuperscript{542} This is another type of social failing: the poison causes men to boast. The specific type of arrogance that Cyrus singles out is that Astyages and his friends brag to each other about how strong they are. This is a failure of politeness and could also be considered lying. If Astyages and his friends were to act politely while at this dinner party, they would not arrogantly boast to each other that they were so strong. If we consider that Astyages is elderly, he is likely not exceptionally strong: these boasts are unsupportable. This is only a brief clause but adds another aspect to Cyrus’ assault on the poison: he has now argued that it causes disrespect, lies, and arrogance. His attack is hardly over, though.

Cyrus then says, “when you stood up to dance, far from dancing in time with the rhythm, you were not even able to stand up straight.”\textsuperscript{543} This is a different type of error: the poison induces a man to lose control over his body. As Cyrus suggests, it would normally be improper for Astyages to get up and dance wildly. Moreover, Astyages was

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{541 Cyr, A.3.10.}
\footnote{542 Cyr, A.3.10.}
\footnote{543 Cyr, A.3.10.}
\end{footnotes}
so poisoned that he could barely stand, much less keep time to the music. Cyrus thus presents the effects of wine as crippling to body and to soul: if Astyages had his wits about him, he would not have gotten up to dance. Even if he did dance, he would not have danced so poorly if he had not been poisoned: the poison has a shameful effect on his body. Cyrus notes that Astyages loses control over his limbs and shambles under the influence of the poison. We have seen Cyrus argue that the poison leads to disrespect for friends, boasting, and arrogance. He argues here, in addition to these, that the poisoned men humiliated themselves through physical lapses and were so poisoned they didn’t notice it.

Finally, Cyrus describes what is, to him, the most tragic victim of the poison: the social hierarchy in the palace. He says, “You all forgot yourselves entirely, you that you were king, the others that you were their ruler.”544 Cyrus has saved this to last in order to emphasize that Sakas’ poison was truly harmful.545 The point is simple: under the effects of alcohol, Astyages and his friends momentarily forgot who they were. Astyages treated

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544 Cyr., A.3.10.
545 Gera (1993) says that “Our Cyrus was disturbed by the sudden sense of equality between Astyages and his subjects at the despot’s birthday celebration: all alike seemed to have forgotten that he was their king and this led to everyone talking at once” (158). Yet Gera is uncertain whether Astyages’ behavior signifies he is a tyrant (158) or a good king (159). Too (1998), on the other hand, sees Astyages’ reciprocal relationship with his lieutenants as a sign of Astyages’ poor leadership. She says that “Astyages is a poor example for his subjects and for his grandson because he continually contradicts his words by his actions. As Cyrus perceptively charges, the king and his companions do precisely what they do not permit their children to do, with the result that those around him have forgotten that Astyages is the state's king and ruler. The king's political position is compromised by his inability to offer himself as a paradigm of virtue to others (290).” Although Too's conclusion, that Astyages harms himself through not being perfectly virtuous, is reasonable enough, the argument she uses to reach this conclusion is problematic. Even though Astyages does something he does not allow Cyrus to do—in this case, get drunk—it does not follow that he has necessarily compromised his virtue or diminished his authority. Cambyses hunts but does not allow the child Cyrus to hunt; Astyages fights in battle but does not allow the child Cyrus to fight: certain actions are inappropriate for children. Moreover, it does not follow that when Astyages gets drunk while refusing to allow Cyrus to drink it will cause the Median lieutenants to think of Astyages as their equal. Finally, Too takes it for granted that it is right and appropriate for there to be a rigid hierarchical division between monarch and lieutenants (a position Astyages, at least, clearly does not hold), a position that I find unproven.
his friends as if they were simply friends, and his friends momentarily forgot that he was king.\textsuperscript{546} This rigid notion of the strict gap between monarch and everyone else is not a Persian custom: Cambyses is the first-among-equals, obedient to the will of the council of elders appointed beyond his control.\textsuperscript{547} Yet because Astyages gets drunk with his lieutenants, it must not be a Median custom either. Yet Cyrus believes that a king disrespects himself if he relaxes and has fun, even on his birthday. Equality between master and subject (caused here by intoxication) makes Cyrus, but not Astyages or Cambyses, uncomfortable. Since the idea of a rigid hierarchy between master and subject that Cyrus uses to humiliate Astyages is neither native to the Persian monarchy nor, clearly, the Median monarchy, it must have originated with Cyrus. Cyrus has already started developing his own ideas about what kind of king he will be.\textsuperscript{548}

Cyrus ends his description of the symptoms of Sakas’ poison with a bitter joke to drive his point home. He says, “Then [at Astyages’ party] I learned for the first time that what you were practicing was that liberty of speech; at least you were never silent.”\textsuperscript{549} It is a cruel joke at the expense of Astyages’ royal authority: Cyrus has joked that in this poisoned state Astyages and his friends have reverted to some sort of proto-democratic state, in which a perverse ἴσηγορία has unexpectedly trampled over Astyages’ royal rights.

\textsuperscript{546} Gera (1993), 158.
\textsuperscript{547} \textit{Cyr.}, A.2.5; A.2.14; A.5.5. Cambyses seems to derive little power or special treatment from his royal position. Carlier (2010) notes that Cyrus, though a prince, is trained no differently than if his father were a commoner (338). Clearly Cyrus has some special privileges, though, since he is allowed to live in Media: the law on continuous enrollment in the School would suggest that Cyrus would normally be expelled for such an extended absence (A.2.15).
\textsuperscript{548} Once he becomes king in Babylon, Cyrus makes it clear that there is no equality between him and the entimoi. They serve him (H.1.6; H.4.11) and think of him as a father (H.1.1) and are completely within his power (H.1.16-20; Z.5.37 ff.). Nadon (2001) says that “The cumulative and intended effect of Cyrus’s contrivances is to drive his followers into an isolated, emasculated, and almost asocial state, not unlike that of his eunuchs” (120).
\textsuperscript{549} \textit{Cyr.}, A.3.10
and prerogatives. 550 Cyrus dismisses this ἰσηγορία by sneering and saying that “at least you were never silent.” 551 This is a hostile and ironic definition of ἰσηγορία. 552 As sneering as Cyrus is, he hints at another danger contained in Sakas’ poison: if his courtiers may become accustomed to ἰσηγορία when poisoned, they might start wanting ἰσηγορία at other times as well. They might even start considering the merits of an oligarchic system, 553 in which every elite Mede has ἰσηγορία. Thus Cyrus dismisses the equality in this group of friends at Astyages’ party by sneering at it and also hinting that it might lead to sedition. 554

Thus Cyrus described the effects of Sakas’ poison. On one level, this section can be taken as a funny attack on alcohol, since any reader would recognize the symptoms of this ‘poison’ as intoxication: scholars have typically interpreted this as Cyrus’ attempt to moderate his grandfather’s alcoholism. 555 Cyrus, in their understanding, is childishly critiquing the effects of alcohol from a naïve distance. However, this section must also be

550 Marchewka (2011), 129.
551 Cyril., A.3.10.
552 Compare Socrates’ free and open conversations, in which anyone is free to accost Socrates or be accosted by him (Mem., B.1.1 ff. Socrates ambushed Aristippus for looking a little tubby; Γ.8.1 ff. Aristippus ambushes Socrates in return in an attempt to win his followers away from him).
553 Darius, in Herodotus (Grene 1987), criticizes oligarchies for this type of equality between rulers. He says, “In an oligarchy, many try to practice virtue for the public good, but in doing so they engender bitter private enmities. Each of the oligarchs wants to be chief man and to win with his opinions, and so they come to great hatreds of one another, and from this comes faction, and from faction comes murder. From murder there is a relapse into despotism” (3.82). If Cyrus were concerned about the same sort of thing that Darius is, then he would fear that this familiarity and equality between monarch and lieutenants could encourage the lieutenants to rebel against the insufficiently mysterious Astyages.
554 Gera (1993) compares Astyages’ birthday party to Xenophon’s Symposium and Ctesias’ account of one of Astyages’ parties in order to argue that Astyages’ party was an important event but un-Socratic in its rowdiness. Yet these comparisons incidentally show how unexpectedly moderate Astyages’ party was: in Ctesias, Astyages’ party has “professional entertainment...with minstrels and dancers performing” (159). In contrast, Xenophon’s supposedly decadent despot threw a party with a few close friends, his family, and some musicians in which they drank and had fun.
555 For example, Hågg (2012), 58 and Too (1998), 290-1. Due (1989), 148, notes and praises Xenophon’s focus on, and skill at depicting, the innocent and bizarre behavior young children display. Hågg (2012) also notes that “what makes this a landmark text in Greek biography, besides the lively description of Cyrus’ first encounter with a strange new world, is the psychological interest in his development from a child to a young boy, aptly highlighting the bewilderment it causes in the boy’s own mind” (59).
placed in its surrounding context: up to this point Cyrus has consistently attacked Sakas in one way or another. He has tried to drive Astyages from rich food, hoping that Sakas will lose influence over Astyages if Astyages doesn’t tarry at the table. He publicly shames Sakas by challenging Astyages’ decision to favor him. He imitates Sakas in order to supplant him, as he boasts, within the court hierarchy. This speech, allegedly about alcohol, is not disconnected to what proceeds: this is the most serious of several attempts to reduce Sakas’ access to Astyages.

This is clear from what Cyrus does in his attack on the effects of the poison: he attempts to humiliate Astyages. According to Cyrus, the poisoned man makes a public fool of himself. His arguments are more persuasive than those concerning luxurious foods: he is able to introduce as evidence the actions of the very man he is trying to persuade. The worse he can make Astyages’ behavior that night appear, the worse Astyages should think of Sakas, since Sakas’ poison was responsible for the behavior.

Astyages, after hearing the details of Cyrus’ accusation, asks a pointed question: “My child, has not your father gotten drunk from drinking?” Cyrus has made a baseless and serious accusation against Sakas, and Astyages wants to know how he could have made such a mistake. Cyrus’ well-planned assault, like his early critique of meat, was doomed due to lack of knowledge: Astyages does not believe Sakas is poisoning him because, unlike Cyrus, he knows what intoxication is. Thus, although Astyages does not believe Cyrus’ allegations, he does not joke with Cyrus any longer: Cyrus has upset the dinner through his groundless allegations against Sakas, and Astyages wants to know

556 For Gera (1993), 159, this dinner is full of jokes and ends happily.
557 Cyr., A.3.11.
how he could make such a mistake. Thus he asks whether Cambyses has never gotten drunk from drinking.

Cyrus’ denial that he had ever seen Cambyses drunk reveals that he genuinely does not know about the existence or effects of alcohol (this makes his delay in informing Astyages all the more appalling). He says to Astyages that Cambyses “Διψῶν παύεται, ἄλλο δὲ κακόν οὐδὲν πάσχει· οὐ γάρ, οἶμαι, ὦ πάππε, Σάκας αὐτῷ οἶνοχοεῖ (quenches his thirst and suffers no harm, for a Sakas, grandfather, certainly does not pour his wine.).”

This is the crux of the matter: Cyrus has seen his own father drink wine on countless occasions before and has never seen him suffer as a result. The reader knows this is because Cambyses is rigidly moderate and never drinks to intoxication, but Cyrus is unaware of this. Cyrus’ prior experiences have dictated his reaction to what he saw at the table during the party. He has never seen anything like what he saw that night and he assumes, since wine is inert, it must be something in the wine: Sakas’ poison. That is why Astyages acted as if he had been poisoned and Cambyses never has. Thus this is not an attack against the drinking of wine, as has been suggested. Cyrus is not arguing that Astyages is a drunk or that Sakas enables his alcoholism; he is repeating, by varying his argument and making it more personal, his prior attacks against Sakas. What Cyrus is saying is that Cambyses has never acted strangely after drinking wine because there is no Sakas in Persia who poisons Cambyses. As should now be clear, Cyrus has misunderstood Astyages’ question: Astyages asked if Cambyses had ever gotten drunk ’after drinking;’ by this he is asking whether Cambyses had ever consumed enough

558 Cyr., A.3.11.
559 Hägg (2012) and Too (1998), as I noted above.
alcohol that he acted drunkenly. However, Cyrus understands from Astyages’ question that he is asking whether Cambyses had ever acted like Astyages did, as if he had ever been poisoned. This is why Cyrus takes this final dig at Sakas by saying there is no Sakas in Persia: he affirms to Astyages that there is nobody sufficiently disloyal to the Persian king to poison him. Cyrus misunderstands what his grandfather asks him, but that should not cause us to overlook that Cyrus is again accusing Sakas of a crime.

Mandane finally interrupts by asking a perceptive question that shows she is aware of what Cyrus is doing. She asks, “Ἀλλὰ τί ποτε σύ, ὦ παῖ, τῷ Σάκᾳ οὕτω πολεμεῖς (But why ever, my child, do you make war on Sakas like this?);”

This question is in direct response to Cyrus’ last assault on Sakas, but it could also be seen as a response to the whole of Cyrus’ conversation during dinner. Mandane, like Astyages, has stopped laughing. She has considered his behavior and accuses Cyrus of making war on Sakas: this is pointed vocabulary. Mandane knows that Cyrus’ attack on Sakas is serious and intentional; she wants to know why. Cyrus finally admits the truth:

Ὅτι νὴ Δία, φάναι, μισῶ αὐτόν· πολλάκις γάρ με πρὸς τὸν πάππον ἐπιθυμοῦντα προσδραμεῖν οὗτος ὁ μιαρώτατος ἀποκωλύει. ἀλλ' ἱκετεύω... ὦ πάππε, δός μοι τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἄρξαι αὐτοῦ.

Because I hate him, by Zeus […], for often when I desire to run up to my grandfather, this most wretched fellow shuts me out. But I beg you, grandfather, give me three days to rule over him.

This has been Cyrus’ motivation throughout the whole of this scene. He hates Sakas because he has the ability to restrict his access to his grandfather. However, since this is

560 Cyr., A.3.11.
561 Gera (1993) believes Mandane gets involved out of fear of Astyages: “Mandane, anxious perhaps to blunt Cyrus’ criticisms of her father, asks Cyrus why he dislikes Sacas so much” (159). This is unfair to Astyages and Mandane, who have patiently laughed at Cyrus’ charming childishness precisely until the seriousness of his allegations became apparent. Mandane sides with Astyages not because of fear of her father but because Cyrus’ behavior is deeply concerning.
562 Cyr., A.3.11.
563 Tatum (1989), 104, believes that Cyrus is joking around to charm Astyages and Mandane. Field (2012)
Cyrus’ explicit motivation, it is crucial to notice that Cyrus has been attacking Sakas during this dinner not in his role as chamberlain but in his role as *cupbearer*: Sakas’ behavior in the dining room doesn’t matter to Cyrus. Thus all of Cyrus’ attacks on Sakas-as-cupbearer during the dinner are confirmed to be cynical attempts at manipulating Astyages. Sakas is apparently more open to attack as cupbearer than as chamberlain: Cyrus didn’t attempt to eliminate Sakas-as-chamberlain because all Cyrus can complain about is that Sakas has done his job. He attempts to overthrow Sakas by attacking him elsewhere.

If we jump briefly ahead, we see that Cyrus details his complaints against Sakas. He singles out three justifications Sakas gave when he prevented Cyrus from visiting his grandfather. They are: “σπουδάζει γὰρ πρός τινας (he is busy with certain others);” “λοῦται (He is washing);” “παρὰ ταῖς γυναιξίν ἐστιν (He is with his women.).” What unpardonable offenses! While the first situation is vague, we can easily imagine what

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564 *Cyr.,* A.3.11.

565 Even Tatum (1989) sees Cyrus’ behavior in this passage as lighthearted. He of this passage that Cyrus is “dropping the mask of solemnity and taking up the role of the clown...Cyrus mimics Astyages’ cupbearer Sacas, whom he dislikes” (104); he does note the “firm assertion of authority that underlies all these pleasantryes. Cyrus displays good will [...] in order to acquire power” (104). Indeed, that Sakas gives Cyrus excuses at all tells the reader that Sakas has consistently treated Cyrus with kindness. Sakas apparently always justifies to Cyrus his periodic exclusions from Astyages. Although Sakas could have shut Cyrus in silence, hit him, or had guards expel him, Cyrus incidentally admits that Sakas always politely explains his position. Cyrus even admits that “often when I desire to run up to my grandfather...” Sakas shuts Cyrus out. Sakas lets him in to see Astyages when appropriate! Based on Cyrus’ own testimony, the following is what so upsets Cyrus: Cyrus frequently tries to gain access to his grandfather; Sakas sometimes grants him access; sometimes Sakas prevents him from gaining access; when Cyrus is turned away Sakas justifies his exclusion; finally, Sakas treats Cyrus kindly, never shouting at or hitting or ignoring the boy, since Cyrus would have most definitely mentioned such treatment. This reasonable situation has so roused Cyrus to jealous anger that he attempts to bring about Sakas’ death.
'he is busy with others’ means. Astyages is ruler of a large kingdom: we cannot criticize Sakas for excluding a nosy and noisy boy from, for example, an ambassadorial meeting. Even if Astyages were just having a conversation with some friends, we cannot blame him for wanting an occasional break from Cyrus. The second excuse Cyrus mentions is “He is washing.” This is less open to criticism than the first. Cyrus wants access to his grandfather while his grandfather is taking a bath. We cannot complain about the desire to keep Cyrus out of the bathroom when it is occupied. Finally, and the least defensible of all, is the third excuse Cyrus complains about: “He is with his women.” We need hardly address this: of course Cyrus should not bother his grandfather while he is having sex. To the adults at the table Cyrus would be seen to be demanding the unreasonable. Cyrus expects constant access, regardless of hour, day, or reason. His inability to convince Sakas to cater to his whims is what infuriated Cyrus: Cyrus lacks empathy. He does not care about Sakas as a person or that he is only doing the (just) thing that Astyages asked him to do. Cyrus views Sakas as a mere obstacle to be excised from the palace because he is in Cyrus’ way. If we consider that Cyrus’ sojourn in Media is in effect an extended vacation, his actions are even more unjust: Cyrus wants to expel Sakas from his office so that he can *temporarily* assume the office of royal chamberlain—in the end, Cyrus will return to Persia. Thus, when Cyrus is faced with a man with more access to power than he has, his reaction is to plot to eliminate him. Cyrus increasingly appears to be coldly calculating, power-hungry, and lacking in empathy.566

Cyrus, as we have seen, admits his hatred of Sakas and asks for permission to

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566 Nadon (2001) hints at a similar understanding of Cyrus’ personality when describing Cyrus’ love of death, killing, and corpses that even borders on the erotic (160).
punish him. Astyages asks how Cyrus would punish Sakas, although he doesn’t allow
him to enact his punishment, so he inquires of Cyrus his methods. Cyrus says,

Στὰς ἂν ὥσπερ οὗτος ἐπὶ τῇ εἰσόδῳ, ἐπειτα ὅπως θαυμάζεις παρθείναι ἐπ’ ἄριστον, λέγομ’ ἂν ὅτι ὅσπὶ
δυνατόν ὅτι ἄριστον ἐντυχεῖν· σπουδάζει γὰρ πρὸς τινας· εἴθ’ ὅπως ᾧκλον ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον, λέγομ’ ἂν ὅτι
λούται· εἰ δὲ πάνω σπουδάζοι φαγεῖν, εἴποιμ’ ἂν ὅτι παρὰ ταῖς γυναιξίν ἐστίν·

Standing at the entrance, just as he does, whenever he wished to come in for lunch, I would say that it is not
possible to have lunch yet, for 'he is busy with certain others.' Then, when he came for supper, I would say,
'He is washing.' If he were very much in earnest to eat, I would say, 'He is with his women.' I would detain
him so long, just as he detains me, keeping me from you.567

This is the most severe punishment that Cyrus can bring himself to openly request. We
have seen him accuse Sakas of crimes that would demand more serious retribution than
this. Even so, what Cyrus suggests is not trivial. He doesn’t ask for Sakas’ execution or
his dismissal, but he does ask for temporary power over Sakas. In effect, he asks to be
given Sakas’ office for three days, which is what he wanted all along. The proposed
punishment shows how important he considers access to Astyages. Since Sakas had kept
Cyrus away from Astyages, Cyrus proposes to keep Sakas away from food. It is a telling
parallel: Cyrus apparently believes that, just as Sakas would suffer if starved, so too
Cyrus has suffered being starved of Astyages. Cyrus asks for permission to starve Sakas
for three days while he smugly mocks Sakas at the door of the dining room because this
situation is analogous to what Sakas has done to him. This is a harsh punishment even for
a Persian adult: outside the military, Persians do not seem liable to corporal or capital
punishment.568 But Cyrus’ innovative punishment is not whimsical: it is calculated to
cause Sakas to to feel exactly how Cyrus has felt being kept from Astyages. Cyrus wants
to produce in Sakas, through starvation, empathy for Cyrus. Not only is Cyrus’ desire

567 Cyr., A.3.11.
568 Cyr., A.2.14. The narrator does mention that the Elders “θανάτου δὲ οὗτοι κρίνουσι” (A.2.14), but the
narrator says that punishment for the homotimoi is limited to this life-long dishonor.
pervasive, but he wants to produce in Sakas an emotion that he does not possess himself.

Astyages’ final reaction to all of this is not preserved by the narrator, but it seems unlikely that Astyages would suddenly grant him this power. Cyrus’ plot fails, but he suffers no consequences. Most importantly, he has begun to practice manipulating people, a skill he will increasingly develop in Book A.

**Astyages’ Intent**

Cyrus dominates the Median court, controls the conversations of his adults, criticizes his grandfather, and attacks the palace staff, all with impunity. This is not without reason. This is not a sign of Cyrus’ superior willpower dominating the immoderate Medes or the innate superiority of Persians over Medes. Astyages controls Media, invades and captures foreign countries, and dominates Persia and Cyrus’ father: he is no pushover. Yet with Cyrus he is so tolerant and yielding that he never disciplines the boy and consistently endures his problematic behavior. If we consider this relationship from Astyages’ perspective—if we consider what Astyages may want from it—we may understand why Cyrus is permitted to act the way he does.

When Mandane announces her intention of returning home, Astyages unexpectedly requests that Cyrus remain. He even offers the boy a number of gifts and privileges to sweeten the deal. In essence, Astyages completely capitulates and yields to every single complaint Cyrus had made about living in Media.

Although Astyages is later revealed to have so successfully warded off an Armenian invasion that he compelled them to serve his empire as a vassal (Γ.1.10).

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569 Astyages is later revealed to have so successfully warded off an Armenian invasion that he compelled them to serve his empire as a vassal (Γ.1.10).
καὶ ἀκοντίζων καταβαλεῖς ὥσπερ οἱ μεγάλοι ἄνδρες.

My child, if you stay with me, in the first place, Sakas will not govern your access to me, but it will be up to you to come to me whenever you wish. And I will be more grateful to you to the extent that you come to me more often. Next, you will use my horses and as many others as you wish, and when you leave you may take the ones you yourself want. Next, at meals, you may take whatever path you wish to what seems to you to be a measured [diet]. Next, I give you all the wild animals that are now in the park, and I will collect others of all kinds, which, as soon as you learn how to ride a horse, you may pursue and strike down with your bow and spear, just as the grown men do. 570

This list is crafted to persuade Cyrus to stay in Media by, first, offering solutions for the problems Cyrus has voiced about living in Media and by, second, offering to place him in a position of unprecedented attention and power. Rather than the horses, the hunting, and the friends, what should draw our attention are two things. First, Astyages promises Cyrus not only that he can visit the king whenever he wants, but that Sakas will no longer have any power over him. This responds to Cyrus’ old complaint that Sakas frequently prevented him from visiting his grandfather. 571 Second, Astyages gives him permission to eat whatever he wants at dinner. Not only is this a response to another of Cyrus’ complaints, but it would effectively make him special—the center of attention—within the Median court. 572 Astyages is doing his best to persuade Cyrus to remain in Media: he

570 Cyr., A.3.14. The general trajectory of the narrator's intercessions into the text begins to change at about this point. The narrator is heavily involved in the introduction, of course, and then makes a number of intercessions during Cyrus’ early stay in Media (e.g. A.3.9, A.3.12). After Cyrus reaches puberty (A.4.3-4) and no longer is politically unaware as he once was (A.3.8) and becomes able to make sophisticated plans (A.4.4-7), Cyrus increasingly begins to speak for himself and to volunteer on his own interpretations of his own dubious actions. The narrator still provides biased and misleading interpretations of events (e.g. A.4.16-17), he more frequently restrains himself to providing additional information (e.g. A.4.25) and makes fewer explicitly interpretative intercessions. In other words, the narrator speaks for Cyrus until Cyrus can speak for himself.

571 Cyr., A.3.11.

572 Cyr., A.3.4-6. Although it is never made explicit in the text, it seems likely that Astyages’ attention was drawn to Cyrus’ diet (A.3.4) because it was not normal—likely even forbidden—to refuse to eat the same food as the king at Astyages’ table. Astyages was sufficiently concerned about being poisoned through his drink that he employed Sakas as his taster (A.3.9); thus the man who refused to eat the same food as the king would implicitly suggest that he either poisoned the food or knew that the food had been poisoned. Thus the permission Cyrus is accorded to eat whatever he likes would set him aside as special and privileged in the eyes of those who normally ate with the king, the Median aristocrats.
promises him the run of the Median court and offers to make him appear special to the Medes and Persians both. It is very important for Astyages that Cyrus continue to live in Media.

It is never said why Astyages wants Cyrus to remain, just that he wants him to stay. The political aspect of their relationship is crucial to understanding why Astyages treats Cyrus as tolerantly and patiently as he does. Astyages is not just his grandson, but is the heir to the throne of Persia, Media’s subject and important ally. So, although the narrator claims that Astyages summons Cyrus to Media “ἰδεῖν γὰρ ἐπεθύμει, ὅτι ἤκουεν αὐτὸν καλὸν κἀγαθὸν εἶναι (for he desired to see him because he heard that Cyrus was noble and good.),” we can be confident this is not the whole of Astyages’ motivation.

Tigranes provides a parallel example: just like Cyrus, he was invited (if not compelled) to live in Media during his childhood, to be raised in Astyages’ court, to—it is clear—serve as a hostage to ensure his father’s loyalty. There is this aspect to Cyrus’ sojourn in Media as well: as long as he stays in Media, his father has every reason to be perfectly loyal to Astyages. Yet there is another aspect to this, as the piles of gifts Astyages is constantly giving Cyrus suggests: Astyages wants something from Cyrus.

A.3.1. Astyages’ motivation for meeting his grandson are the same that Socrates has for meeting Ischomachus, at Oik., VI.16-17.

There is this aspect to Cyrus’ sojourn in Media as well: as long as he stays in Media, his father has every reason to be perfectly loyal to Astyages. Yet there is another aspect to this, as the piles of gifts Astyages is constantly giving Cyrus suggests: Astyages wants something from Cyrus.

A.3.3. The request of an important ally and father-in-law to the king can hardly be refused” (43).

A.4.15.

During Cyrus’ time in Media, among other gifts he is given a set of Median clothes and golden jewelry (A.3.3), the long-term use of horses with golden bridles (A.3.3), training in riding (A.3.3), luxurious foods (A.3.6), weapons (A.4.10), a suit of armor (A.4.18), and horses to keep along with a variety of other presents (A.4.25).
loyalty of his ally Cambyses through his marriage to Mandane. It seems likely that he looks to the next generation by inviting Cyrus to Media. If Astyages can ingratiate himself and Cyaxares to Cyrus, he could help maintain the relationship between the two nations in the future. To this end, Astyages tries to ensure that Cyrus remembers his time in Media as fondly as possible.

Thus Astyages’ lenient, even lax, treatment of Cyrus makes sense in the context of the political relationship between the two nations. Astyages has invited Cyrus to Media in order to ensure that Cyrus, once he assumes the Persian throne, continues to act as a loyal and helpful ally to Media. As part of this plan, he gives Cyrus gifts upon his arrival in Media, begins to teach him how to ride a horse, and grants him a place of honor at his table. Yet, by the time Mandane is ready to return home, all Cyrus has done in response is that he has criticized the way his grandfather eats, attacked his grandfather’s staff, and attempted to humiliate his grandfather. Not only does this suggest that Astyages’ plan has failed, but that if Cyrus should return home now the consequences would be worse for

Later in the text, the narrator confirms this reading of Astyages’ motivations in summoning Cyrus to Media: “ἔνθα δὴ ἴππους τε αὐτῷ δοὺς οὓς αὐτὸς ἐπεθύμει λαβεῖν καὶ άλλα συσκευάσας πολλά ἔπεμπε καὶ διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ ἁμα ἐλπίδας ἔχον μεγάλας ἐν αὐτῷ ἄνδρα ἔσεσθαι ίκανὸν καὶ φίλους ὀφελεῖν καὶ ἐχθροὺς ἀνιᾶν (So giving him the horses that he himself desired to take and furnishing him with many other things of all sorts, both because he loved him and at the same time because he had great hopes that he would be a man competent to help his friends and bring his enemies to grief, [Astyages] sent him off)” (A.4.25).

Tatum (1989) sees every conversation between Astyages and Cyrus as tense: from their first interaction, “these childhood scenes at the court of the Medes are nothing less than a sustained test of wills” (97).

This is a good example of how Astyages' two roles in Book A, as king of Media and grandfather of Cyrus, conflict. As grandfather of Cyrus, he should be concerned that his grandson grows up to be the best man possible, as most grandfathers want for their grandchildren. As king of Media, he must be concerned that Cyrus grows up loving, or at least dependent on, Media to some degree so that he will maintain the close alliance between the two nations. We will see below several moments in which these two desires conflict (for example, when he twice refuses to let Cyrus hunt because he is too young and then twice changes his mind because Cyrus grows upset). These presents he awards Cyrus would not all be approved of by Socrates (Cf. Mem., B.1.1 ff.) because they make Cyrus special, spoiled, and in danger of falling into a love of luxury. While they may fulfill his desire as king of Media, he runs the risk of failing as a grandfather.
Media than if Astyages had never invited Cyrus to visit in the first place: better impersonal apathy than personal loathing. Astyages does not have many allies: the quantity and quality of the gifts he offers Cyrus in order to convince him to stay in Media—the desperation suggested by such a powerful king virtually begging a child to stay—lead us to believe that Astyages views the continuing loyalty of Persia as crucial for ensuring the safety and security of Media. Cyrus being made happy and being kept safe—so that Cyrus can leave Media with love and nostalgia in his heart—is one of Astyages’ most important concerns during the remainder of Cyrus’ sojourn. Astyages believes that Media’s security depends upon it.

**Cyrus Refines his Techniques**

After the departure of Mandane prompts Astyages to offer Cyrus new privileges, Cyrus finds himself in a position where, due to the social embarrassment caused by the onset of puberty and his new freedom to maneuver within the Median court, he is both compelled, and uniquely able, to innovate in the field of manipulation. He finds that the childish jump, hug, and kiss style of manipulation, as well as begging and wheedling, are both too juvenile and embarrassing for him to attempt any longer. As a result, he must, aided by the new power he wields over almost everyone in Media, discover how he would be able to continue to manipulate and exploit Astyages.

Cyrus makes three attempts to cynically manipulate his grandfather in this passage. In each case, he offers to do what he claims is a ’favor’ for his grandfather.\(^{580}\) In

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\(^{580}\) Field (2012) categorizes Cyrus’ ’benevolence’ similarly to my understanding. She says that in Media Cyrus “receives no guidance or admonishment while there. Instead, he builds favor with his grandfather the king, and gains influence over all with his natural gifts and charms. He alleviates his dependence on others primarily by making them beholden to him. Indeed, Cyrus’ form of benevolence, to the extent that it is not informed by real wisdom, may be the most harmful variety, since it directly threatens others’ freedom. There is no hint from Xenophon that Cyrus ever recognizes the tension between his
the first instance, he tries to convince his grandfather to allow him to do something forbidden by offering to do him a favor; in the second, he attempts to distract his grandfather from realizing that he has done something he was forbidden to do; in the third instance, Astyages’ *laissez-faire* attitude to Cyrus is explicitly connected by the narrator to another favor Cyrus has done for him.

The first, and perhaps most cynical, of the favors Cyrus offers to do for his grandfather is prompted by a problem that the narrator claims has arisen for Cyrus. One of Astyages’ promises to Cyrus was that he would be allowed to hunt in the *paradeisos* if he stayed. At some point after agreeing to stay, Cyrus slaughtered the last of the animals Astyages maintained in the royal *paradeisos*. The narrator notes that Astyages wasn’t lying to Cyrus, but had in fact attempted to make good his promise. He had continually supplied the *paradeisos* with new wild animals to ensure that Cyrus could always hunt, but Cyrus had slaughtered the animals so quickly that Astyages was unable to maintain a constant supply. As the narrator says, he

\[ταχὺ δὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ θηρία \ ἀνηλώκει διώκων καὶ βάλλων καὶ κατακαίνων, ὡστε ὁ Ἀστυάγης οὐκέτ’ εἴχεν αὐτῷ συλλέγειν θηρία. καὶ ὁ Κῦρος αἰσθόμενος ὅτι βουλόμενος οὐ δύναιτό οἱ ζῶντα πολλά παρέχειν, ἔλεγε πρὸς αὐτόν.:\]

quickly used up all the wild animals in the park, because he chased, threw at, and killed them. Consequently, Astyages was no longer able to collect wild animals for him. And Cyrus, perceiving that Astyages wished to provide him with many animals but was not able to, said to him...  

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581 Astyages promised to give Cyrus permission to hunt the animals in the *paradeisos* among the various promises he made to persuade Cyrus to remain in Media after the return of Mandane to Persia (A.3.14)  
582 *Cyr.,* A.4.5
We may conclude two things from this: first, Astyages is genuinely attempting to keep his side of the agreement that had convinced Cyrus to stay. Secondly, and more importantly, Cyrus has deliberately contrived this problem in order to manipulate Astyages.

Cyrus knows that Astyages promised him animals to kill in the *paradeisos* as a condition of his continued stay in Media and he has used this situation to extort his grandfather in an attempt to win greater privileges. The ‘problem’ Cyrus faces is that there are no more animals for him to hunt: this has arisen because Cyrus has killed the animals in the *paradeisos* faster than Astyages has been able to resupply them. As the narrator says, Cyrus has noticed that Astyages “βουλόμενος οὐ δύναιτό οἱ ζῶντα πολλὰ παρέχειν” for Cyrus to kill.\(^{583}\) Cyrus sees his grandfather struggling to capture quite as many animals as Cyrus has killed. This is a contrived problem, because Cyrus could solve it in a way that would allow him to keep hunting and would lessen the strain on his grandfather: Cyrus could simply kill fewer animals! After contriving this problem, Cyrus goes to Astyages to offer to do a favor for him. Cyrus offers to personally eliminate the increasingly troubling cost Astyages spends on capturing animals by means of a convenient solution and easy solution.

Cyrus proposes that he be allowed to supply the solution to his problem. He says to Astyages, with an air of generosity, “Ὡ πάππε, τί σε δεῖ θηρία ζητοῦντα πράγματ’ ἔχειν; ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν ἐμὲ ἐκπέμπῃς σὺν τῷ θείῳ, νομιῶ ὅσα ἂν ἴδω θηρία, ἐμοὶ ταῦτα τρέφεσθαι (Grandfather, why must you be bothered looking for wild animals? If you send me out on a hunt with my uncle, I will believe that you are raising for me whatever wild

\(^{583}\) *Cyr., A.4.5*
animals I see.\textsuperscript{584} Cyrus notes that Astyages is having trouble (πράγματ’ ἔχειν) supplying as many animals to the paradeisos as Cyrus needs and helpfully offers to take this problem off of his hands. He depicts this as offering to do a favor for Astyages: since Astyages is struggling to keep up his side of the agreement, Cyrus will take over for him to save him the time and effort by personally hunting in the wilderness. Cyrus does know the limits of what his grandfather will likely agree to. Cyrus is still young and realizes that Astyages would not allow him to go into the wilderness on his own to hunt animals, so he suggests a compromise: he suggests that he go out σὺν τῷ θείῳ. Cyaxares is substantially older than Cyrus and would be able to supervise the hunting trip. Thus he tries to extort from Astyages something within the bounds of reason: he volunteers to selflessly hunt wild animals in the wilderness, but he suggests that he do so with supervision.

Whether he is unimpressed by Cyrus’ ‘favor’ or does not think it worth the risk to Cyrus’ life, Astyages, although the narrator does not explicitly state it, does not grant Cyrus permission. The narrator says that “ἐπιθυμῶν δὲ σφόδρα ἐξιέναι ἐπὶ τὴν θήραν οὐκέτι ὁμοίως λιπαρεῖν ἐδύνατο ὥσπερ παῖς ὤν, ἀλλ’ ὀκνηρότερον προσῄει (even though [Cyrus] vehemently desired to go out on a hunt, he was no longer able to implore his grandfather as he had done when he was a boy, but he approached him with greater hesitation.\textsuperscript{585}’\textsuperscript{585} The narrator attributes Cyrus’ failure to convince Astyages to the onset of puberty. The self-awareness of maturity has diminished his ability to manipulate his grandfather. He can no longer implore Astyages any longer—one remembers how he

\textsuperscript{584} Cyr., A.4.5.  
\textsuperscript{585} Cyr., A.4.6.
used to leap on and kiss Astyages—and now hesitates in dealing with him. Cyrus has outgrown his first form of persuasion, the unrelenting and enthusiastic childishness. Only by having recourse to Sakas and by tacitly expressing discontent to Astyages does he eventually persuade him to let him hunt.  

As a result of Cyrus’ bashful withdrawal and his frequent intercessions through Sakas, Astyages eventually relents and sends him to hunt supervised by Cyaxares. Upon his return, Cyrus uses the hunt to attempt to manipulate Astyages twice into believing that Cyrus is an adult. The first of these attempts takes the same form as before: he tries to convince Astyages he has done him a favor.

Cyrus, as should be clear, has been chafing under his place in the hierarchy of the palace. Cyrus’ actions upon his return to the palace are an attempt to persuade Astyages that he should no longer be treated as a child. Cyrus’ gift of the carcasses to Astyages is his first attempt to persuade Astyages that he is no longer a child.

The gift of the carcasses, including a boar, is a loaded gesture that implies Cyrus has arrived at adulthood. On one level, Cyrus presents this action as a favor he has done for Astyages. Cyrus “ἐδίδου τέ τῷ πάππῳ καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι αὐτὸς ταῦτα θηράσειεν ἐκείνῳ.” he emphasizes that ‘I personally killed this boar for you, to drive home that he risked his life to give Astyages a gift. Not only has he hunted and killed a wild animal,
the behavior of an adult, but it was even a traditionally dangerous animal. The words he uses, 'αὐτὸς θηράσειεν,' emphasize that he personally hunted and killed these animals: he killed without the aid of his guards or his uncle, who would surely confirm that Cyrus acted independently. Cyrus presents himself as an adult.

In addition, Cyrus’ gift is, according to Median tradition, a loaded gesture. The reader has previously seen two prior instances in the Median court of one person awarding others the gift of meat. Both events take place during Astyages’ dinner party: in the first instance, Astyages awarded meat to Cyrus as a mildly condescending and placatory gift. In the second instance, Cyrus awards the same pile of meat to a number of slaves who, I argued, became indebted to Cyrus through the award of this meat. In both instances the reader sees a social and hierarchical superior award a gift of meat to a subordinate. Cyrus thus is attempting to subvert this paradigm by, as a social and hierarchical inferior, giving this present to his superior. This action implies that Cyrus is not the subordinate child Astyages believed him to be but, as a person who kills wild animals and distributes their meat, he is worthy of far more consideration and freedom than he has thus far been accorded. As before, the award of a gift that is not asked for and not expected puts the recipient in a certain amount of debt.

Upon his return, Cyrus did not boastfully wave his bloody spears in front of his

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588 In the *Odyssey*, for example, it is related that Odysseus suffered the boar-gash on his thigh when visiting his grandfather, Autolycus. The poet connects his visit with his coming of age: Autolycus had told Odysseus’ parents that ‘when he has come of age and pays his visit to Parnassus […] I will give him enough to cheer his heart, then speed him home to you.’ And so, in time, Odysseus went to collect the splendid gifts” (Homer in Fagles and Knox 1996, 19.464-468). After Odysseus settled in, he went on a hunt with his grandfather and uncles; a boar was startled; Odysseus was wounded when “a tusk thrusting up over the boy’s knee, gouged[a] deep strip of flesh” (19.509-510).

589 *Cyr.*, A.3.6.

590 *Cyr.*, A.3.7.
grandfather; rather, he “τὰ ἀκόντια ἐπεδείκνυ μὲν οὐ, κατέθηκε δὲ ἣματωμένα ὅπου ᾤετο τὸν πάππον ὁμεσθαὶ (did not show him the spears, but he put them, still bloody, where he thought his grandfather would see them.).”591 The narrator only describes Cyrus behavior and does not suggest why he does this. Two aspects of this story suggest that this is a further attempt to manipulate Astyages. He did not clean his spears and he did not take them with him to his meeting with Astyages. The significance of leaving the blood on the spears is clear enough: should Astyages see the spears, crusted with blood, he would be presented with another visual and indisputable piece of evidence that Cyrus is an adult. That Cyrus puts them away instead of taking them into his meeting with Astyages suggests, however, that Cyrus sees some benefit in having Astyages first see the spears “accidentally.” This is another attempt to prove to Astyages that Cyrus has arrived at adulthood: he pretends to be unmoved emotionally by the hunting trip. This is careful stage-management: on the hunt, of course, Cyrus acted extremely emotionally and immaturely.592 Although the reader knows that Cyrus is quite immature, Cyrus attempts to manage what his grandfather believes. Cyrus knows that if he came to Astyages to boast of his maturity, waving the bloodied spears about as proof, Astyages would likely be unimpressed. He might think that Cyrus is over-excited and immaturely calling attention to his so-called proof of his maturity. Yet Cyrus still needs Astyages to see the spears because the encrusted blood proves his maturity. Cyrus thus hits upon this solution: if he puts the spears ‘carelessly’ aside, yet in a place where Astyages will see them, Astyages will come across these spears and be encouraged to believe that Cyrus has reacted to this

591 Cyr., A.4.10.
592 I discuss his behavior in some length later in this chapter and in my conclusion.

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hunt in a mature manner. Although the narrator does not explicitly say why, Astyages is not persuaded by Cyrus.\textsuperscript{593} He continues to think of him as a child and, when Cyrus later asks to go on another hunt, he refuses out of hand.

The narrator describes Cyrus’ third attempt in this section to manipulate Astyages by doing favors for him. The narrator says that

\begin{quote}
Astyages was not able to refuse to gratify Cyrus in whatever he asked of him, for when his grandfather was sick, Cyrus never left him and never ceased weeping, but he made it plain to all that he was extremely afraid that he might die. Also at night, if Astyages needed anything, Cyrus used to perceive it first and would leap up with the greatest alacrity of all in order to serve him in whatever way he thought would gratify him. He thus won Astyages over to the highest degree.\textsuperscript{594}
\end{quote}

There are two aspects of this episode that are noteworthy: Cyrus perpetually works to ingratiate himself to his grandfather by doing him constant favors.\textsuperscript{595} Whenever Astyages needs anything, day or night, Cyrus is the first to serve him, leaping at the opportunity. In doing so, he always works to make himself apparent as the most devoted of everyone.

The other important aspect of this, which the narrator emphasizes, is that Cyrus \textit{publicly}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{593} Sandridge (2012) claims that “For his part, Astyages is grateful for Cyrus’ gift but does not see that it was worth the risk” (27). I do not see appreciation in Astyages’ chastisement, but if it is there it supports my interpretation of Cyrus’ behavior as manipulative: even though Astyages is frustrated at Cyrus’ behavior, he still feels some degree of appreciation at the risks to which Cyrus went to win him some fresh meat.

\textsuperscript{594} \textit{Cyr.}, A.4.2. This is another instance of the narrator’s bias clouding his appraisal of Cyrus: Cyrus’ actions, so deliberate and deliberately public, are difficult to see as anything but manipulative. In particular, this scene coming in the context of Cyrus’ manipulation of Astyages in response to his refusal to allow him to hunt (A.4.6-7) and his hostility for Astyages which surfaces when Astyages later refuses again to let him hunt (A.4.14) suggests that the beloved—slavish—attitude Cyrus shows to his grandfather here is a front.

\textsuperscript{595} This passage is usually taken as a tame example of Cyrus’ dedication to his grandfather. Mitchell (2005) says that “In the \textit{Cyropaedia}, we have the positions of both Herodotus and Ctesias incorporated and refuted. Cyrus’ familial relationship with Astyages is maintained, yet any hint that it is an unhappy relationship is transmuted into a mark of their close relationship: thus, when Astyages is ill, Cyrus weeps lest he die; and Astyages’ death is in the end peaceful, and not in any way related to Cyrus’ actions, as he is succeeded by his son Cyaxares” (303).
\end{quote}
mourns and worries about Astyages: in other words, the public aspect of his behavior is important to Cyrus.

Cyrus’ constant manipulations of his grandfather are beginning to have some effect: Cyrus’ complaint at the dinner party about Sakas, which eventually led Astyages to grant him unrestricted movement within the palace, is what allows Cyrus to wait on Astyages day and night. It seems that Cyrus has learned a dangerous lesson about how to interact with his hierarchical superiors: if he disrespectfully manipulates his superiors and plays them off each other, he will get what he wants in the end. In this case, he received unlimited access to Astyages. Moreover, rather than resting on his laurels, he uses this newly increased access to his grandfather to redouble his attempts to manipulate him into granting even greater privileges.

Yet, we know that Cyrus is not a normal grandson: the narrator notes why Cyrus pursued this sycophantic behavior. Because of Cyrus’ constant favors, especially those done at inconvenient times, he won Astyages over “to the highest degree;” moreover, Astyages was “not able to refuse to gratify Cyrus in whatever he asked of him.”596 Cyrus’ actions produce a useful result; Astyages, however, is not the only target of his manipulation.

When Cyrus selflessly dotes upon Astyages, he ensures that his actions are seen by the entire palace. The narrator says that “Astyages was not able to refuse to gratify Cyrus in whatever he asked of him, for when his grandfather was sick, Cyrus never left him and never ceased weeping, but he made it plain to all that he was extremely afraid

596 Cyr., A.4.2.
that he might die.” While it is natural for a grandson to be upset at a relative contracting a potentially fatal illness, the narrator’ description of Cyrus’ behavior implies that Cyrus has prepared for the possibility that Astyages’ illness might actually prove fatal. The manner of Cyrus’ mourning suggests that he attempts to manipulate the whole court.

Cyrus’ later behavior indeed suggests that his expressions of grief at the sickbed of Astayges were nothing more than carefully prepared displays of false grief. Once he returns to Persia—one the Median court can no longer see what he says and does, he abandons any pretense of showing any concern for Astyages. First, after Cyrus returns to Persia, he makes no attempt to maintain any contact with his purportedly beloved grandfather. Second, when Astyages dies several years later, Cyrus expresses no grief, sadness, or any other emotion. The narrator says, “Προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου ὁ μὲν Ἀστυάγης ἐν τοῖς Μήδοις ἀποθνῄσκει, ὁ δὲ Κυαξάρης ὁ τοῦ Ἀστυάγους παῖς, τῆς δὲ Κύρου μητρὸς ἀδελφός, τὴν βασιλείαν ἔσχε τὴν Μήδων (In the progress of time, among the Medes, Astyages died, and Cyaxares, the son of Astyages and brother of Cyrus’ mother, came to hold the kingship of the Medes.).” That sole emotionless sentence—it has the emotion of a chronicle written by a monk fifteen hundred years later—is the sum total of Cyrus’ reaction to the death of Cyrus’ dearly beloved grandfather.

Whatever Cyrus wanted, he obtained partially through his own skill at

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597 Cyr., A.4.2
598 Cyr., A.5.2
599 Juxtaposing the two statements makes the contrast vivid. The narrator says “for when his grandfather was sick, Cyrus never left him and never ceased weeping, but he made it plain to all that he was extremely afraid that he might die” (A.4.2). After Cyrus’ return to Persia, the narrator says “In the progress of time, among the Medes, Astyages died, and Cyaxares, the son of Astyages and brother of Cyrus’ mother, came to hold the kingship of the Medes” (A.5.2).
manipulation and partially through (his awareness of) Astyages’ awareness of him as future ally of Media. Cyrus’ manipulations do not always succeed, but he is developing his skill.

**Cyrus’ Failed Elenchus**

Cyrus’ manipulations have, as we have seen, frequently met with failure: he is forced to innovate yet again. The impetus for this innovation comes from his agemates after his first hunt with Cyaxares. He boasts to them about how much better this hunting is than the paradeisos. He invites them on a hunt in the wild, which they immediately accept—on the condition that he can convince Astyages to let them go. Cyrus hesitates, because he knows that, as the narrator signaled, puberty has robbed him of his persuasiveness. Most of his recent attempts have failed: he failed to persuade Astyages to allow him to hunt or to think of Cyrus as an adult. He has only succeeded previously because Astyages wishes to keep him happy, not because he has been persuaded. Yet he has a new urgency: the Median youths threaten that, should he prove incapable of persuading Astyages, they will find someone else who can persuade Astyages and, accordingly, lead them. Although his previous failures of manipulation did all lead to eventual success, it was only after extended delays in which Astyages gradually reappraised his position. To avoid losing control over his agemates, Cyrus must

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600 *Cyr.*, A.4.7-A.4.9.
601 Nadon (2001) notes that this favor “demonstrates his care for others. But as Astyages perceives and Cyrus’ anger at his playmates’ ingratitude confirms, his benevolence is far from self-forgetting. His deeds are all calculated to increase his honor or influence” (52).
602 *Cyr.*, A.4.4.
603 *Cyr.*, A.4.5.
604 *Cyr.*, A.4.10.
605 Tatum (1989), 108, claims that Cyrus is devoted to Astyages but is also pressurized here by the demands of his agemates. He needs to figure out how to get everything he wants without creating enmity. Gray (2011) says that Cyrus has a “reverential fear of his grandfather” but he “sees he will lose estimation in their eyes if this happens” (230).
act quickly.

Cyrus’ subordinates threaten to sever their loyalty to him unless he fulfills their desires: he is learning how to control subordinates. Cyrus rises to the challenge. The narrator says,

άκούσας δὲ ταῦτα ὁ Κῦρος ἐδήχθη, καὶ στὴ ἄπελθὼν διακελευσάμενος ἑαυτῷ τολμᾶν εἰσῆλθεν, ἐπιβουλεύσας ὃπος ἂν ἀλλοτριᾶτα εἴποι πρὸς τὸν πάππον καὶ διαπράξειεν αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς παισίν ὃν ἐδέοντο.

Cyrus was stung at hearing this, and going away in silence, he ordered himself to take the dare [to persuade Astyages]. After planning how he could speak to his grandfather with least pain and accomplish for himself and the boys what they wanted, he went in.606

Cyrus is thus explicitly said to be devising a new style of manipulation.607 How perverse it is, then, that the style of manipulation Cyrus hits upon to unjustly manipulate his grandfather anew is that of the Socratic elenchus.

When Cyrus approaches his grandfather, he immediately initiates a conversation that, superficially, could have been excerpted from the Oeconomicus. At first, Cyrus/Socrates seems to ask Astyages/Ischomachus about household management.

ἤρξατο οὖν ὧδε. Ἐιπέ μοι, ἔφη, ὦ πάππε, ἢν τις ἀποδρᾷ σε τῶν οἰκετῶν καὶ λάβῃς αὐτὸν, τι αὐτῷ χρήσῃ; Τί άλλο, ἔφη, ή δήσας εὐραξίσεις ἀναγκάσω; ἰν δὲ αὐτόματος πάλιν ἔλθῃ, πῶς ποιήσεις; Τί δὲ, ἔφη, εἰ μὴ μαστιγώσας γε, ἵνα μὴ αὐθίς τοῦτο ποιή, ἐξ ἀργῆς χρῆσομαι; Μόρα ἄν, ἔφη ὁ Κῦρος, σοὶ παρασκευάξεις εἰπή ὅτι μαστιγώσεις με, ἐχθροί τοὺς παῖς ὑποδόθωσίν μοι λαβόν τοὺς ἡλικίωτας ἐπὶ θῆραν. καὶ ὁ Λυκιαίης, Καλὸς, ἔφη, ἔποιησας προειπών· ἐνδοθεν γάρ, ἔφη, ἀπαγορεύω σοι μὴ κινεῖσθαι. χαρίεν γάρ, ἔφη, εἰ ἔνεκα κρεατίων τῇ θυγατρί τὸν παιδὰ ἀποβουλοξήσασιν.

[Cyrus] began, then, as follows: “Tell me, grandfather, if one of your servants runs away and you catch him, how do you treat him?

“How else,” he said, “than by chaining him and compelling him to work.”

607 Field (2012) says that Cyrus “is portrayed as a diligent learner with regards to the ambitions, hopes, and fears of others. This is perhaps best illustrated by considering Cyrus’ growing practical ability to help, gratify, and otherwise manipulate people towards his ultimate purpose of maintaining his dominance and receiving their love and praise” (728). It is in this scene that Cyrus begins to consciously train himself in manipulation.
“And if he comes back again of his own accord,” he said, “what do you do?”
“What else,” he said, “except beat him, in order that he not do it again, and then treat him as before.”
“It is high time, then,” said Cyrus, “for you to get something ready to beat me with, since I am making plans about how to run away from you and take my agemates on a hunt.”
And Astyages said, “You acted nobly in telling me in advance, for I forbid you to stir from within. How charming it would be if I should let my daughter’s son stray off for a bit of meat!”

The provocation of the Median youths has indeed induced Cyrus to innovate. Instead of telling lies, criticizing or promising favors, Cyrus attempts to manipulate his grandfather through Socratic questioning. Before, however, I discuss Cyrus’ new manipulative approach, it is worth pointing out what Cyrus does not try first: he does not ask Astyages. Cyrus is so committed to his manipulations that he is incapable of stepping back from what he has grown accustomed to. He simply does not ask his grandfather if he would allow him to take his agemates on a hunt. Most of what Cyrus wants to obtain has been permitted him before. Astyages had previously allowed him to hunt with Cyaxares. Nothing after the hunt suggested that he would not be allowed to hunt again. Moreover, he has no reason to expect that Astyages would refuse to allow his agemates to attend. Again, nothing indicates this is forbidden. They have accompanied him in the paradeisos and they even anticipate that permission would be granted if Astyages were simply asked. Yet, Cyrus does not ask Astyages, even though he has no reason to

608 Cyr., A.4.13.
609 Tatum (1989) states that Cyrus presents Astyages with “an impossible dilemma” (109).
610 Gray (2011) notes that “Cyrus does not put his request as bluntly and simply as Archidamus” (230) to whom she compares Cyrus here; yet she describes Astyages’ reaction by saying “Thanks for the warning is the reply from his slightly humourless grandfather—I forbid you even to move outdoors; it would be a nice thing, he says, to make a shepherd of his grandchild for the sake of a bit of hunted meat” (230). This is unfair: Cyrus’ ham-fisted attempt to compel Astyages to bend to his will does not deserve a light-hearted laugh in response. What Cyrus is doing here is more serious than Gray (2011) allows.
611 When Cyrus returns from his hunt with Cyaxares, he enthuses to his agemates, “Boys, what triflers we were when we hunted the wild animals in the park” (A.4.11)! They subsequently say, in response to his initial unwillingness to approach Astyages, that “It is a bad problem […] if you are unable to act on our behalf when it is needed; but, rather, it will be necessary for us to ask someone else for you” (A.4.12).
believe it would fail. Cyrus is so committed to manipulation that he cannot consider alternatives.

Cyrus carefully plans this conversation: he will, by asking Astyages a series of questions, try to accomplish several things: he attempts to cause Astyages to recall Median policy regarding slaves; by doing so he attempts to humiliate Astyages and convince him of the seriousness of Cyrus’ desire to take his agemates hunting. When Cyrus begins to talk to Astyages, Astyages cannot anticipate what Cyrus will say. Cyrus approaches him and asks, “if one of your servants runs away and you catch him, how do you treat him?” It is not impossible that Astyages read between the lines, but he gives no indication that he does so. It is more likely, based on his reactions, that Astyages believes that Cyrus is considering whether to admit that some slaves has fled. Astyages may guess that Cyrus is balancing his loyalty to himself (to help enforce Median laws) and his desire to see the slave unharmed. Astyages’ response suggests no awareness of Cyrus’ guile. He says, “How else,” he said, “than by chaining him and compelling him to work.”

Astyages’ punishment for the crime is harsh but not cruel: it is designed to prevent a repeat of the offense. If a slave had fled, Astyages would prevent him with chains from running away again. The slave would not be beaten, tortured or executed. Cyrus’ next question seems to confirm to Astyages that Cyrus is considering whether to betray a runaway slave. “And if he comes back again of his own accord,” [Cyrus] said, “what do

They seem confident that permission would be granted.
612 Cyr, A.4.13.  
613 If one compares what slaves in later Greek novels suffer, Astyages’ punishment is mild in comparison: in Chariton (in Reardon 1989), Chaereas is enslaved and almost crucified (4.2) and Callihroc, as a semi-slave, is forced into bigamy, although not as a punishment per se (3.1-2). In Heliodorus (in Reardon 1989), Charikleia is enslaved and executed (8.9), although she survives and both she and Theagenes are tortured (8.9-11).
you do?” Astyages’ rule for dealing with such a situation again seems to be crafted to prevent a repeat occurrence. He says, “What else [...] except beat him, in order that he not do it again, and then treat him as before.” Astyages proposes beating the slave to reinforce his decision to return through the memory of pain. As for whether Astyages would genuinely treat the slave as before, or whether he is softening the punishment to encourage Cyrus to give up the escaped slave is uncertain. It seems unlikely, if Sakas had run away and returned, that the security-conscious Astyages would return him to his former position as intimate confidante and wine-pourer. Astyages does not suspect that Cyrus has anything in mind but runaway slaves. It is at this point that Cyrus admits the truth and reveals that he hasn’t been talking about slaves at all.

Cyrus says “It is high time, then, [...] for you to get something ready to beat me with, since I am making plans about how to run away from you and take my agemates on a hunt.” Cyrus suddenly shifts the dynamic of the conversation: where Astyages was mentally preparing to punish a runaway slave, Cyrus reveals that the slave Astyages was preparing to beat was really his own grandson. “Get something ready to beat me with,” as Cyrus says: his language makes this image very personal. Cyrus urges Astyages to personally beat him, rather than the lackey who would surely beat a runaway slave. Cyrus, by delaying the revelation of this detail to the end, attempts to catch Astyages off balance. He puts Astyages’ mind on the topic of beating disobedient slaves and, by this sudden revelation, tries to upset him. If Cyrus were not trying to catch Astyages off-balance, he would have started this conversation with the admission that he was

615 Cyr., A.4.13.
616 Cyr., A.4.13.
617 Cyr., A.4.13.
considering running away to go hunting with his agemates. Making Astyages think of beating slaves is a crucial component of Cyrus’ plot.

Yet there is more to Cyrus’ method than simply catching Astyages off-balance. He also tries, by associating his position in the court with that of a slave, to embarrass and shame his grandfather. This comparison brings to the fore the restrictions that have been applied to his freedom of action by his grandfather: he cannot decide to leave the palace, nor, should he be permitted to leave, can he choose when to return. He has little power over his schedule, and should he run away in protest at his unfair treatment, the restrictions would likely be tightened upon his return. It is an extension of his complaint about Sakas restricting his access to Astyages: Cyrus again exploits his grandfather, using his need that Cyrus have a pleasant time in Media as leverage. Despite this new approach, Astyages again proves stubborn, at least initially (per usual): he refuses to be coerced by Cyrus’ unfair and unjust argument, forbidding him from leaving the palace at all.

Astyages is not convinced because there is something that Cyrus has overlooked: even more important than Cyrus being made happy is that Cyrus does not die. Astyages is willing to gamble in an attempt to make Cyrus think fondly of Media, but if Astyages became responsible for Cyrus’ death, relations with Persia would likely be permanently ruined. Astyages says, in response to Cyrus’ attempt to persuade him to let him go out on his hunt, that “You acted nobly in telling me in advance, for I forbid you to stir from within. How charming it would be if I should let my daughter’s son stray off for a bit of

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Tatum (1989) sees here what I argued was present in the previous scene, when Cyrus returned from the hunt. He says that Cyrus “suggests that if a grandson wants to run away […], he must be some kind of captive to his grandfather, one who needs to be confined and watched like a slave. Yet his thoughtfulness shows he is capable of thinking adult thoughts, grandson though he may be. And to treat an adult like a child, to refuse an adult what is his due, is in effect to treat that adult like a slave, a creature with no freedom” (109).
Astyages is unswayed by Cyrus. The risk is that Cyrus might be overwhelmed and killed by a wild animal. He was able to kill a boar once, but what if he errs this time? Cyrus, far more confident in his own abilities than Astyages, fails to manipulate him. Not only is Cyrus now forbidden, as he was before, from leaving the palace with his agemates to hunt, but now he is even forbidden from leaving the palace at all. Cyrus has gotten himself into serious trouble: he promised his agemates that he would take them hunting and he must arrange it for them, else he risk his future political ambitions by losing the loyalty of the young Median aristocrats and their fathers.

Cyrus, frustrated by his grandfather’s desire to keep him alive, has another trick up his sleeve: he exploits that which concerns Astyages almost as much as Cyrus’ life:

Cyrus’ happiness. Cyrus begins to sulk:

On hearing this [Astyages’ refusal to let him hunt], Cyrus obeyed and stayed back, but he passed his time in silence, sulky and sullen-faced. When he realized that he was greatly distressed, Astyages of course wished to gratify him and led them out hunting.”

Cyrus has finally hit on an effective means to manipulate Astyages: his grandfather is so dedicated to ensuring that Cyrus is happy that he caves once Cyrus begins to sulk. This is because Cyrus’ sulking, expected in teenagers, becomes more dangerous when the prince of Persia begins to sulk. Cyrus has previously expressed frustration, annoyance, and even anger with various aspects of life in Media, but has never withdrawn from the court before. This is almost as bad for Media as if Cyrus were to be killed: after all the money, trouble, and time he has spent on ensuring that Cyrus had as pleasant a stay in Media as

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619 Cyr., A.4.13.
possible, now he risks having a worse relationship with Cyrus—who appears to hate him—than if he had never invited him to visit Media. As trivial as this event seems, Astyages must compromise with Cyrus in order to ensure that Cyrus’ time in Media comes is successful, from the point of view of the Median dynasty.

Through my discussion of Cyrus’ behavior during his time in Media thus far, I have concentrated on how Cyrus develops and employs various tactics to manipulate people. His behavior has consistently shown a lack of compassion and care for all those around him and a tendency to manipulate, use and exploit his acquaintances and family for his own purposes. From his premeditated attack on Sakas to his various manipulations of Astyages, he attempts, over and over, to benefit himself without considering what is good or helpful for all those around him. He is cold, calculating, and manipulative; his worst behavior in Media, however, is yet to come.

*Cyrus mainomenos*

Cyrus’ stay in Media ends abruptly: I argue that, despite the good relationship between Cyrus and his grandfather, Astyages becomes aware of Cyrus’ true nature after the skirmish with the Assyrians and expels him from Media as a result. The narrator does

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621 Tatum (1989) concludes that “Things turn out happily for Cyrus because they must turn out that way, not because Astyages was incorrect” (110), which is a curiously fatalistic position. That Astyages finally gives in to Cyrus and allows him to hunt does contradict why he had initially refused to allow him to hunt—to keep him safe. Yet this is not a new contradiction in Astyages’ guardianship of Cyrus. Before, Cyrus attempted to get permission to hunt (A.4.5), Astyages refuses permission (A.4.6), and then gives it (A.4.7) although he is visibly concerned about Cyrus’ safety (A.4.7). Similarly, in this case Cyrus tries to get permission for a hunt (A.4.13), Astyages refuses on grounds of Cyrus’ safety (A.4.13), and then permits Cyrus to hunt (A.4.14). In both cases Astyages is convinced to let Cyrus hunt because he sees that Cyrus is upset by his refusal to let him hunt (A.4.7; A.4.14) I see the source of this tension in Astyages as his desire to balance two contradictory concerns: first, he must ensure that Cyrus does not die while living in Media, lest he alienate the Persian king and queen; as importantly, however, he wants to ensure that Cyrus has a good time in Media, in order that he, once he becomes king in his own right, continues to maintain Persian loyalty to Media. Thus in both of these cases, we see that Astyages’ first thought is on Cyrus’ safety, but Astyages’ resolution is undermined by Cyrus’ unhappiness to the point that he capitulates.
not explicitly connect Cyrus’ sudden departure from Media with his behavior, but I argue that the former is directly caused by Cyrus. Not only does the narrative juxtaposition of the two events hint they are connected, but Astyages’ behavior in this section, despite the narrator’s brief and ambiguous description of it, is readily open to the interpretation that Astyages returns Cyrus home in fear and anger. Cyrus’ behavior in this section of the text is crucial not only because it is the first time Cyrus allows his mask of normalcy to slip wholly off for the first time, but because Astyages’ horror at what he sees can provide the reader with an example of a response to Cyrus alternative to the sycophantic praise characteristic of the text.

A brief summary of Cyrus’ behavior during the skirmish is as follows. Cyrus sneaks out of the palace and accompanies the Median army on their rush to the border; although Astyages catches Cyrus and forbids him to fight, Cyrus dashes away to join the Median cavalry when they charge. Forcing the Median cavalry to move closer and closer to the enemy, Cyrus (and Cyaxares) are saved from death by the intervention of Astyages, who is compelled to order his infantry to charge to rescue the cavalry. The Assyrians are routed and the Median army regroups. 622

Cyrus’ behavior throughout the skirmish is consistently disobedient: he disobeys Astyages’ command to remain in the palace; he disobeys his command to avoid combat; he also disobeys Cyaxares’ authority as commander of the cavalry. Astyages, as witness to these events, is for the first time confounded by his disobediently reckless grandson. The narrator notes that, after Cyrus forces the cavalry to advance dangerously close to the Assyrian infantry, Astyages must intervene in a situation that is spiraling out of control.

When Astyages

ὁ δὲ Ἀστυάγης ὡς ἔδρα τοὺς μὲν ἀπρονοήτως διώκοντας, τοὺς δὲ πολεμίους άθρόους τε καὶ τεταγμένους ὑπαντῶντας, δείσας περί τε τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Κύρου μὴ εἰς παρεσκευασμένους ἀτάκτως ἐμπεσόντες πάθοιεν τι, ἡγεῖτο εὐθὺς πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους.

saw the one side pursuing without forethought, while the enemy, close together and in good order, marched to meet them, he was afraid that his son and Cyrus might suffer some harm from falling in disorder on others who were prepared to meet them. He thus immediately advanced against the enemy. 623

Astyages knows what is happening: Cyrus has caused his cavalry to fall into disorder and to move into serious danger. The battle and, more importantly, the lives of Astyages’ son and grandson, have been unnecessarily jeopardized. This forces Astyages to charge the enemy in a way he had not desired or planned for. Through his skill as general, Astyages’ charge puts the Assyrians to flight: the battle is won, but Astyages shows discomfort with Cyrus’ behavior for the first time.

Astyages has two reactions to Cyrus behavior, one following the other: he first reacts to Cyrus’ behavior during the skirmish. The narrator says, immediately after the retreat of the Assyrians, that “καὶ τὸν Κῦρον οὐκ ἔχων ὅ τι χρὴ λέγειν, αἴτιον μὲν οὖν εἰδὼς τοῦ ἔργου, μαινόμενον δὲ γιγνώσκων τῇ τόλμῃ (As for Cyrus, Astyages did not know what to say about him, for he knew he was the cause of the deed but also recognized that he was mad with daring.).” 624

For Astyages, Cyrus’ behavior on the battlefield was confounding because it was both good and bad. Astyages understood that

623 Cyp., A.4.22.
624 Cyp., A.4.24. While mainomenos is a term that can be applied to a soldier in battle, it also be applied to less savory contexts. For example, Telemachus (Odyssey 18.406-7) berates the Suitors for acting insane and intoxicated. He says, “δαμάντης καὶ χάμαπτε καὶ οὐκέτι κείμενος θυμῶν ὅτι τοῦ ἐ οὐδὲ ποτῆρα,” which Fagles (18.458-9) translates as “Fools, you’re out of your minds! No hiding it, food and wine have gone to your heads.” There is something in Cyrus' behavior akin to the conversation Socrates has with Glaukon in the Memorabilia (Γ.6.1 ff.). Cyrus as a thus-untrained child, does not understand military matters as an expert would; Glaukon, as an arrogant or (perhaps) dimwitted young man, does not understand political affairs and is resoundingly chastised by Socrates for making a fool of himself in the Assembly. Cyrus is luckier than Glaukon, but not, at this state, necessarily more knowledgeable.
Cyrus was the cause—but not the sole cause—of the Medes’ victory. He courageously—and recklessly—forced the Median cavalry so close to the enemy infantry that the Assyrians were set on edge and retreated once the Median infantry charged. However, Cyrus’ methods also deeply unsettle Astyages. Astyages, even after so many happy years with Cyrus, is still capable of realizing that Cyrus’ behavior was—simply—insane.

Astyages hesitates come to a conclusion about Cyrus because of these contradictions. Cyrus has shown, without question, that he is brave, yet he has simultaneously demonstrated why he is too reckless to be trusted. With his reckless bravery he forced his uncle and his grandfather, generals and experienced soldiers, to conform to his selfish and immature actions on the battlefield due to their commitment to his safety. With reckless bravery he forced a victory but made no effort to ensure his own survival. Using his own life as leverage he temporarily usurps the Median dynasty’s authority over the Median army by forcing the whole Median army to follow him to keep him safe. If he had recklessly failed to achieve victory, Astyages could easily condemn him; if he responsibly ensured victory, Astyages could easily praise him. So Astyages hesitates. Cyrus has hijacked the whole Median army: his selfishness has, in fact, interfered with an issue of national security. Astyages hesitates. Perhaps it is because the stakes are so much higher; perhaps it is because he can easily compare the obvious obedience of every other soldier to Cyrus’ selfish disobedience; perhaps since Cyrus has now jeopardized the life of the Median heir, Astyages no longer sees Cyrus’ behavior as charmingly childish. Astyages’ hesitation continues until Cyrus does something very disturbing indeed.
Before Astyages makes up his mind and before Cyrus returns to the Median army, Cyrus does something that deeply upsets Astyages. The narrator says,

καὶ γὰρ τότε ἀπιόντων οὐκάδε μόνος τῶν ἄλλων ἐκεῖνος οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ τοὺς πεπτωκότας περιελαύνων ἐθέατο, καὶ μόλις αὐτὸν ἀφελκύσαντες οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦτο ταχθέντες προσήγαγον τῷ Ἀστυάγει, μάλα ἐπίπροσθεν ποιούμενον τοὺς προσάγοντας, ὅτι ἑώρα τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πάππου ἠγριωμένον ἐπὶ τῇ θέᾳ τῇ αὐτοῦ.

Even then when they [the Median army] were going home, in fact, [Cyrus] alone, apart from the others, did nothing but ride around and gaze at the fallen, and it was with difficulty that those who were ordered to do so dragged him away and led him to Astyages. As he came he kept his escort very much in front, because he saw that his grandfather’s face was angry at sight of him.625

Cyrus’ façade of normality has completely fallen away under the influence of bloodlust: the reader and Astyages are allowed a peek at his true nature. Cyrus forgets everything else when he obsessively, aggressively, ogles the bodies of the dead. Thrice before Cyrus has similarly lost control of himself to a lesser degree; all three were prompted by Cyrus being allowed to kill. On his first hunt, the sudden appearance of a deer causes Cyrus to “πάντων ἐπιλαθόμενος ὃν ἤκουσεν ἐδίωκεν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ὃπῃ ἔφευγε (forg[et] everything he had heard and pursued it, seeing nothing but the way it went as it fled.).”626

The view-halloa of the guards that a boar was coming produced a similar sort of result.627 His single-mindedness causes him to fall off his horse, almost die, and then immediately afterward charge recklessly again, now at a dangerous animal. Cyrus twice loses control...

625 Cyr., A.4.24. This is another example of the narrator saying less than he could because saying more would be harmful to his image of Cyrus as a perfect leader. Why does Cyrus stare at the corpses? Why does Cyrus stay so long that he must be dragged away by Astyages’ men? I suggest answers to these questions in the section that follows, but it should be noted that by leaving them as ambiguities the narrator at least allows the possibility of an interpretation friendly to Cyrus. More provocative still is the question of why Cyrus has his escort stay far in front because he sees his grandfather is angry at him: the narrator describes what Cyrus does but does not interpret it or provide enough information to understand why Cyrus does what he does. That Cyrus keeps his escort far in front when he sees Astyages' anger suggests that, I would argue, he fears violence from Astyages. This would be a complete misreading of Astyages as a person, but it is revelatory of Cyrus' own character. When he is angry, he wants to kill (Cf. my reading of the Sakas scene). The narrator's silence does not tell the reader whether the narrator is oblivious to the meaning of Cyrus' actions or suppresses them, but this silence may mislead the reader.

626 Cyr., A.4.8.
627 Cyr., A.4.8.
of himself and twice is almost killed. The compulsion to kill overpowers Cyrus’ self-preservation. Cyrus exhibits a similar lack of control when he later attends a hunt led by Astyages. The narrator says of Cyrus that, “ὥσπερ σκύλακι γενναίῳ ἀνακλάζοντι, ὁπότε πλησιάζοι θηρίῳ, καὶ παρακαλοῦντι όνομαστὶ ἐκαστόν (like a well-bred puppy, crying out whenever he approached a wild animal, he called on everyone by name.).”

Cyrus is again carried away at the prospect of killing: he loses control of himself and makes nonsensical noises (of joy? lust?). Killing—or the prospect of it—removes Cyrus’ ability to control or moderate his behavior at even a basic level. When he charges the Assyrians, he acts in the same way for the third time: he presses forward, regardless of danger, and ends up in a very dangerous position, although he does not realize it. The narrator again compares him to a puppy, well-bred but this time untrained: “ὥσπερ δὲ κύων γενναῖος ἀπειρος ἀπρονοήτως φέρεται πρὸς κάρπον, οὕτω καὶ ὁ Κῦρος ἐφέρετο, μόνον ὁρῶν τὸ παίειν τὸν ἁλισκόμενον, ὠλλο δ' οὐδέν προνοῶν (Just as a well-bred but inexperienced dog rushes without forethought against a boar, so also rushed Cyrus, seeing only that he struck whomever he caught, with forethought for nothing else.).”

628 Cyrus’ life is at serious risk here: this scene contains serious literary danger for a young prince: Mitchell (2005) notes that this scene has an intertextual relationship with the death of Croesus’ son Atys in Herodotus. She develops a complicated association among Cyrus, Cyaxares, and Atys, concluding that “Cyrus, of course, avoids Atys’ fate and kills the boar, yet the episode does not bode well for Cyaxares. Cyaxares does not lose his life because of this hunt, but he does lose his throne to Cyrus in Cyr. 8,5,19, and is shown to be a coward in Cyr. 4,1,13” (305). Hunts are good places for princes to die, even beloved and well-protected princes like Cyrus.

629 Reisert (2009): “Cyrus […] finds himself unable to control his appetite for killing” (301).

630 Csr. A.4.15.

631 Cyr., A.4.21. Consider the narrator's double-standard here: the narrator here compares Cyrus, when he disobeys his grandfather and throws the Median army into confusion, to an untrained puppy. It is a somewhat charming and forgiving analogy: Cyrus does not know that what he did was wrong (which is preposterous, given that he was disobeying the explicit command of his grandfather) and with a little training he will become excellent. Compare this to the scene in which Cyrus strips Daiphernes of all his possessions simply because Daiphernes did exactly what Cyrus commanded only a little too slowly (H.3.21-23). In this case, the narrator sits in approving silence while Cyrus strips one of his lieutenants of all his possessions for a crime far less serious than many Cyrus himself committed when living in Media.
Cyrus could think of nothing but killing. Twice Cyrus is compared to a dog, once a σκύλακι γενναίῳ, once a κύων γενναῖος ἀπειρος. Twice he is said to lose the ability to think or remember: once πάντων ἐπιλαθόμενος ὧν ἦκουσεν and once μόνον ὅρων τὸ παίειν τὸν ἀλισκόμενον, ὁλλο δ᾽ οὐδὲν προνοῶν. Once he is said to lose control over his power of speech: he acts ὥσπερ σκύλακι γενναίῳ ἀνακλάζοντι. Cyrus becomes a mindless—and untrained—animal. He loses the ability to think outside the moment because of his obsessive fixation on the target of his killing blow. He even loses the power to speak, shouting incoherently when he draws close to the moment of killing. He is clearly—disturbingly—in the grip of emotions so powerful they completely control him. The possibility of killing blinds him to the rest of the world: the façade that he has built up of the moderate Persian youth always slips to and his disturbing passion peeks out. Thus while his compulsive behavior above the corpses of the Assyrians should disturb, it should not surprise: this behavior is consistent with his established love of killing.

Cyrus, as the Median army begins to regroup, rides around staring at the corpses of the dead. “He alone, apart from the others, did nothing but ride around and gaze at the fallen:” no one else, of all the Medes, joins him. His compulsion to ogle the dead is so strong that he must be physically dragged away. Cyrus’ mask has slipped for longer than even before: he had never exhibited such fascination with the carcasses of animals and had always replaced his mask of moderation after the hunt. This time, however, something is different: human corpses have a hold on Cyrus that animal carcasses did not. What was running through his head as he stared at the dead? Ambler suggests that “In

this context, it appears that Cyrus is gloating.”633 This is part of it, but Cyrus’ behavior
towards killing animals cannot be explained as gloating. In addition to gloating, Cyrus
seems to have been overpowered by his emotional response to the corpses of his human
enemies, some of which he personally killed. He revels in his graduation from animals to
humans. Throughout his time in Media, he has shown himself to utterly without empathy:
this scene is the latest evidence of the same. Cyrus stands on the battlefield not thinking
about the tragedy of this pointless battle, not just gloating but *glorying that he has killed
men.* Cyrus is deeply abnormal: he gets pleasure from killing and from staring at corpses;
this so pleasures him that it overwhelms every other impulse: the commands of his
grandfather, the eyes of the Medes, and the stink and gore of the battlefield have no
power over him in this moment. His inhumanity is thrown into great contrast if his
behavior is compared to a near-identical passage from Plato.

In the fourth book of Plato’s *Republic,* Socrates and Glaucon discuss the
composition of the soul and decide that the soul holds two parts, the “rational part” and
the “irrational appetitive part, companion of certain indulgences and pleasures.”634
Socrates then asks Glaucon to which of the two parts of the soul ‘anger’ is assigned, and
Glaucon suggests the appetitive. Socrates, to correct him, tells the following story:

Ἀλλ’ ἦν δ’ ἐγὼ, ποτὲ ἀκούσας τι* πιστεύω τούτῳ· ὡς ἄρα Λεόντιος ὁ Ἀγλα
 الوزراء ἀνιὼν ἐκ Πειραιῶς ὑπὸ

633 Ambler (2001), 289, note 46. Nadon (2001) says that “Cyrus clearly enjoys the fight itself and
especially looking at the fallen. His ‘theoretical’ tastes and ambitions appear to be in perfect harmony
with the requirements of service to a particular political community” (53).
634 Republic, 439D. Translation by G.M.A Grube. Lucan, in his *Bellum Civile,* has a post-battle scene
similar to this. In Lucan, Caesar acts disturbingly after Pharsalus. The narrator says that Caesar “sees
rivers driven on by gore and mounds of corpses high as lofty hills, he watches heaps sinking into
putrefaction and counts the peoples of Magnus; a place for feasting is prepared from where he can
discern the faces and the features of the dead” (Braund 1992, 7.789-94). In Lucan this is one of a
countless reasons that Caesar is a bloodthirsty, raving maniac. The narrator of the *Bellum Civile* is
always happy to draw attention to Caesar’s worst qualities, while the narrator of the *Cyropaideia,* as I
have argued, tends to overlook Cyrus’ problems.
τὸ βόρειον τεῖχος ἐκτός, αἰσθόμενος νεκροὺς παρὰ τῷ δημίῳ κειμένου, ἃμα μὲν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοὶ, ἃμα δὲ αὐτὸ ἀποτρέποι καὶ ἀποφθέγματα ἐκατοντάκι, καὶ τέος μὲν μάχιτο τε καὶ παρακαλόμποτο, κρατούμενος δὲ οὐν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, διελκύσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, προσδραμὼν πρὸς τοὺς νεκροὺς. Ἰδοὺ ύμῖν, ἐφι, ὁ κακοδαίμονες, ἐμπλήσθητε τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος.

But I've heard something relevant to this, and I believe it. Leontius, the son of Aglaion, was going up from the Piraeus along the outside of the North Wall when he saw some corpses lying at the executioner’s feet. He had an appetite to look at them but at the same time he was disgusted and turned away. For a time he struggled with himself and covered his face, but, finally, overpowered by the appetite, he pushed his eyes wide open and rushed towards the corpses, saying ‘Look for yourselves, you evil wretches, take your fill of the beautiful sight!’

Socrates provides his audience with a situation virtually identical to the passage in the *Cyropaideia*. Socrates uses this story to prove that anger is allied with the rational part of the soul. What is important for our purposes, however, is not the similarity between these two scenes but how Leontius and Cyrus react differently when being confronted with corpses. Leontius knows that staring at corpses is unjust: his reason struggles with his appetite, and despite anger joining reason to oppose his compulsion, they are eventually overcome. Leontius angrily rushes up and stares at the corpses to spite the appetitive part of his soul as much as satisfy it—perhaps his anger and memory of the horror will prevent a repeat occurrence. Cyrus, however, revels amongst the dead without internal conflict. The rational part of his soul, unlike Leontius’, has clearly not been educated in justice: Cyrus is in no conflict about whether staring at corpses is unjust. Even though Leontius loses his internal battle, he fights to do the right thing; there is no such struggle in Cyrus. The only struggle he experiences is when “those who were ordered to do so dragged him away and led him to Astyages.”

Cyrus is incapable of providing this internal dialogue between the rational and irrational parts of his soul: the appetitive and

635 Republic 339E-440A.
rational portions of his soul, to apply Platonic language to a Xenophontic character, are in such agreement that there is no hint of strife.

Astyages, who was already on the fence about Cyrus, watches him gawk on the battlefield. What Astyages sees causes him to fundamentally reappraise Cyrus. When the reader last saw Astyages, he was of two minds: although Cyrus had won the battle, he was *mainomenos*. Should he be angry or proud? After watching Cyrus’ behavior over the corpses, Astyages makes up his mind: “μάλα ἐπίπροσθεν ποιούμενον τοὺς προσάγοντας, ὅτι ἑώρα τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πάππου ἠγριωμένον ἐπὶ τῇ θέᾳ τῇ αὑτοῦ (As [Cyrus] came he kept his escort very much in front, because he saw that his grandfather’s face was angry at sight of him.).”637 The narrator never says what so provoked Astyages.638 There are two potential reasons: he grows furious either because Cyrus ignored his order to withdraw or because Cyrus had been staring at the corpses of the dead Assyrians. If the former, then this would be the last straw that made Astyages realize how disobedient Cyrus was. Not only did Cyrus disregard the order to withdraw, but Astyages needed to send men to drag him away: the Medes who did come for Cyrus were those “οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦτο ταχθέντες (who were ordered to do so.).”639 Astyages grew impatient while Cyrus alone refused to regroup, single-handedly delaying their departure. Astyages decided to have him dragged away even though he did not want to go.640 It is one final act of disobedience on a day full

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637 *Cyr.*, A.4.24.
638 Tatum (1989) says that Cyrus “learns to repress this kind of revealing conduct: it does not become the young man who has done so well as the grandson of Astyages” (111). Huggens (1977), on the other hand, says, “Cyrus is no blind enthusiast, and as a mature leader he seems to have overcome the unthinking passion of his youth” (50). Does Cyrus learn to repress this behavior or does he grow out of it?
639 *Cyr.*, A.4.24.
640 This seems to be the first time that Astyages does not cave and allow Cyrus to do whatever he wants after brief resistance. Perhaps this is a sign that Astyages really has changed his tolerant and permissive attitude towards his grandson (or perhaps he has decided that if Cyrus is old enough to fight in and survive a battle he is old enough to obey orders).
of Cyrus’ disobedience. If this is what caused Astyages to finally grow furious with Cyrus, then he must have come to the conclusion that, despite how well Astyages had treated him, Cyrus was incorrigible. He would never respect Astyages’ authority, much less Cyaxares’, and would continue to treat the Medes, aristocratic, royal, and common, as if they were his natural subordinates. Hence his anger.

On the other hand, Astyages could have finally grown angry with Cyrus not because of his disobedience but rather because of his abnormal and unpleasant behavior following the battle.641 Reveling in death is abnormal, as Astyages knows. If Astyages believed it acceptable, he would have ridden alongside Cyrus to gawk at the dead himself. If this is what upset Astyages, then he could have considered this along with other examples of Cyrus’ lack of empathy. He could have remembered how Cyrus attacked Sakas, the calculating way that Cyrus misused Cyaxares during the hunting trip, or any number of other examples of when Cyrus harmed innocents—even family—to help himself. Thus when he finally sees Cyrus roaming the battlefield gloating over the bodies of the dead and glorying in his own ability to kill, he may grow very uncomfortable indeed. Cyrus has previously shown that he is willing to have his political opponents killed, that he dislikes Cyaxares, and that he enjoys the sight of corpses. Might he not someday turn against Cyaxares?642 How far would Cyrus go to gain power?

For the remainder of this section, in which the decision is made to send Cyrus back to Persia, the narrator focuses on praising Cyrus’ excellence and success and reduces Astyages’ role in this decision to several ambiguous side-notes. Despite this, I

641 Reisert (2009) notes that Cyrus “exults in their deaths, their perfect, silent testimony to the domination of his will” (302).
642 Nadon (2001) says that “for good or ill, Cyrus’ growing stature threatens to eclipse that of his uncle, Cyaxares, Astyages’ legitimate heir, and might well present a challenge to an orderly succession” (53).
argue that Astyages and Cyrus never reconcile and that Astyages, due to his fear of his grandson, wants Cyrus to leave Media as quickly as possible. The narrator says (when discussing Astyages) that

Ἐν μὲν δὴ Μήδοις ταῦτα ἐγεγένητο, καὶ οἱ τε άλλοι πάντες τὸν Κῦρον διὰ στόματος εἶχον καὶ ἐν λόγῳ καὶ ἐν ὠδαῖς, ὃ τε Ἀστυάγης καὶ πρόσθεν τιμῶν αὐτὸν τότε ὑπερεξεπέπληκτο ἐπ’ αὐτῷ [...] καὶ τῷ Ἀστυάγει δὲ ἔδοκε εἶναι ἀναγκαῖον ἀποπέμπειν αὐτὸν. ἔνθα δὴ ἦποιν σὲ αὐτῷ δοὺς σὺς αὐτὸς ἐπεθύμει λαβεῖν καὶ ἄλλα συσκευάσας πολλὰ ἐπέμπε καὶ διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ ἄμα ἐλπίδας ἔχον μεγάλας ἐν αὐτῷ ἀνόρα ἐσεθαὶ ἦκαν καὶ φίλους ὑφελεῖν καὶ ἔχθροὺς ἀνιᾶν. ἀπόντα δὲ τὸν Κῦρον προὔπεμπον πάντες [...] ἔφ’ ἦποιν καὶ Ἀστυάγης αὐτὸς, καὶ οὐδένα ἔφασαν ὅντι' οὐ δακρύοντ' ἀποστρέφεσθαι.

And not only did everyone else have Cyrus on his lips, both in speech and in song, but Astyages, who had honored him even before, was then quite astonished by him [...]. It also seemed necessary to Astyages to send him away. So giving him the horses that he himself desired to take and furnishing him with many other things of all sorts, both because he loved him and at the same time because he had great hopes that he would be a man competent to help his friends and bring his enemies to grief, he sent him off. Everyone [...] escorted Cyrus on horseback as he left, as did Astyages himself; and they said that there was no one who turned back without tears.

When Cyrus returned to the Median palace, he was on everyone’s lips: he had performed amazing deeds; according to the narrator, Astyages had honored Cyrus before and was now ‘quite astonished’ by him. ‘Quite astonished’ is quite ambiguous, though: if we understand that the narrator means Astyages was ‘quite impressed’ by Cyrus, this is incompatible with Astyages’ reaction to Cyrus’ behavior after the battle. Astyages had been confused about whether to praise or condemn Cyrus; he had been so angry that Cyrus could see his fury from a distance; now, without an intervening reconciliation, it is difficult to accept that Astyages is now suddenly, without reason quite impressed by Cyrus. Rather, I suspect the narrator is correct in attributing to Astyages a powerful emotional reaction to Cyrus’ actions, but deliberately misleading in his implication that it is a positive reaction. The laudatory reaction of the Medes to this skirmish surely

643 Cyr., A.4.25. 644 The word the narrator uses is “ὑπερεξεπέπληκτο.” This word, according to the LSJ, can mean to astonish, frighten, or amaze beyond measure. It’s quite an ambiguous word.
reinforced the anger that Astyages felt after the skirmish. The narrator says that “everyone [has] Cyrus on his lips, both in speech and in song:” Astyages’ own subjects insultingy ignore Astyages and Cyaxares’ contributions to the victory. The Medes credit Cyrus alone with the victory, Cyrus who had been left in the palace, Cyrus who had disobeyed Astyages’ order to stay at his side, Cyrus who led the Median cavalry to the verge of obliteration, and, yes, victory. By all rights Astyages should be astonished, but not pleased.

I would rather suggest that Astyages’ astonishment is akin to surprise and horror at Cyrus’ hold, suddenly apparent, on the minds of the Medes. The narrator’s implication that Astyages is impressed with Cyrus when he says Astyages was ‘quite astonished’ with him is unsupportable and inconsistent with Astyages’ prior behavior. This astonishment is a continuation of, if not the aggravated form of, the fury Astyages felt for Cyrus after the battle. It is far more likely that Astyages’ astonishment is caused both by Cyrus’ disturbing and disobedient actions and the Median public reaction to Cyrus, which is almost treasonous in its disregard for the Median king and dynasty. This interpretation is consistent with Astyages’ furious reaction after the skirmish; given that nothing happens between these two events to suggest that Astyages set aside his anger for Cyrus, nothing suggests that Astyages suddenly has positive feeling, much less awed reverence, for Cyrus again.

The second statement that the narrator makes about Astyages in this passage supports this. The narrator, after saying that Cambyses heard of Cyrus’ martial deeds and

645 Cyrus’ sway over the Medes who matter was surely greatly increased by the constant favors he did for his agemates and, as importantly, their aristocratic fathers, taking advantage of the access to Astyages that had been granted him after the departure of Mandane (A.3.14).
thought it time for him to return and that Cyrus also wanted to return to avoid displeasing his homeland, claims that “It also seemed necessary to Astyages to send him away.” This is strikingly ambiguous: although the narrator provides the reasons that both Cambyses and Cyrus desire that he return to Persia (Cambyses wants him to return to School and Cyrus wants to obey his native land), the narrator produces this bland statement devoid of information concerning Astyages. Astyages wants Cyrus to leave—why? If Astyages believes that Cyrus is as amazing a warrior and as unparalleled a teenager as every lived—as the narrator implies—he should want Cyrus to remain in Media as a support to his throne. He need not return home simply because he fought in his first battle. If Astyages but reluctantly realizes he can no longer detain Cyrus from parents and homeland, the narrator could say so: such reluctance to lose Cyrus would be complimentary. Yet the narrator’s ambiguity not avoids saying why Astyages sends Cyrus home but also creates the vague impression that his reasons were positive. Yet, in the previous few paragraphs, Astyages has both realized that Cyrus was *mainomenos* and became visibly furious at him. Unlike the first time Cyrus’ return to Persia was mooted, Astyages does not request permission from Mandane and Cambyses to detain Cyrus longer; he does not offer him long-desired presents in an attempt to persuade the boy to

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646 Nadon (2001) says that “Yet no more can Xenophon say of Cyrus that he was a cause of good to all and harm to none. His service to the Medes puts him at odds not only with the Assyrians but with the Persians to a certain extent as well. Persian law unequivocally states that a citizen must not go to war until the age of twenty-five. Indeed, Cyrus’s reward, his increasing fame, is what alerts his father to this violation and prompts him to send orders for his son to return and complete his formal education” (54).

647 *Cyr.*, A.4.25. Cambyses wants him to return “ὅπως τὰ ἐν Πέρσαις ἐπιχώρια ἐπιτελοίη (in order that he might fulfill what was customary among the Persians.)” Cyrus wanted to return “μὴ ὁ πατήρ τι ἄχθοιτο καὶ ἡ πόλις μέμφοιτο (in order that his father not be at all annoyed with him and that his city not blame him.).” Nadon (2001) suggests that Cambyses wants Cyrus to return home because he broke the Persian law by fighting in battle long before it was legal for him to do so” (54). Again consider the ambiguity the narrator causes about Astyages’ motivation in particular by telling less than he could. One increasingly gets the suspicion by this point in the text that when the narrator falls silent about certain things, it is because these things are uncomplimentary to Cyrus.
stay. He does not even speak to Cyrus before his departure. Taken together, these details do not suggest that Astyages reluctantly sent Cyrus away. Astyages’ anger contributes to his decision to send Cyrus back to Persia. Cyrus cannot stay in Media because Astyages does not trust him, because of his disobedience, his lack of empathy, or both. Astyages’ opinion of Cyrus is no longer consistent with the narrator’s rosy view of Cyrus: once Astyages grows angry at silence, the narrator immediately reduces his role in the text to an almost invisible figure on the sidelines who is never permitted to speak again. The narrator’s silent ambiguity about Astyages is more consistent with his overall depiction of Cyrus than the truth. An ambiguous but vaguely positive Astyages is more in keeping with the narrator’s depiction of silence than his furious anger and rejection.

Astyages sends Cyrus on his way with a number of gifts, yet these need not imply that Astyages has at the last minute abandoned his anger with Cyrus. His gifts fulfill the promise he made years before. The narrator says,

ἔνθα δὴ ἱπποὺς τε αὐτῷ δοὺς οὓς αὐτὸς ἐπεθύμει λαβεῖν καὶ ἄλλα συσκευάσας πολλὰ ἔπεμπε καὶ διὰ τὸ φιλεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ ἁμα ἐλπίδας ἔχον μεγάλας ἐν αὐτῷ ἄνδρα ἔσεσθαι ἱκανὸς καὶ φίλους ὁφελεῖν καὶ ἐχθροὺς ἀνιᾶν.

So giving him the horses that he himself desired to take and furnishing him with many other things of all sorts, both because he loved him and at the same time because he had great hopes that he would be a man competent to help his friends and bring his enemies to grief, he sent him off.

The gift of the horses fulfills a promise that Astyages had made years before when trying to convince him to stay. He had promised to Cyrus that “when you leave, you may take the [horses] you yourself want.” He is now fulfilling that promise. To refuse would alienate Cyrus—the boy who never forgets a debt—which Astyages still wants to avoid:

648 Field (2012) says that “it is immediately clear that Cyrus’ risk taking on this occasion is more than even his doting Median family will tolerate. He is sent home” (726-7).
649 Cyr., A.4.25.
Astyages does not trust Cyrus, but Cyrus is not yet an enemy of Media: all is not lost. The narrator notes that Astyages also gives Cyrus a number of presents; unlike the first time Cyrus was about to leave Media, these presents are so unimportant that the narrator does not even describe them. They impress Cyrus as much as they impress the narrator: he immediately gives them away.

The narrator does give one final insight into Astyages’ motivations. The narrator attributes two motivations to Astyages in giving these gifts to Cyrus. He does so “because he loved him and at the same time because he had great hopes that he would be a man competent to help his friends and bring his enemies to grief.” The former of these reasons is, I would suggest, rather suspect. As I have argued, Cyrus has destroyed the love Astyages felt for him.

The second motivation the narrator attributes to Astyages in giving these gifts is that “at the same time [he gave Cyrus these gifts] because he had great hopes that he would be a man competent to help his friends and bring his enemies to grief.” This is a puzzling statement. Superficially, the narrator states that Astyages gives the presents to Cyrus because he hopes that Cyrus will be a powerful in the future. Yet, since the narrator phrases it in this way, these gifts begin to take on the air of a desperate bribe: Cyrus has been treated so generously and indulgently over the whole of his time in Media because, as I have argued, Astyages wanted to ensure that Cyrus would be a loyal ally to Media. The narrator confirms this interpretation: Astyages gives him gifts because he knows that Cyrus will be powerful. Yet now we have Astyages, furious, pushing Cyrus

651 *Cyr.*, A.4.25.
652 *Cyr.*, A.4.25.
out of Media as quickly (if politely) as possible, and yet also loading him down with gifts because he hopes—or fears—that Cyrus will soon be powerful enough to help friends and harm enemies.

The last Cyrus ever sees of Astyages is the first part of Cyrus’ extended departure from Media. The narrator describes the scene: “Everyone […] escorted Cyrus on horseback as he left, as did Astyages himself; and they said that there was no one who turned back without tears.”653 Cyrus departs the palace accompanied by agemates, family, and Astyages himself—the narrator emphasizes Astyages’ presence to perhaps suggest that they had reconciled. This briefly described scene is a normal enough way for a royal court to see off the king’s grandson, except for one awkward detail. The narrator says that “they said that there was no one who turned back without tears.”654 Who said? Why must the narrator drop into secondary reporting for this seemingly safe statement? From the beginning of the skirmish at A.4.18 until this moment the narrator has only needed to include a citation from ‘another’ source once, when he ascribed a particular motivation to Cyrus’ desire to return to Persia.655 The narrator is sufficiently confident to report in his own voice that everyone escorted Cyrus; he is also confident that Astyages was there; however, he is refuses to report in his own voice that everyone wept. Why is this one detail less certain? The Median aristocrats are devoted to Cyrus: their tears and extended farewell, which come later, are genuine. We see later see Cyrus himself weeping before

653 Cyr., A.4.25.
654 Cyr., A.4.25. My emphasis. Hägg (2012) says, when discussing the narrator’s citations during the scene of Cyrus’ arrival in Media, that “A light documentary air is provided by the reporting verbs appearing in the infinitive” (57). I would agree, but we now see the narrator employing the same strategy in a tense and angry scene: this reported speech allows the narrator to avoid discussing Astyages’ anger. It is another example of the narrator saying less than he could. He uses a very careful application of “they said” to balance between a lie and admitting the truth.
655 “It is reported that Cyrus said on this occasion that he wished to return, in order that” (A.4.25)....
he departs.\textsuperscript{656} Having eliminated the Median aristocrats and Cyrus himself, we must conclude that it is Astyages who was without tears: the narrator even indirectly reveals that Astyages is the first to abandon the procession and return to the palace.\textsuperscript{657} The attention the narrator draws to his use of another source leaves open the possibility that what he is saying is not wholly true. The possibility remains that some turned back from the procession with dry eyes and, if anyone did, it was Astyages.

Astyages, even after Cyrus has departed from Media, acts to countermand the his influence over the Median aristocracy that he recognized only belatedly. When Cyrus received the above-mentioned presents from Astyages, presents Cyrus cared so little for that their contents are never mentioned, he re-gifts them to his Median agemates. The narrator says that, after Cyrus departed,

\begin{quote}
τοὺς μέντοι λαβόντας καὶ δεξαμένους τὰ δῶρα λέγεται Ἀστυάγει ἀπενεγκεῖν, Ἀστυάγην δὲ δεξάμενον
Κύρῳ ἀποπέμψαι, τὸν δὲ πάλιν τε ἀποπέμψαι εἰς Μήδους καὶ εἶπειν· Ἐι βούλει, ὦ πάππε, ἐμὲ καὶ πάλιν
ἰέναι ὡς σὲ μὴ αἰσχυνόμενον, ἔα ἔχειν εἴ τῷ τι ἐγὼ δέδωκα·
\end{quote}

those who received and accepted the gifts carried them off to Astyages, that Astyages on receiving them sent them off to Cyrus, and that he again sent them back to the Medians saying, “If you wish, grandfather, for me to come back again to you with pleasure and without being ashamed, let everyone to whom I have given something keep it.”\textsuperscript{658}

After Cyrus departs from Media, those aristocrats who had received Cyrus’ re-gifted presents return them to Astyages. Cyrus has again been trying to win influence on the cheap, a strategy that he has used throughout his time in Media.\textsuperscript{659} However the Medes

\textsuperscript{656} Cyr., A.4.28.
\textsuperscript{657} This detail is easy to miss: Astyages accompanies the procession; not long into the procession, Cyrus takes the gifts Astyages gave him and distributes them to all the Median aristocrats. When Astyages later hears about this, he forces the aristocrats to give him the gifts and sends them to Cyrus again. The only way this sequence of events is possible is if Astyages almost immediately left the procession and returned to the palace (A.4.24; A.4.26).
\textsuperscript{658} Cyr., A.4.26.
\textsuperscript{659} Cyrus had developed in Media a rather cheap way to win influence over other people: whenever he was given a physical gift (not some right or power), he would turn around and give that same gift to someone else, thereby putting the recipient into his debt. These types of gifts are therefore from both
who received the redirected gifts from Cyrus do not keep them, although their reason is not stated. Perhaps they have noticed Astyages’ unhappiness with Cyrus and do not want to offend the king by keeping presents that were meant for his out-of-favor foreign grandson. Perhaps they have realized that they will probably never see Cyrus again, since there will be little chance of him returning to Media. They should re-endear themselves to their king and his dynasty, with whom they will always live. Whatever their reasons, they return to Astyages the presents that Astyages had given to Cyrus, and Cyrus to them.

Astyages then, instead of keeping the presents, returns them to Cyrus. He clearly still hopes that Cyrus may be swayed by them and retain a positive opinion of Media. Astyages’ action has two consequences: first, Cyrus is given the gifts for a second time; second, the Median aristocrats are not allowed to keep what Cyrus gave them. Astyages seems to want to influence Cyrus as much as he wants Cyrus to be unable to influence the Median aristocracy.

Astyages’ re-re-gifting presents Cyrus with a difficult situation: Cyrus’ re-gifting of these presents to the Median aristocracy has been publicly challenged and reproached by Astyages, if subtly. By sending the gifts back to Cyrus instead of allowing the Medes to keep them, Astyages chastises Cyrus for his behavior. Astyages has, belatedly, hardened his attitude toward his grandson. Cyrus is presented with a choice: he can accept Astyages’ chastisement in order to stay on good terms with him, or he could reject it.660 Cyrus chooses the latter: he sends the presents back to the Medes to whom he had

660  Gera (1993) sees Cyrus here acting to protect the property of others (222), yet this is undermined by
originally given them and extorts Astyages, using his personal happiness as leverage. In the message he sends to Astyages, he says “If you wish, grandfather, for me to come back again to you with pleasure and without being ashamed, let everyone to whom I have given something keep it.”

Cyrus explicitly extorts Astyages by exploiting his greatest worry—that Cyrus might turn out to be an enemy of Media. If, in other words, Astyages doesn’t do exactly as Cyrus says, Cyrus will never be able to return to Media ‘with pleasure.’ This is ambiguous: this may be interpreted to mean that he will never return to Media, or that he will return to Media as an enemy. He is manipulating Astyages by playing on his fears and, for the last time, tries to force him to do exactly what he wants him to do.

For the first time, he completely and immediately succeeds: Astyages gives the gifts back to the aristocrats. That he was able to so openly take this approach to Astyages—if you don’t do what I say and let me influence your aristocrats with my bribes I won’t like you any longer—is because he has finally left Media and has withdrawn from his grandfather’s power: he cannot derive any benefit from Astyages thinking fondly of him, for he cannot take advantage of the power derived from access to a complaint Astyages in Persia. Cyrus now acts without the need to make Astyages like him any longer: he previously manipulated the old man (primarily) through sweetness; now that sweetness is of no use, he uses fear. Thus he finally succeeds at manipulating Astyages, but is able to do so only once he can no longer gain power through making

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661 Cyrus’ response in the big shirt-little shirt court case (and his later behavior).
662 Danzig (2009) says of Cyrus in general that “As long as he remains under the authority of others, Cyrus learns to accomplish just distributions without the use of brute force, but when the opportunity and necessity present themselves, he does not hesitate to use violence as well” (290). Although Danzig sees this as a positive, I would point out that here, once Cyrus departs from Astyages’ authority, he abandons his act as a beloved grandson and attempts to compel his grandfather to conform to his will through (violent) compulsion.
Astyages happy. As quickly as the narrator relegates Astyages to the sidelines once he grows angry with Cyrus, so quickly does Cyrus abandon the role of kindly and beloved grandchild once it is of no profit.

**Conclusions**

In this chapter I have argued that Cyrus, effectively, skilfully plays a role during his tenure in Media. He projects the image of the loyal and dutiful grandson in his dealings with Astyages. He loves and respects him, he honors him, and he does all he can to make his grandfather’s life enjoyable. Yet this exemplary behavior serves hide, and thus allow, what Cyrus consistently attempts to do behind the scenes. In counseling his grandfather about the benefits of eating simply and revealing a murderous plot against the king, he acts under the pretense of being a loving grandson concerned about his grandfather. I argued, however, that despite the purported intent of these actions, Cyrus was genuinely attempting to overthrow, even kill, his grandfather’s chamberlain so that Cyrus might replace him and acquire his power. Although Cyrus behaves like a virtuous and loving grandson in doting on his grandfather in his sickbed and presents him behavior after his hunt as that of a mature man who deserves to be treated as an adult, I argued that in reality Cyrus was attempting to cynically manipulate his grandfather in order to gain power for himself and freedom of movement within the palace. The more freedom Cyrus has, the greater his power to manipulate and maneuver, as his recently-granted freedom of access to his grandfather that allowed him to perpetually manipulate his grandfather when he fell ill shows. It is only when Cyrus’ mask slips away among the dead of the battlefield, when he cannot overcome his compulsions to restore it until he
was been dragged away by his grandfather’s men, that Astyages realizes there is something deeply wrong with Cyrus. The result of this, I argued, is that Astyages is repulsed, and perhaps frightened, by Cyrus’ disobedience, lack of empathy and hold on the minds of the Medes. He hurries to expel him from Media as quickly, if as gently, as possible before he can do more harm. Cyrus plays the role expected of him, using the facade of a loving grandson to allow him to manipulate and maneuver without being caught. In general, Cyrus does not feel—or at least does not express—selfless or empathetic human emotions: although he projects grief for his ill grandfather, I argued that it was an affectation meant to manipulate both his grandfather and the court. The emotions the reader does see in Cyrus are anger and hatred, which he feels for Sakas, shock and fear when his agemates threaten to abandon him for a more effective leader, and whatever emotion (empowerment? erotic lust?) he feels on the battlefield so powerfully that he needed to be dragged from the dead by soldiers. Cyrus is adept at wearing masks of normalcy but several times throughout his childhood he loses enough control that the mask slips away, revealing the inhuman horror beneath. His inability to feel empathy for other human beings is central to his character and drives—and makes possible—his utilitarian treatment of people throughout his life, his manipulations and exploitations that allow him to create the world-empire for which he is famous. As we see him gradually isolate, usurp, and neutralize Cyaxares over the next two chapters, it is important to keep this in mind. There are two Cyroi: one is the selfless and generous man who woos and wins allies and subjects the world over; the other is the vicious monster hiding underneath whose lack of empathy is just as responsible for Cyrus’ achievements.
Chapter Four: Usurpation

In Chapter Three, I argued that Cyrus’ behavior in Media as a child reveals his double-life. He juggles his external persona—that of a beloved grandson who will do anything for his grandfather—and his true desire—to acquire as much power as he can, however he can. In this chapter, I discuss Cyrus’ relationship with Cyaxares on campaign by focusing on four episodes in which Cyrus undermines Cyaxares’ authority as commander of the Median army. On the one hand, Cyrus still maintains this dual personality: he always maintains a mask of loyalty and deference to his uncle, at least in public. Yet once Cyrus successfully usurps his uncle’s army and is free from his uncle’s power, Cyrus’ manipulative approach to Cyaxares completely changes. Over the course of these sections, his claims to deference become increasingly incredible and he begins to humiliate Cyaxares in an attempt to neutralize him as a political rival. Thus the changes Cyrus’ relationship with Cyaxares undergoes in this section are crucial for understanding another aspect of Cyrus’ personality. In Chapter Three, we saw Cyrus attempting to obtain power by deferring to a man in possession of authority; here we see Cyrus obtaining power by humiliating and discrediting a man whose power he has stolen.

Cyrus’ Open Subversion before Cyaxares’ Last Battle

Once the Assyrian army approaches, they rest for a day while Cyaxares stands in battle order, waiting for combat. Cyrus uses this tense time to open his final campaign of aggression against his uncle. Before Cyrus can act, though, Cyaxares preempts him. He

663 I had argued, in an excised section of my dissertation, that Cyrus’ entire relationship with Cyaxares
suggests that

marshaled for battle just as we now happen to be, we should advance up to the fortification of these men and make it clear we are going to fight, for in this way, if they do not come out against us, our troops will go away more confident, and the enemy, having seen our daring, will be more afraid.\
\
Cyrus vehemently refuses, saying,

No, by the gods, let us not do it at all like this, for if we march up while exposed to view, as you order, the enemy will gaze upon us as we approach but will not be afraid, knowing that they are safely protected against suffering any harm. Further, when we go away without having done anything and they see that our numbers fall much short of their own, they will hold us in contempt and will come out tomorrow much more robust in their judgments. But now, knowing that we are present and yet not seeing us, do understand that they do not hold us in contempt, but they are wondering, ‘Whatever is going on?’ and I am sure that they do not stop conversing about us.\n\
The council of generals adopts Cyrus’ advice as the best course, presumably convinced by Cyrus’ vehemence. Cyrus convinces the generals that Cyaxares’ plan, although well from the moment he arrived in Media with his army (B.1.1) until this stage, was directed at undermining and usurping his uncle. From his lies about the size of his army (B.1.2; Cf. Whidden 2007a, 131), to publicly insinuating that Cyaxares is effeminate (B.4.5-6), to deviously corrupting the Armenian king (Γ.3.4-5; Cf. Carlier 2010, 343), every interaction with Cyaxares is subversive and malicious. I excised the majority of this argument in interests of length: when I speak here of Cyrus’ ‘final’ campaign of aggression, it is as the climax of Cyrus’ behavior throughout Books B and Г. As Whidden (2007a) puts it, “Cyrus does not in fact obey Cyaxares and, to the contrary, repeatedly and quite deliberately seeks to deceive him and undermine his authority (130);” and, “The principle means by which Cyrus deposes Cyaxares involve repeatedly deceiving his uncle about his true intentions and his burning desire to rule” (131).\n
664 Cyr., Г.3.30.\n665 Cyr., Г.3.31. By this point, the narrator has almost entirely stopped intervening in the text in the misleading manner that I have identified in the introduction. Beyond his habit of confirming what Cyrus has said and done by (generally) positively paraphrasing Cyrus’ words, thoughts, and actions, he does not seem to feel the need any longer to clarify or explain. This silence of the narrator’s personality is finally ended in the epilogue, when he (mistakenly, as I argue in Chapter One) directs his anger and disappointment at the failure of Cyrus’ successors to live up to Cyrus’ example.
intentioned, is tactically disastrous. Tatum (1989) is also convinced by Cyrus: he sarcastically notes that “When Cyaxares finally shows some initiative, the results are predictable...The tactic is characteristically bold but not thought through.” Despite this agreement, I would suggest that Cyrus deliberately gives bad advice in order to humiliate Cyaxares and undermine his authority before his officers.

We may be confident that his advice is bad because of how Cyrus later reacts to a similar situation. The parallel nature of these two scenes has not been noted by modern scholarship. When Gobryas and Cyrus discuss how they might best reach Gadatas’ fortress, Gobryas voices concerns about how dangerous it will be to pass by Babylon.

Moreover, Gobryas says,

'Ὅτι νὴ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Γωβρύας, οἶδα ἐξελθοῦσαν <ἀνυδρία><
άνυδρια> ὀλυμπιάν ἐξ αὐτῆς πολλαπλασίαν ἢς σὺ ἔχεις νῦν· εὖ δ’ ἐστὶ ὅτι καὶ δ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἤττον σοι νῦν ἡ τὸ πρότερον Λασσύροι καὶ τὰ ὀπλα ἀποφέρουσι καὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἀπάγουσιν, ὅτι τοῖς ἰδοὺν αὐτῶν ὀλίγη ἔδοξεν εἶναι ἡ σὴ δύναμις· καὶ ὁ λόγος οὗτος πολὺς ἤδη ἔσπαρται·

a force many times greater than the one you now have would attack from [Babylon]. Be assured that the Assyrians now tend less than before to bring you their weapons and drive in their horses [i.e. surrender to the Persians], and this is because your force seems small to those of them who saw it. This account of it has already circulated widely...

Although the Assyrians were once afraid of the Perso-Medes, they are no longer. These two situations are parallel: the smaller Perso-Median army is/will be in close proximity to the fortified and much larger Assyrian army. In the first case, Cyaxares had suggested advancing to the walls of the Assyrian camp, anticipating that the Assyrians would become disheartened. Cyrus rejects this plan, saying that the Assyrians would grow brave, should they see how few Perso-Medes they faced. We should expect, if Cyrus were

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666 Tatum (1989), 122. Cf. Gera (1993), 103. She also says, “Often it seems that Xenophon has Cyaxares speak up simply in order to have his words demolished by Cyrus” (104).
667 Cyr., E.2.30

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giving good advice to Cyaxares, that he would suggest a similar plan to Gobryas in this later, and nearly identical, situation.

Cyrus instead resurrects Cyaxares’ plan, although he once publicly disparaged it. He says that the best plan for passing by Babylon is to march directly up to its walls, for this will terrify the enemy:

Upon consideration I am unable to conceive that there is any journey safer for us than marching right up to Babylon itself, if the strongest part of our enemies is there. Yes, they are numerous, as you say; what I say is that if they become confident, they will also be terrible for us. Now if they do not see us and think that we are out of sight because we are afraid of them, be quite assured that they will lose the fear that arose in them, and in its place will naturally arise a confidence that becomes ever greater as the time that they do not see us increases.\(^{668}\)

This is what Cyaxares had proposed before, the very plan Cyrus publicly humiliated him for suggesting. In these parallel situations, then, Cyrus suggests opposite plans. In the first case, when Cyaxares is in command, he argues that if a fortified enemy does see the smaller enemy force, they will grow brave. In the second case, when he is in command, he argues that if a fortified enemy does not see the smaller enemy force, they will grow brave. Moreover, Cyrus’ logic is exactly the opposite in both cases: he says to Cyaxares that “if we march up while exposed to view...the enemy will gaze upon us as we approach but will not be afraid, knowing that they are safely protected;” to Gobryas, Cyrus says that “Now if they do not see us and think that we are out of sight because we are afraid of them, be quite assured that they will lose the fear that arose in them.”\(^{669}\) Cyrus’ two pieces

\(^{668}\) *Cyr.,* E.2.31

\(^{669}\) *Cyr.,* G.3.29; E.2.32.
of advice are incompatible. In which situation is Cyrus being less than truthful?

These situations are parallel, yet Cyrus’ plan is opposite in each case: we must conclude that Cyrus is lying in one of the two cases.\textsuperscript{670} We can compare the two situations. In the former, the safety of Persia is one retreat away; in the latter, Cyrus is deep within hostile territory. If Cyrus is defeated before Babylon, he would be in serious peril: he is surrounded by enemies and far from home.\textsuperscript{671} If the Persians suffered defeat on the borders of Media, they were only a quick retreat away from the safety of Media or even Persia. Thirdly, if Cyaxares as overlord were defeated, Cyrus could blame him; now that Cyrus is in sole command, there is no one he could reasonable shift ultimate blame onto. We may conclude that Cyrus’ plan before Babylon is informed by his honest tactical skill: he is in sole command and the military situation is far more dangerous. We can further conclude that the advice he gave to Cyaxares is, in fact, deliberately bad advice. It is not intended to help Cyaxares defeat the Assyrians but, along with Cyrus’ humiliating tone, it undermines Cyaxares’ authority and makes him appear an incompetent general. Yet the council of generals accepts Cyrus’ advice: since it is bad advice, it follows that it would increase their chances of losing; this potentially would leave Cyrus liable to attacks on his own ability if his advice led to defeat. Thus Cyrus complicates the issue of responsibility by publicly undermining Cyaxares in another way.

\textsuperscript{670} Could Cyrus have completely changed his mind about military tactics between the two events? Perhaps, though the narrator does not show us any event that might have precipitated such a drastic re-evaluation of his tactics. This is even less likely, considering that the plan Cyrus advocates to Cyaxares does actually work. Or, at least, even if it does not help the Perso-Median army, it does not harm it either. Perhaps it was despite Cyrus’ plan that Cyaxares defeated the Assyrians.

\textsuperscript{671} It is a situation analogous to that faced by Xenophon and the Greek mercenaries after the battle of Cunaxa (\textit{Ana.}, B.1.3). Their struggles allow Xenophon’s readers to visualize the potential dangers the Persians face if they are overwhelmed by the Assyrians here.
Cyrus has given Cyaxares bad advice to humiliate him, yet he desires to remain personally blameless in the case of defeat. To achieve this, Cyrus continues to manipulate public consciousness the next morning. After dawn, the Assyrian king begins to slowly form his army into battle order. Cyaxares, whose army is already drawn up, orders Cyrus to attack via messenger. Cyaxares says, “εἰ γὰρ νῦν [...] ἔτι ὀλίγοι εἰσίν οἱ ἔξω τοῦ ἐρύματος, ἐν φῶν προσίωμεν πολλοὶ ἔσονται· μὴ οὖν ἀναμείνωμεν ἕως ἂν πλείους ἡμῶν γένωνται. ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ἕως ἐν αὐτῶν κρατῆσαι” (if those outside of the fortification are now still few […] by the time we arrive, there will be many of them. Let us not wait until they become more numerous than we. Let us go while we still think we will overcome them easily.).

This is not a request for advice but a politely worded command. Cyaxares is so polite that he not only gives Cyrus the order to start marching against the Assyrians but even explains his order. He is still trying to be nice to Cyrus, treating him not just as a subordinate but as a close relative. Cyrus refuses to view this order from his superior as an order and refuses to obey. Cyrus replies,

Ω Κυαξάρη, εἰ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἔσονται οἱ ἡττηθέντες, εὖ ἵσθι ὅτι ἡμᾶς μὲν ἐροῦσι φοβουμένους τὸ πλῆθος τοῖς ὀλίγοις ἐπιχειρῆσαι, αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐ νομιοῦσιν ἡττῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ἄλλης σοι μάχης δεήσει, ἐν ἂν ἀμείνοιν ἄν ἴσως βουλεύσῃ πολλοὶ ἔσονται... Cyaxares, unless more than half of them are defeated, they will surely say that we set upon a few out of fear of their numbers. They will not believe themselves defeated, and you will still need to fight another battle, one in which they would perhaps deliberate better than they have deliberated now...

Perhaps this is good advice, perhaps it is not. Cyrus is never in a parallel situation, so we

672 Cyr., Γ.3.46

673 Cyr., Γ.3.47. Cyrus’ words are ridiculous. Cyrus is undermining Cyaxares here in order to strengthen his own position in preparation for seizing Cyaxares’ army so that he can invade Assyria. Although he claims that he wants to limit the number of battles the Perso-Mede army fights against the Assyrians, we can comfortably disbelieve Cyrus’ words here as pious rubbish.
never see how Cyrus himself would have acted in this situation. 674 We note again and pass by the insubordination of a subordinate summarily rejecting a command on the pretense it is not perfectly timed. What Cyrus has done with this message is that he has seized the initiative from Cyaxares: unless Cyrus publicly gives permission for the Perso-Mede army to charge, he has created the perfect excuse to attack Cyaxares for incompetence should they lose this battle or need to fight again. In either case, Cyrus could claim that Cyaxares bears responsibility because he ignored Cyrus’ advice. It becomes clear that this is Cyrus’ intention once Cyaxares sends another, now annoyed, command to Cyrus to attack.

After Cyrus sends his first response, he has a diverting conversation with Chrysantas about the inability of speech to encourage virtue.675 Cyaxares, who focuses on the Assyrians, sends a second, more forceful, message in which he criticizes Cyrus and again orders him to attack. The narrator says, “Οἱ μὲν ταῦτα διελέγοντο. ὁ δὲ Κυαξάρης πάλιν πέμπων ἔλεγεν ὅτι ἐξαμαρτάνοι διατρίβων καὶ οὐκ ἄγων ὡς τάχιστα ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους” (So they were discussing such things. Cyaxares sent again and said that Cyrus was making a mistake in letting time pass and not marching against the enemy as soon as possible.).676 Cyaxares is growing concerned that victory is slipping away. Cyrus no longer pretends to defer to Cyaxares: he says, “Ἀλλ’ εὖ μὲν ἴστω, ἔφη, ὅτι οὔπω εἰσὶν ἔξω ὡς τάχιστα ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους δεῖ· καὶ ταῦτα ἀπαγγέλλετε αὐτῷ ὡς τάχιστα ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους” (But be assured that there are not yet as many of them out as there ought to be. Report

674 Agesilaos, however, handily defeats the Persians by acting precisely as Cyaxares suggests (Age., 1.31).
675 Cyr., Γ.3.48-55.
676 Cyr., Γ.3.56
this to him *in front of everyone*. Nevertheless, since it seems [good] to him, I shall now
march).” Unless they completely wipe out the Assyrian army, Cyrus has prepared
himself well to attack Cyaxares’ competence publicly after the battle. Insidiously, Cyrus
specifies here that his message be relayed *publicly*: Cyrus wants the Median officers to
hear his frustration with Cyaxares’ obvious incompetence. Cyrus has not only
undermined Cyaxares again, but he has created the following situation: if the Perso-
Medes lose, Cyrus can say that it is Cyaxares’ fault for not following his advice. If the
Perso-Medes win, but must fight again, Cyrus can say that the continuing danger is
Cyaxares’ fault. Either situation would further undermine Cyaxares and his authority. In
the event, Cyrus doesn’t need to attack Cyaxares’ authority in this manner, since he
almost immediately steals Cyaxares’ army. Yet we can see by his maneuvering that Cyrus
was planning for several possibilities. His successful theft of the Median army after the
battle—more than he could be certain of—obviated the need for immediate public
undermining of Cyaxares, yet we can see hints of what Cyrus was planning to do if the
Perso-Medes lost the battle.  

**The Betrayal**

After planting the seeds of contempt for Cyaxares’ incompetence in the minds of
the Median and Persian soldiers, Cyrus uses the opportunity of the Median victory over
the Assyrians, as I argue, to steal his uncle’s army. Cyrus, by pretending to satisfy

677 *Cyr.,* Γ.3.56. My emphasis. This is reminiscent of what Achilles says in the *Iliad* to Odysseus during
the embassy scene. He is still furious at Agamemnon for confiscating Briseis, and he rejects Odysseus’
try to catalyze a reconciliation by saying, “Go back and proclaim to him all that I tell you, openly,
so other Achaians may turn against him in anger if he hopes yet one more time to swindle some other
Danaan” (9.369).

678 It is, moreover, easy to see why Cyrus is planning for a defeat: he has been giving bad tactical advice
to Cyaxares for days.
Cyaxares’ concerns about the dangers of unnecessarily continuing the war and by outright lying, convinces Astyages to lend him a small number of Median cavalrymen. Cyrus then uses the official, but limited, permission Cyaxares grants him to convince the whole of the Median army to accompany him without his uncle’s knowledge. Cyaxares, when he discovers what has occurred, sends a firm but polite message to Cyrus, recalling his army; in response Cyrus disparages Cyaxares to the Medes and sends a message to Cyaxares subtly threatening his throne and life. Thus I argue, despite the analysis of many scholars, that in this section Cyrus succeeds at eliminating the threat Cyaxares represents to his plan of world-conquest by incorporating Cyaxares’ army into his own without Cyaxares’ permission.

After the battle, Cyrus suggestively notes to his subordinates that it would be wonderful to pursue the Assyrians because “Οἷά μοι δοκοῦμεν καὶ ὅσα ἀγαθά, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἀφεῖναι, θεῶν ἡμῖν αὐτὰ διδόντων” (great and numerous are the good things we seem to have thrown away, even though the gods gave them to us to take!). As always, Cyrus’ attempt to manipulate his offers with greed succeeds. His subordinates quickly agree to pursue the enemy, but Cyrus then ‘realizes’ that they cannot do so without the Medes, for the Persians have no cavalry. Cyrus decides that they must talk to Cyaxares about this; he brings his lieutenants along so that “εἰδῇ ὅτι πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ταῦτα δοκεῖ” (he may see that this is how it seems to all of us.). Cyrus wants to publicly pressure—“peer” pressure—his superior officer, not the first time he has done so. The narrator does not tell the reader exactly how Cyrus made his case to Cyaxares, but does provide Cyaxares’ response. 

679 Cyr., Δ.1.10
680 Cyr., Δ.1.12
681 Gray (2011) emphasizes that “the suggestion that they should ask Cyaxares for troops comes from the
Cyrus rejects, politely and at length, Cyrus’ suggestion. He says,

Ἀλλ’, ὦ Κῦρε, ὅτι μὲν κάλλιστα ἀνθρώπων μελετᾶτε ὑμεῖς οἱ Πέρσαι μηδὲ πρὸς μίαν ἡδονὴν ἀπλήστως διακεῖσθαι καὶ ὁρῶν καὶ ἀκούων οἶδα· ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ τῆς μεγίστης ἡδονῆς πολὺ μᾶλιστα συμφέρειν ἐγκρατῆ εἶναι. μείζω δὲ ἡδονὴν τί παρέχει ἀνθρώποις εὐτυχίας ἣν ἡμῖν παραγεγένηται; ἢν μὲν τοίνυν, ἐπεὶ εὐτυχομένες, συμφιλοῦμεν, διαφυλάττωμεν αὐτήν, ἵσθαν εὐθυμούμεθ' ἐν θαλάττῃ πεπονθέναι, διὰ τὸ εὐτυχεῖν οὐκ ἐθέλοντας παύσασθαι πλέοντας ἀπολέσθαι: πολλοὺς δὲ νίκης τυχόντας ἑτέρας ἐφιεμένους καὶ τὴν πρόσθεν ἀποβαλεῖν. καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὲν οἱ πολέμιοι ήττος ὅτις ἡμῶν ἐφευρόντας, ἵσθαν· οὐδὲν τοίς ήττος ὅσπερ ἔσχεν, ἵσθαν δὲ κατανόησον πόστῳ μέρει αὐτῶν πάντες μαχεσάμενοι νενικήκαμεν· 

Cyrus, that of all human beings you Persians take the noblest care not to be insatiably disposed toward any single pleasure I know both by seeing and hearing. Yet it seems to me to be most especially advantageous to be continent in the greatest pleasure. And what provides human beings with a greater pleasure than the good fortune that has now come to us? If then, when we enjoy good fortune, we guard it moderately, it would perhaps be within our power to grow old in happiness without risk. Yet if we are insatiable in this, and try to pursue first one and then another instance of good fortune, watch out that we do not suffer what they say that many have suffered as sea, to be unwilling—on account of their good fortune—to cease sailing until they perish; and they say that many, chancing on one victory but desiring another, throw away the first, for if our enemies fled because they were weaker than we, perhaps it would be safe also to pursue these weaker troops. But now bear in mind what a small fraction of them we have conquered, though all of us fought […] Consider that sows flee with their offspring whenever they are seen, even if there are many of them; but whenever someone hunts one of their offspring, [the mother] no longer flees, not even if she happens to be alone, but she charges the one who is trying to make the capture […] Moreover, since I see the Medes enjoying themselves, I would not now wish to rouse them and compel them to go off in order to run risks.”

The essence of his speech is that one should not, amidst victories, strive too hard for future victories: the risk is unnecessary. There is no point in risking the victory which just ended the war in order to march against an enemy who must now be, Cyaxares says, like a wild animal backed into a corner. He says, “ὁρᾶτε μὴ πάθωμεν ἀπειρόλαβος μὲν λέγουσιν ἐν θαλάττῃ πεπονθέναι, διὰ τὸ εὐτυχεῖν οὐκ ἐθέλοντας παύσασθαι πλέον ταύτης ἀπολέσονται” (Watch out […] that we do not suffer what they say that many have suffered men as well as Cyrus” (270). It is true that Cyrus’ officers accompany him, but only after Cyrus raises the topic of conversation and encourages them with a vague promise of heaps of profit if they should pursue the Assyrians. It is not as straightforward as Gray suggests. 682 Cygr. Δ.1.14-18.
at sea, to be unwilling—on account of their good fortune—to cease sailing until they perish.\textsuperscript{683} This response is in keeping with Cyaxares’ general presentation as a character: Cyaxares is cautious without cowardice, and brave without recklessness. His answer here—a Socratic moderation in all things, including war—does not satisfy Cyrus, even though (or perhaps because) he should have expected something of the sort. Cyaxares’ cautious hesitation wins him the grudging respect of Gera, who is typically hostile to Cyaxares. She notes that “Cyaxares’ reply is the most interesting and curious feature of our dialogue....Normally he serves simply as a pallid and ineffectual contrast, a kind of counter-figure, to the hero of the work” but “The Mede’s arguments, even if they do stem from laziness and jealousy, are surprisingly powerful and persuasive. Cyaxares believes that moderation is a wise policy on the part of victors.”\textsuperscript{684} Modern scholars in general, however, tend to react to Cyaxares’ speech with hostility. Gray states that Cyaxares is motivated by “envy...[and] merry-making” and argues that, because Cyrus’ invasion of Assyria is in the event successful, Cyaxares was wrong to urge moderation: “subsequent events prove Cyrus right: he has tremendous success in this campaign.”\textsuperscript{685} Tatum castigates Cyaxares for his moderation, saying that he is “a strategist of the day, and, what is more striking still, a hedonist in his strategic thinking. An abiding desire for

\textsuperscript{683} Cyr., Δ.1.15. Tatum (1989) says that Cyaxares’ speech is “a brilliantly conceived lesson in how not to think like Cyrus the Great (124).” This is true, but Tatum’s statement is double-edged.

\textsuperscript{684} Gera (1993), 103; 104. Gera also compares Cyaxares’ words of hesitation, even if “Xenophon may have included [them] because they were a standard topos” (105), to the words of caution of Herodotus’ Artabanus, Thucydides’ Spartans, and Xenophon’s Callistratus. Gera notes that “this is one of the rare instances where the author of the Cyropaedia allows us to see that serious, worthwhile objections can be made to a proposal put forward by Cyrus” (105).

\textsuperscript{685} Gray (2011), 270; 270. This bizarre attitude would justify virtually all unjust behavior. Not only does her argument depend on the identification of Cyrus’ empire as ‘good,’ but it presumes that such an empire could not have been achieved through just acts.
pleasure and personal comfort determines everything he says. Due agrees, contrasting
Cyrus’ “readiness to continue the war [to] when Cyaxares sits down to drink and feast
and sleep.” Although Nadon notes that “there is nothing false in this argument and
nothing that would not readily be seconded by Cyrus’s father,” he determines it to be a
“pretense, the tribute vice pays to what it takes to be virtue.” He ultimately agrees with
Gray and Tatum. Cyaxares’ speech seems to recommend a Socratic moderation, even if
his noble words, as some argue, hide an underlying viciousness.

Cyrus’ response, which hides his true emotions, is striking for its breath taking
deception:

\textit{Ἀλλὰ σὺν μη δὲν ἀναγκάσῃς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐθέλοντάς μοι ἔπεσθαι δός· καὶ ἴσως ἂν σοὶ καὶ τῶν σὺν φίλον
toūτων ἤρωμεν ἐκάπτω ἄγοντες ἐφ’ ὑπηρέτησεν. ἕνδε γὰρ πλῆθος ἡμεῖς γε τῶν πολεμίων
οὐδὲ διωκόμεθα· πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ καταλάβομεν; ἢν δὲ τι ἤπεισαμενόν τοῦ στρατεύματος λάβωμεν ἢ τι
ὑπολειπόμενον, ἤδειμον πρὸς σὲ ἄγοντες. ἐννόει δ’, ἢρθεν ὁ πολεμίων ἡμεῖς, ἤπειροι, ὅτι καὶ ἡμεῖς,
καὶ μὴ εἰς τὸν σόβον θησαυρὸν πάντες ὁρῶμεν.}

But do not compel anyone; rather, grant me those who are willing to follow along. And perhaps we would
return bringing you and each of these friends of yours things with which you will all enjoy yourselves. We
will not even pursue the main body of the enemy, for how would we catch them? But if we catch some part
detached from the army, or left behind it, we will bring it back to you. Consider that when you asked, we
traveled a long way to gratify you. So it is just that you now gratify us in return, so that we may go home
with something in our possession and that we not all look to your treasury.

This is a wonderfully skillful speech, crafted to placate Cyaxares, reassuring his concerns
about risk; yet, it also puts him on his back foot by inducing guilt and by insulting him,

686 Tatum (1989), 125.
687 Due (1989), 96.
688 Nadon (2001), 90; 91.
689 Later, Cyrus says to Cyaxares concerning this conversation, “Do I here seem to you to have done
something harsh because I avoided getting angry at you for your response, and I asked you for what I
knew to be the most minor thing for you to give and the easiest thing to be commanded to the Medes: I
asked that you grand me anyone who wished to follow along” (E.5.21). Cyrus was apparently furious
with Cyaxares but hid his emotions—he later presents it as a favor he did for Cyaxares, but it is clear
that he really hid his anger to better manipulate Cyaxares.

690 Cyr., Δ.1.19

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bringing up the old topic of Cyaxares’ (allegedly) miserly nature. Cyrus is lying through his teeth: almost the whole of this speech is in bad faith. In order to emphasize this, I discuss Cyrus’ points individually.

Cyrus’ first statement is quite misleading, since it implies that he will borrow only a handful of Median cavalry. He says, “But do not compel anyone; rather, grant me those who are willing to follow along.” Of course, Cyaxares has already refused to compel anyone to follow: he doesn’t want the war to continue and he doesn’t want to unnecessarily risk his men. Cyrus thus suggests that a few Median volunteers could accompany him. Of course, Cyrus does not admit that he plans to take all 70,000 Medes: he implies, and lets Cyaxares assume, that he means to borrow only a handful of Medes. His first sentence misleads Cyaxares by pretending that the two men share in common the assumption that the loan would be of only a few Medes.

Cyrus realizes that he has not yet convinced Cyaxares to lend him even a portion of his cavalry because he has not yet convinced him that he has any reason to do so. As a result, Cyrus suggests a reason: he reminds Cyaxares of his (allegedly) excessive expenses supporting the Medes, Persians, and Armenians. He says, “And perhaps we

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691 Tatum (1989) places this speech in the context of what he says Cyrus’ final push to usurp his uncle’s army: he says “From this point onwards, Cyrus moves to isolate his uncle completely” (123). Despite this, Tatum suggests that Cyrus ignores Cyaxares’ reservations, saying that “As always, Cyrus makes no effort to disabuse someone so misguided, but picks up only the last point: no man should be compelled to go on this mission unless he wishes to do so. He asks only for volunteers” (125). Cf. Gera (1993), 104. I argue that Cyrus responds directly or indirectly to most of what Cyaxares says.

692 Cyr., Δ.1.19.

693 Nadon (2001) points out that “Cyrus does not dispute his uncle’s assessment of the military situation, although this would certainly have been one way to press for further action. He is careful to say nothing to indicate that he does not share his commander’s views. He agrees that the Assyrian threat has been eliminated and that his official mission has therefore come to a successful close” (91). This is important: Cyrus uses this impression to make Cyaxares assume that he will require only a handful of Median cavalymen.

694 Cf. Nadon (2001), 91: “Cyrus appeals both to his uncle’s greed and to his sense of shame: it would be terribly ungenerous for him to refuse to do something for those who have traveled such a long way to
would return bringing you and each of these friends of yours things with which you will
all enjoy yourselves.” This is an appeal crafted to sway Cyaxares as Cyrus believes will
best sway him—Cyrus has repeatedly shown that he believes that Cyaxares is a greedy
and miserly person, motivated primarily by avarice. Thus Cyrus’ first attempt at
persuasion is based on what he thinks would most appeal to Cyaxares: money. In the
event, this, just like the first sentence, is deceitful on several levels. First of all, Cyrus
says he will perhaps turn over a portion of the plunder that he seizes; in the event, he does
not do this. Secondly, Cyrus implies that he intends to borrow only a fraction of
Cyaxares’ army: he says he will bring gifts to “τῶν σῶν φίλων τούτων (each of these
friends of yours).” This is ambiguous: this could be understood to include Cyaxares’
imimate circle of philoi or it could include the majority of Cyaxares’ army. Either
interpretation is possible. Cyrus wants Cyaxares to understand his statement as ‘the
majority of his army,’ but in the event it means ‘only his philoi,’ because only they will be
abandoned with Cyaxares.

This statement is manipulative on another level, however, as Cyrus pretends to

695 Cyrr., Δ.1.19.
696 Of course there is no evidence in the text that would suggest Cyaxares is even remotely motivated by
money. For example, when Cyaxares and Cyrus discuss the failure of the Armenian to fulfill his
responsibilities, Cyaxares’ seems completely disinterested in the financial impact of the missing tribute
(it does seem that Media is very wealthy); he is rather concerned about the missing Armenian troops. He
says that he is also worried about the danger of a campaign against the Armenian, for if it fails “we
[could] add him too to our other enemies” (B.4.12). It is Cyrus who is solely concerned about making
money. Cyrus rather bluntly says “I think I need money” (B.4.11). Again, despite Cyrus’ insinuations,
Cyaxares seems to be completely unmotivated by the potential for profit.

697 Since Cyrus is not alone with Cyaxares during this conversation, this promise of booty also may be
intended to plant the seed of greed in the minds of the Median officers.
698 He does hand over the Assyrian king’s tent and the second most beautiful woman he captures, but these
are insultingly trivial compared to the actual spoils he obtained: all the people, revenues, and resources
found between the Aegean and the Median border.
699 Cyrr., Δ.1.19.
admit a certain amount of subordination. In other words, in exchange for the use of a number of Cyaxares’ soldiers, Cyrus will compensate not only Cyaxares but also, generously, whichever Medes chose to remain. Cyrus indirectly admits that it is not within his rights to give commands to the Median soldiers; they are subordinate to Cyaxares, not to Cyrus. This amounts to an admittance that Cyrus is, to a degree, subordinate to, or at least less powerful than, Cyaxares. He will incur a debt to Cyaxares—will owe him a favor—and will compensate him for it. Of course, he focuses on a monetary compensation, which he believes is what motivates Cyaxares, instead of horses, weapons or other such objects that would, if turned over to Cyaxares, provide aid to the Median army. Cyrus thus tries to persuade Cyaxares with a combination of false obedience and lies.

Cyrus’ next sentence is an outright lie. Cyrus promises to Cyaxares that “We will not even pursue the main body of the enemy, for how would we catch them?” Cyrus knows that this is pious nonsense meant to allay Cyaxares’ concerns about the danger his Medes might unnecessarily face. Cyrus wants the Median cavalry so that he can attack the main body of the Assyrians. At the beginning of this scene, he had pointed out to the Persian officers, “(great and numerous are the good things we seem to have thrown away, even though the gods gave them to us to take!).” He has promised his men that the mooted pursuit of the Medes, if successful, would make them rich. An army will not be made rich off the loot seized from the panicked and disordered commoner-Assyrians who must make up the majority of the troops scattered from the main body of the Assyrian

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700 *Cyr., Δ.1.19.*
701 *Cyr., Δ.1.10*
army. The Assyrian aristocrats and the Assyrian royals, commanding the main body of the Assyrians, are the ones who (are rich enough to) have riches worth pursuing. Indeed, once Cyrus leaves the Median camp with the Median cavalry, he orders his cavalrymen, “παρ’ ἐμοὶ μὲν καταλίπετε ἕκαστοι τάξιν ἱππέων, ὡς, ἄν τι δέῃ, χρῶμαι μένον παρὰ τὸ στρατόπεδον (When I reach the enemy’s army, let each of you [Median and Hyrcanian cavalry divisions] leave a cavalry unit with me so that I [...] may use them if there be any need.).”702 Cyrus never intends to avoid the main body of the Assyrians.

Cyrus’ next sentence is a recapitulation of his points thus far in his attempted persuasion of Cyaxares. He says, “But if we catch some part detached from the army, or left behind it, we will bring it back to you.” This is a combination of his previous three sentences: if ’we,’ the Persians and whatever Medes volunteer (thus the first sentence), catch some part detached from the army, or left behind it (the third sentence), we will bring it back to you (the second sentence). Note, however, how Cyrus fineses his plan. This time, he says “ἠν δέ τι ἢ ἀπεσχισμένον τοῦ στρατεύματος λάβωμεν ἢ τι ὑπολειπόμενον, ἥξομεν πρὸς σὲ ἄγοντες.”703 In other words, the second time he elucidates his plan, he changes his emphasis—the first time, he said “τὸ μὲν γὰρ πλῆθος ἡμεῖς ὑπολειπόμενον ἡ πολεμίων οὐδὲ διωχόμεθα.”704 Whereas the first time he said “We will not even pursue the main body of the enemy” he says the second time “if we catch some part detached from the army, or left behind it[.]”705 He stresses even more in his recapitulation of his plan the distance between the two armies—why? He may have suspected that

702 Cyr., Δ.2.23
703 Cyr., Δ.1.19.
704 Cyr., Δ.1.19.
705 Cyr., Δ.1.19; Δ.1.19.
Cyaxares was insufficiently persuaded. Cyaxares may have made an unhappy face, not believing Cyrus when he said he would not pursue the main body of the enemy. Whatever non-verbal communication passed between the two men causes Cyrus to alter his emphasis in his recapitulation.

Cyrus takes two final tacks: he shames Cyaxares and makes another appeal to his (alleged) greed. He says: “Consider that when you asked, we traveled a long way to gratify you. So it is just that you now gratify us in return, so that we may go home with something in our possession and that we not all look to your treasury.”

First of all, this is another attempt to bend Cyaxares to his will by claiming Cyrus’ plan will save the Mede a considerable amount of money in the long run. By letting the Persians seize money and goods from the Assyrians, Cyaxares will need to spend less of his own money to ensure that the Persians return home appropriately recompensed. Yet this is also an attempt to shame Cyaxares: Cyrus says that he did Cyaxares a favor by coming to Media and fighting the Assyrians. This is untrue: he, as Persian general, was fulfilling the responsibilities of Persia as a nation subordinate to Media.

Nadon (2001) argues, with which I agree, that by saying this “Cyrus misleads Cyaxares about his going home, as if this were his ultimate destination” (91). He goes on to say that Cyrus cannot bring the Persian soldiers home unless he has already established his empire since he has “armed 30,000 commoners and given them basic military training, to say nothing of transforming the peers’ understanding of virtue” (91). If he would return home now, he would destroy “the balance of power between the classes there” (91). Gray (2011)’s sarcastic counter-argument to Nadon (2001)’s point, that to “the innocent reader this sounds like regular leadership theory” (271) does not convince since she fails to show how 30,000 armed and now-wealthy commoners could be convinced to return to their humble and poor agrarian lives.

Although it is not stated explicitly, there seems to be little room to challenge the status of Persia as a subordinate or junior member in their relationship with Media. Persia seems to be in much the same position as Armenia in respect to Media. Both have to supply armies on the request (command) of Media. Armenia, of course, also has to pay tribute to Media. Nothing is said on this subject about Persia. Does Persia have to pay tribute? Perhaps it is not mentioned by the partisan narrator. On the other hand, it is possible that they are junior member of the Median alliance, but less junior than Armenia. However, both the king of Armenia and the king of Persia (must? choose to?) send their eldest son to be fostered in the Median court (Cyrus and Mandane were summoned to Media by Astyages; it seems to have been stronger than an invitation—A.3.1) and to be educated and come to know the
treatment for (barely) fulfilling his responsibilities adequately. In exchange for this, he says, Cyaxares should equally gratify Cyrus (as if there is equality between Cyrus and Cyaxares) if Cyaxares wishes to be just. Cyaxares is just (note that Cyrus literally says “you are just,” not “it is just,”) if he allows Cyrus to do this thing: Cyrus has the audacity to lecture Cyaxares on justice while he is plotting to steal Cyaxares’ army! If Cyrus did Cyaxares a favor by bringing the Persian army to Media, and if Cyaxares wants to be just, then Cyaxares must lend Cyrus (part of) his army for a short-term and temporary deployment.

Cyrus’ manipulation here is quite impressive: he twists reality to suit his needs. Let us examine the reality that he is sophistically replacing with ‘his’ reality. First, his claim that Cyrus did Cyaxares a favor by leading the Persian army to Media is untrue: it was Cyaxares who did the favor for Cyrus. Cyaxares, when he summoned the Persian army to help him, specifically requested that Cyrus be put in command. As the narrator says,

Κυαξάρης [… ] εἰς Πέρσας ἔπεμπε πρός τε τὸ κοινὸ καὶ πρὸς Καμβύσην τὸν τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἔχοντα καὶ βασιλεύοντα ἐν Πέρσαις. ἔπεμπε δὲ καὶ πρὸς Κῦρον, δεόμενος αὐτοῦ πειρᾶσθαι ἄρχοντα ἐλθεῖν τῶν ἀνδρῶν.

Median king and heir (are they hostages?). Much is not said about the terms of the legal/political relationship between Persia and Media, but Persia seems to be closer to Armenia’s position than anything else—and Armenia had been captured and forcefully subjugated by Astyages. The narrator never says anything about how the Persians joined their alliance with Media. The most substantial difference between Armenia and Persia is that Mandane was married to Cambyses and not to the Armenian. Does this mean that Persia and Media were more equal and Astyages wanted to acknowledge this, or does it mean that Astyages was more concerned about the loyalty of Persia and married his daughter to Cambyses to ensure his reliability?

As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, Cyrus’ subversion in the days leading up to the battle with the Assyrians is calculated to undermine Cyaxares’ authority among the Medes; as I noted, this would suggest that Cyrus is prior to the battle already planning how to supplant Cyaxares as commander of the Median army. When Cyrus’ juvenile rivalry with Cyaxares transmuted into a calculated plan of usurpation is less clear; I suspect, however, that from the moment of Cyrus’ arrival in Media (B.1.1), this has been at least at the back of his mind. Nadon, also sees Cyrus’ first actions in Media as being motivated by “his […] long-term, if unstated, plan” (61), although he doesn’t specify whether this plan is specifically his plot against Cyaxares.
Cyaxares [...] sent messages to the Persians, both to the common council and to Cambyses, who was married to his sister and was king of the Persians. He sent also to Cyrus, asking that he try to come as the ruler of the men.\textsuperscript{709}

It is because of Cyaxares’ request—not for any other stated reason—that Cyrus is in command of the Persian army at all: “οὕτω δὴ δεξαμένου τοῦ Κύρου οἱ βουλεύοντες γεραίτεροι αἱροῦνται αὐτὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς εἰς Μήδους στρατιᾶς (So then, with Cyrus’ acceptance, the elders in council chose him as the ruler of the expedition to Media).”\textsuperscript{710}

There is no indication that Cyrus would have been chosen general had Cyaxares not said what he did. Cyrus, despite his constant disrespect and subversive activities, is the one who is indebted to Cyaxares; yet he claims that it is Cyaxares who owes him the favor. If Cyaxares had not requested Cyrus, Cyrus would either be stuck in Persia or accompanying his father as a subordinate.\textsuperscript{711}

In general, there is no way for Cyaxares to know that Cyrus’ words are so deeply deceptive: Cyrus crafts his speech in order to completely assuage Cyaxares’ concerns about risk which caused him to initially deny Cyrus’ request.\textsuperscript{712} Cyaxares ended his first speech, rejecting Cyrus’ request, by saying “προσέτι δ’ οὐδ’ ἂν ἐθέλοιμ’, ἐγὼ νῦν ἐξαναστήσας ἀναγκάζειν κινδυνεύσοντας ἰέναι” (I would not now wish to rouse them).

\textsuperscript{709} Cyr., A.5.4
\textsuperscript{710} Cyr., A.5.5
\textsuperscript{711} That Cyrus leads the Persian army while his father still lives and rules is, at least in the context of Persia’s neighbors, unusual. When Astyages still lived, he retained command of the Median army and relegated Cyaxares to the role of cavalry commander (A.4.20). The Old Assyrian King remains commander of the Assyrian army until his death and defeat at the hands of Cyaxares (Γ.3.44). The Armenian king retained overall command of the Armenian army until his defeat by Cyrus, at which point he hands the army over to his son, Tigranes (G.3.4-5).

\textsuperscript{712} Due (1989) justifies Cyrus’ treatment of Cyaxares by saying that “Cyaxares, as we have seen, was never superior to Cyrus in any real sense. He was formally the leader, he was the king and Cyrus only a young prince, but, nevertheless, Cyrus actually surpasses him in all areas from childhood on, and the interest of the reader is always focused on Cyrus...The two characters are never on the same level” (60). This is a rather uncomfortable argument that justifies the 'better' man’s abuse of the 'weaker' man due to his moral/physical/political superiority.
[the Medes] and compel them to go off in order to run risks). It seems to be clear why Cyrus chooses this particular lie (that he won’t pursue the Assyrian main body) to persuade Cyaxares. Cyaxares had expressed his hesitation about needlessly risking the lives of his soldiers: for Cyaxares, the war is over and Cyrus’ pursuit is frivolity. Thus Cyrus attempts to overcome this concern by suggesting that he will not risk the lives of the Medes, but will pick off stragglers and isolated sections of the routing Assyrian army. While this is a superficial lie he discards as soon as he moves beyond Cyaxares’ sight, it is thus a lie crafted to meet and dismiss a particular concern of Cyaxares.

Cyaxares does yield to Cyrus: after Cyrus’ speech, Cyaxares says ‘Ἀλλ’ εἴ γε μέντοι ἐθέλων τις ἕποιτο, καὶ χάριν ἔγωγέ σοι εἰδείην ἄν’ (‘But if someone should follow along willingly, I would even be grateful to you.’). Cyaxares’ response to Cyrus is ambiguous: the narrator does not say why Cyaxares yields, nor does he indicate whether Cyaxares’ claim of gratitude is sarcastic, grudging, or genuine. Did the money, the guilt, or the insults persuade? According to Tatum, there is a straightforward answer to this question. He says that “Cyaxares does not see the trap […] has made his last mistake, and it is fatal.” This is true, but this is not the whole answer. I suggest three potential interpretations of Cyaxares’ action here. There is nothing in this passage to confirm or deny any of these readings, so they must remain speculative. However, we may rely on Cyaxares’ prior treatment of Cyrus, since his behavior has been thus far consistent.

713 *Cyr.*, Δ.1.18
714 *Cyr.*, Δ.1.21
715 For Nadon (2001), “Cyrus appeals both to his uncle’s greed and to his sense of shame (91),” yet he attributes Cyaxares’ acquiescence to other factors: “Ignorant of the necessities Cyrus has created, and believing that very few of his own men will respond to the call, Cyaxares allows him to select a messenger to announce to the Medes that those who are willing may go along” (92).
716 Tatum (1989), 125.
Being motivated by the promise of money is inconsistent with Cyaxares’ personality as we have seen it thus far. Cyaxares has repeatedly expressed apathy towards collecting even very large amounts of money, such as the overdue tribute of the entire nation of Armenia.\textsuperscript{717} Cyrus claims to intend to pursue only stragglers scattered from the main body of the Assyrians: Cyaxares could hardly expect to profit hugely from these few panicked men. Furthermore, Cyrus does not promise a percentage of the spoils but Cyaxares can perhaps expect whatever gifts Cyrus chooses for him. If Cyaxares remained unmoved at the thought of receiving the overdue tribute of Armenia, an entire nation, it is difficult to accept that he is now motivated by greed when Cyrus promises to pursue a small number of scattered Assyrians, promises to avoid the main body of the Assyrians (where the majority of the loot would be), and then says he will perhaps give select gifts to him. It is unlikely that Cyaxares is motivated by such piddling riches.

The second possibility is that Cyaxares is swayed by Cyrus’ attempt to shame him. Cyaxares has gone above and beyond the norm in attempting to maintain a friendly relationship with Cyrus by, among other things, including him in the military decision-making process beyond the norm for other foreigners within the Median army. Tigranes, for example, isn’t included in all the meetings Cyrus attends. Yet, from the moment that Cyrus arrived in Media, his interactions with Cyaxares were strained: Cyrus shows annoyance, frustration, and occasional open hostility. Cyaxares may have come to believe that the relationship between himself and Cyrus has been so strained not because of Cyrus but because of some failing of his own. Thus this speech, in which Cyrus justifies

\textsuperscript{717} Cyaxares was apathetic at the thought of obtaining the back tribute owed him by Armenia (B.4.12-17) and was equally blasé about the cost of maintaining the Persian troops out of his own pocket (A.1.13-18).
his request by means of a number of (apparently) reasonable excuses and tact attempts to shame Cyaxares may have struck Cyaxares as the beginning of a reconciliation between the two men. Cyrus seems to be coming around: he asks Cyaxares’ permission, defers to him, and speaks reasonably instead of with hostility. Cyaxares may be fooled by Cyrus because he deludes himself into believing that Cyrus has begun to abandon his hostility towards him.

Thus we cannot rule out Cyaxares being pricked by Cyrus’ attempt to shame him; he may see cooperating with Cyrus here as a way to ease the tensions in their relationship.\(^{718}\) One possibility is that while he knew that Cyrus was acting disobediently, he did not suspect the extent of his subversion. Cyaxares might have thought he had a bad relationship with Cyrus, but didn’t suspect that Cyrus was planning anything treasonous. Another possibility does suggest itself: Cyaxares might view this as an opportunity to conclusively end the war with little risk to himself and the majority of the Medes (not realizing, of course, that Cyrus is about to steal his army). If Cyrus, with the aid of a couple of Median troops (and the liaison he attaches to Cyrus’ staff),\(^ {719}\) manages to increase the rout and panic in the Assyrian army, cause it to collapse, or drive it far into Assyria—without Cyaxares and the main Median army’s involvement—Cyaxares would be able to benefit and bring peace and safety to his country without risking many of his own soldiers and his ability to defend his country in the future.

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\(^{718}\) Nadon (2001), 92, suggests that it was because Cyaxares did not believe many Medes would accompany Cyrus, which seems to suggest that Cyaxares wanted to maintain good relations with Cyrus without committing his entire army to the endeavor.

\(^{719}\) Why does Cyaxares attach this liaison? And why does he allow Cyrus to pick the liaison? Does he believe that any of his high-ranking officers would naturally be more loyal to him than to Cyrus? If so, it was a mistake. Was this liaison meant to go along as the commander of the Median troops? Or as a spy to ensure Cyrus’ compliance?
In this section, we have seen Cyrus lie to and mislead Cyaxares in order to appropriate his army for his own benefit. Yet Cyaxares is not only a friendly superior officer, but also the brother of Cyrus’ mother. Cyaxares is both a friend and family member and yet Cyrus treats him as an enemy: this is unjust.\textsuperscript{720}

**Cyrus and Cyaxares’ Correspondence**

After Cyrus leaves with all the Medes, it takes until the next morning for Cyaxares to realize what has happened. He celebrated in his tent that evening and assumed that his soldiers were still in camp because he heard sounds of joy and celebration. It is only after he wakes and leaves his tent that Cyaxares realizes he has been betrayed: the sounds he heard were of the suddenly-abandoned Median slaves looting the Median camp.\textsuperscript{721} He sends a message to Cyrus ordering the Medes to return. When Cyrus receives Cyaxares’ letter he derides Cyaxares, ignores his command, bribes the messenger, and eventually replies to Cyaxares, threatening him with violence unless he keep quiet. In this section we see the relationship between Cyrus and Cyaxares transition into a new phase. Cyrus, who has stolen Cyaxares’ army and finds himself outside of Cyaxares’ power, begins to speak to Cyaxares as a poorly educated subordinate and, to the army, as a panicky old woman whose terror of the unknown must be patronized and ignored. Despite this, Cyrus maintains the obedience of the Medes at this stage because they believe they are serving Cyrus at Cyaxares’ command—thus he

\textsuperscript{720} Seager (2001) says that “πλεονεξία too occupies a prominent place. Like others, Xenophon associates it with absolute rule” (394). He adds, “Among Athenians it is perhaps not surprising that Critias, labelled the most self-seeking and violent member of the Thirty (M. 1.2.12), is credited with the belief that those who wish to exercise πλεονεξία should not hesitate to liquidate all those who might stand in their way (H. 2.3.16).”

\textsuperscript{721} *Cyr.*, Δ.5.8 ff. We see this scene in a flashback; the narrator only returns to what Cyaxares has been doing to bring the reader up to speed when his letter is about to arrive at Cyrus’ camp.
cannot yet completely remove Cyaxares from the picture: his speech to the army and his letter to Cyaxares, both prompted by Cyaxares’ letter to Cyrus recalling the Medes, thus balances between the need to ridicule and effemenize Cyaxares yet at the same time preserve his authority to a minimal degree.

The narrator says that on the morning after the victory,

ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐπὶ θύρας οὐδεὶς ἦκε πλὴν οἴπερ καὶ συνεδείπνουν, καὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον ἤκουε κενὸν εἶναι τῶν Μήδων καὶ τῶν ἱππέων, καὶ ἑώρα, ἐπειδὴ ἐξῆλθεν, οὕτως ἔχοντα, ἑνταῦθα δὴ ἐβριμοῦτό τε τῷ Κύρῳ καὶ τοῖς Μήδοις τῷ καταλιπόντας αὐτὸν ἔρημον οἴχεσθαι...

When it was day, and no one but those who had dined with him came to his doors, and [Cyaxares] heard that the camp was empty of Medes and knights, and he saw, when he went out, that it was so, then of course he fell into a rage at both Cyrus and the Medes for having departed and left him alone...

After winning his greatest triumph, defeating a mortal threat that had loomed over Media for at least a generation by winning a famous victory over an army several times the size of his own, Cyaxares finds himself defeated not by the enemy but by the betrayal of his nephew. It is unsurprising that he grows angry: he is betrayed at the moment of his victory that saved both his country and throne. Indeed, he gets angrier when he discovers that Cyrus had concealed the defection of the Hyrcanians—what would Cyaxares have done had he known of this? Yet his deep fury is neither mindless nor uncontrolled.

Consider his reaction to this situation: he doesn’t work himself up into a frothing fury (as the narrator later implies). Rather, he sends a fairly calm and practical letter to

722 Cyr., Δ.5.9. This is a good example of what I mean by the silence of the narrator's personality that generally prevails in his account of Cyrus' adulthood. Although this would be a perfect opportunity to drive home to the reader that Cyaxares is a wicked and vicious man, the narrator restrains himself to describing what happened, describing Cyaxares' emotional state, and the reasons for Cyaxares' emotional state. His preferred behavior at this point is to merely describe what Cyaxares does and leave it to Cyrus, when he speaks to the Medes (Δ.5.20-22) and when he writes in response to Cyaxares (Δ.5.27-33), to make it clear that Cyaxares is effeminate, cowardly, and vicious.

723 Tatum (1989) says that the news of the Hyrcanians makes him realize “that Cyrus’s expedition was not at all the casual outing he had made it out to be” (126).

724 Cyr., Δ.5.18.
Cyrus. His letter reads,

Ὤ μὴν μὲν ἔγωγε, οὖδ' ἂν σέ, ὦ Κῦρε, περὶ ἐμοῦ οὕτως ἀπρονοήτως βουλεύσαι, εἰ δὲ Κῦρος οὕτω γνώσκοι, οὐκ ἂν ύμᾶς, ὦ Μῆδοι, ἐθελῆσαι οὕτως ἔρημον ἐμὲ καταλιπεῖν. καὶ νῦν, ἂν μὲν Κῦρος βουλήσῃ, εἰ δὲ μὴ, ὃμεῖς γε τὴν ταχίστην πάρσοτε.

I did not think that you, Cyrus, would deliberate about me in a way so lacking in foresight, or, if Cyrus is of this judgment, that you Medes would be willing to leave me so alone. Now, whether Cyrus wishes it or not, be here as quickly as possible."

He prepared this message for Cyrus and Medes before he found out about the defection of the Hyrcanians, and once he did, the narrator says, he

πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐτῇ τῷ Κύρῳ ὀργίζετο τῷ μηδ’ εἰπεῖν αὐτῷ ταῦτα, καὶ πολλῇ σπουδῇ μᾶλλον ἔπεμπεν ἐπὶ τοὺς Μήδους, ὡς ψιλώσων αὐτόν, καὶ ἰσχυρότερον ἔτι ἔπεμπεν ἐπὶ τοὺς Μήδους ἀπεκάλει, καὶ τῷ πεμπομένῳ δὲ ἠπείλει, εἰ μὴ ἰσχυρῶς ταῦτα ἀπαγγέλει.

became even much more angry at Cyrus for not having told him this, and he sent for the Medes with much more zeal, intending to strip [Cyrus of the Median cavalry]. Threatening still more strongly than before, he called the Medes back, and he threatened the envoy as well, if he should not report his message with severity."

We should first examine these lines before we consider the reaction of Cyrus and his Medes to this message.

Cyaxares is furious but sends a fairly reasonable letter. His message communicates a few things. First, he claims disappointment and surprise at Cyrus’ actions. Secondly, he is surprised and disappointed that the Medes went along with Cyrus’ plan. Third, he summons back his own national army but does not order back Cyrus, the Persians, the Hyrcanians, and the Armenians. Only the Medes are recalled. He does not accuse Cyrus of betraying him or of committing any crime. He characterizes

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725 Ambler (2001) in his translation notes points out that “so lacking in foresight” could also be translated as “so lacking in consideration for me” (293).
726 Cvr. Δ.5.10
727 Cvr. Δ.5.12
728 Many modern scholars characterize Cyaxares’ letter as representative of his wild temper and savage nature. Due (1989) compares his, when he sends the letter, “to the traditional Greek conception of an oriental despot” (58). Gera (1993) says that Cyaxares’ “short temper is notorious” (101).
Cyrus’ actions as merely “lacking in foresight.” Whatever his true belief, he treats this publicly as a misguided mistake. He doesn’t accuse the Medes of betraying him. He merely suggests that they have erred in being “willing to leave me so alone.” Cyrus and the Medes have been misguided, or have reasoned improperly, but have not acted criminally. He is perhaps pessimistic that Cyrus will listen to him, saying that even “if Cyrus is of this judgment” (i.e. he will continue his invasion of Assyria), the Medes should still come home. Thus we see that he begins his brief letter with mild reproach, far more mild than he could show (and less than is deserved). This is an exercise of political skill: the more angry his letter to the Medes, the less likely they would obey him. Despite his provocation, he presents a calm and conciliatory demeanor in his letter.

The final sentence of Cyaxares’ letter contains his actual command to his soldiers and an admission that he knows that Cyrus has abandoned any pretense of subordination. He says, “Now, whether Cyrus wishes it or not, be here as quickly as possible.” Cyaxares commands no more than the return of his army and their resumption of their normal duties (i.e. obedience to their king) Again, perhaps because he realizes his precariousness, he doesn’t threaten his army if they don’t return and he doesn’t threaten Cyrus—he just reproaches him. His letter is rather mild overall.

Before Cyaxares sends his letter he learns of the defection of the Hyrcanians. He grows far angrier as a result: Cyaxares “became even much more angry at Cyrus for not having told him this, and he sent for the Medes with much more zeal, intending to strip [Cyrus of the Median cavalry]. Threatening still more strongly than before, he called the Medes back, and he threatened the envoy as well, if he should not report his message
with severity.” The narrator frustratingly only paraphrases this second message. He says that Cyaxares threatened more strongly, but he gives no details. Whether the contents of the letter changed substantially is thus ambiguous. When the messenger arrives at Cyrus’ camp, the narrator says, he relays “both his [Cyaxares’] anger against Cyrus and his threats against the Medes. He said in conclusion that he commanded the Medes to come back, even if Cyrus wished to remain.” This description of the message bears little resemblance to Cyaxares’ message that the narrator relayed verbatim: in the first message, Cyaxares mildly criticized Cyrus and the Medes and firmly but politely commanded the return of the Median army. This cannot be described as angry and threatening. Yet there is a troubling disjunction here: when the narrator describes how Cyaxares’ second draft is different from his first draft, he notes two specific changes: he says that the second draft threatens the Medes more; he also says that Cyaxares’ instructions to the messenger are harsh. If we take the narrator’s description at face value, this would mean that Cyaxares does not alter what he had initially said to Cyrus. If so, the statement “I did not think that you, Cyrus, would deliberate about me in a way so lacking in foresight” is what the narrator later describes as Cyaxares’ “anger against Cyrus.” Cyaxares is reproachful but does not treat Cyrus with fury.

729 Cyr., Δ.5.12
730 Cyr., Δ.5.18.
731 Cyr., Δ.5.10.
732 Cyr., Δ.5.13; Δ.5.18.
733 The narrator is typically eager to relay, in detail, the foolishness of people who challenge or oppose Cyrus. For example, the reader is told verbatim the speech the elder Assyrian king gives before his battle against the Perso-Mede army. (Γ.3.44) He also relays the brief monologue of the younger Assyrian king to Gobryas at the walls of Babylon. (Ε.3.6) Why do we not get the details of Cyaxares’ angrier message? One possibility is that it is in the interest of Cyrus for the message not to be recorded verbatim and simply described as ‘angry’ and ‘threatening,’ which might make it seem worse than it really was.
I now turn to Cyrus’ and the Medes’ response to Cyaxares’ message. I argue that the reaction of the Medes displays their surprise, guilt and knowledge that what they did was unjust. I also argue that Cyrus reacts in two ways: first, he attempts to assuage the guilt of the Medes. Secondly, he tells Cyaxares, in a letter full of lies, that he has done nothing wrong and that he will not obey Cyaxares’ commands until he has finished literally obeying his prior command (an act of disobedience behind the façade of obedience); he then ends by guilting and threatening Cyaxares.

The initial reaction of the Medes to Cyaxares’ message reveals that they are aware they have acted unjustly; however, they immediately try to disregard this in favor of following Cyrus: he promises them more profit. After the Median messenger speaks, the Medes “ἐσίγησαν, ἀποροῦντες μὲν πῶς χρὴ καλοῦντος ἀπειθεῖν, φοβούμενοι δὲ πῶς χρὴ ἀπειλοῦντι ὑπακοῦσαι, ἄλλως τε καὶ εἰδότες τὴν ὠμότητα αὐτοῦ” (fell silent […] being at a loss as to how—since he called—they could disobey; and fearing as to how—since he was threatening—they could comply with him, especially since they knew his savagery.).

734 Cyaxares has learned from Cyrus: when the Median messenger relays his message, he does it “in front of everyone,” not just the Median and Persian officers. 735

The Medes’ initial reaction is threefold. They fall silent, grow afraid, and they desire to continue to disobey.

The Medes fall silent because they now learn for the first time that there is the possibility that their king and general had not fully approved of what they have done. Because Cyrus manipulates Cyaxares’ command when he initially transmits it to the

734Cyr., Δ.5.19.
735Cyr., Δ.5.18. Compare this to Cyrus’ treatment of Cyaxares

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Medes, the Median soldiers had believed that Cyaxares fully approved of their *en masse* accompaniment of the Persians deeper into Assyria. Thus they are suddenly confronted with the fact that what they are doing, which they believed they were doing with Cyaxares’ full permission, amounted to unjust disobedience. It is a difficult situation.

The Medes fall silent because they belatedly realize that they have erred. They should not have left *en masse* because they have, in effect if not intentionally, abandoned their king. Yet, although they are now aware of their mistake, they are “at a loss as to how—since he called—they could disobey.” They respond to their realization that they have erred by plotting how to continue to err, now deliberately. Previously they had in ignorance acted unjustly to Cyaxares; now they look for justification to do it intentionally. Their motivations for this mutiny are left unstated: we may compare, though, the stated reasons which induced them to volunteer for Cyrus’ expedition: some of the Medes “had been friends with Cyrus when he was a boy.” Some “admired [Cyrus’] manner.” Some “felt grateful to him.” Some believed that Cyrus “would one day be exceedingly great.” Some wanted to “grantify him in return” for favors when he lived in Media. Finally, and this must apply to the majority of the 70,000 Median soldiers, “the argument circulated that they would guide them to many good things, [and] many came out also in order to get something.” The Medes volunteered to follow

736 Cyr., Δ.5.19.
737 Cyr., Δ.2.10.
738 Cyr., Δ.2.10.
739 Cyr., Δ.2.10.
740 Cyr., Δ.2.10.
741 Cyr., Δ.2.10.
742 Cyr., Δ.2.10
Cyrus for two primary reasons: the minority owe Cyrus personal debts and the majority think that they will profit from this campaign. Their mistake—abandoning Cyaxares for Cyrus—was accidental. It is their reaction—might we not ignore Cyaxares?—that crosses into injustice. The Medes want to ignore Cyaxares primarily due to their greed. Even the elite Medes, who follow Cyrus because of debts they owe him, act unjustly in this: they must owe still greater debts to Cyaxares. Their king has promoted them, honored them, and trusted them for decades, unlike Cyrus. As for the majority, their motivation is base: they don’t want to return to Cyaxares because they believe they will make more money if they follow Cyrus. Yet, despite their passions, they hesitate: can they disobey the just command of their king? Cyrus helps them overcome their fleeting pangs of conscience.

Cyrus knows why the Medes fall silent—guilt—and he assuages this in his address. Of course, like much of what Cyrus says to and about Cyaxares, he lies. Here is the majority of his address:

Ἀλλ’ ἐγώ, ὦ ἄγγελέ τε καὶ Μῆδοι, οὐδέν, ἔφη, θαυμάζω εἰ Κυαξάρης, πολλοὺς μὲν πολεμίου τότ’ ἰδών,

This must be the case—how many of the 70,000 Medes could have been benefited by Cyrus in childhood, been his friend, or owed him a debt? Perhaps some went because they thought he would be a great man someday, but the majority must have been influenced by greed, the very way Cyrus motivates the homotimoi (Cf. Nadon 2001, 56-60).

Scholarship is split on this point. There is general agreement that Cyrus manipulates the contents of Cyaxares’ letter: Tatum (1989) calls it a “careful misreading” (126), Nadon (2001) variously calls it a “(re)interpretation” (94) and a “gross misreading” (94), Whidden (2007a) calls it “a rather duplicitous reading of Cyaxares’ message” (135), and Gray (2011) says that “he makes Cyaxares sound much better than he is” (273). Yet there is no agreement on the purpose of Cyrus’ manipulation: Tatum (1989) says that “This model of clam and reasonableness reduces Cyaxares’ rage to mere ‘worry’” (126), and Nadon (2001) similarly argues that Cyrus “intervenes at this delicate juncture to soften and deflect the force of Cyaxares’ letter” (94). Both thus interpret Cyrus’ action as an attempt to allay concerns and dismiss Cyaxares’ order in order to prevent a potential departure of the Medes from camp. Gray (2011), on the other hand, views Cyrus’ misreading of Cyaxares’ letter as a favor Cyrus is doing his uncle: “he makes Cyaxares sound much better than he is when he says that Cyaxares is angry because he is fearful...Cyrus softens the bad news in his comment on the message...It was important to preserve morale in this case not just against the enemy but to prevent general mutiny. Cyrus clarifies this threat in his letter to Cyaxares, and in his later comment to Cyaxares that it is dangerous for him to show anger against his whole force because they will unite in full force against him” (273-4).
ἡμᾶς δὲ οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅ τι πράττομεν, ὀκνεῖ περί τε ἡμῶν καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἐπειδὰν δὲ αἴσθηται πολλοὺς μὲν
tῶν πολεμίων ἀπολωλότας, πάντας δὲ ἀπεληλαμένους, πρῶτον μὲν παύσεται φοβούμενος, ἐπειτα
gνώσεται, ὅτι οὐ νῦν ἔρημος γίγνεται, ἡνίκα οἱ φίλοι αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἐκείνου ἐχθροὺς ἀπολλύουσιν. ἀλλὰ μὴν
μέμψεώς γε πῶς ἐσμὲν ἄξιοι, εὖ τε ποιοῦντε ἐκεῖνο καὶ οὐδὲ ταῦτα αὐτοματίσαντες; ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν ἐκεῖνον
ἐπεισά ἐᾶσαί με λαβόντα ὑμᾶς ἐξελθεῖν· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ ὡς ἐπιθυμοῦντε τῆς ἐξόδου ἠρωτήσατε εἰ ἐξίοιτε καὶ
νῦν δεῦρο ἥκετε, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἐκείνου κελευσθέντες ἐξιέναι ὅτῳ ὑμῶν μὴ ἀχθομένῳ εἴη. καὶ ἡ ὀργὴ οὖν αὕτη
σάφ'
οἶδα ὑπό τε τῶν ἀγαθῶν πεπανθήσεται καὶ σὺν τῷ φόβῳ
λήγοντι ἄπεισι.

But I do not wonder at all, messenger and Medes, if Cyaxares, having then seen many enemies and not
knowing how we are faring, has misgivings both about us and about himself. Yet when he perceives that
many of the enemy have been destroyed, and that all have been driven away, he will first of all stop being
afraid, and then he will recognize that now he is not alone, since his friends have been destroying his
enemies. But how do we deserve blame, we who are benefiting him and are not even doing this on our own
initiative? For I then persuaded him to allow me to take you and go off, and you, unlike men who might
have desired this expedition, did not ask to depart and come here. Rather, you—whoever among you was
not annoyed to do so—came only after having been so ordered by him. His anger, I know clearly, will have
been assuaged by these successes and will vanish with the cessation of his fear.

Cyrus interprets Cyaxares’ message with the intention of deceiving his Median audience
(or teaching them how to deceive themselves). Cyaxares’ command is unambiguous and
just: the Medes must return to Cyaxares immediately. Cyrus, however, neutralizes
Cyaxares’ order through a sophistic reinterpretation.

Cyrus starts by laying the foundation for a rejection of this order. Despite the
clarity of Cyaxares’ commands, Cyrus suggests an alternative understanding of Cyaxares’
motivation. He says that Cyaxares doesn’t know “how we are faring, [and] has
misgivings both about us and about himself.” He interprets Cyaxares’ command as

746 Cyr., Δ.5.20-21. I leave out Δ.5.22, because it is not relevant to this discussion.
747 Reisert (2009) argues that “Cyrus does not corrupt the Medes; he takes advantage of their corruption,
and succeeds easily, even as a child” (302). He overlooks how skillfully Cyrus must balance and
manipulate what the Medes are told and encouraged to believe about Cyaxares in this scene, in the letter
he writes to Cyaxares, which I discuss below, and in the reconciliation scene, which I discuss in the next
chapter. Cyrus must work very hard to corrupt the Medes, who are not as barbaric as Cyrus and the
narrator imply; he corrupts them, but he corrupts them quite differently than he corrupts the Persians. As
Carlier (2010) puts it, “By acting this way, Cyrus contributes to the development of the idea among the
Medes that their king is a lazy sovereign and a sensual one” (344).
748 This highlights how farcical Cyrus’ position is here. Never in the history of armies has it been
permissible for soldiers to delay implementing a superior’s command until they had thoroughly and
publicly considered his motivations in giving the order and implementing the order only after finding
his motivations acceptable.
749 Tatum (1989) notes that “When he asks why Cyaxares should blame ‘us,’ Cyrus links himself with the
Medes as fellow victims of Cyaxares’ anger” (127).
being motivated not by anger at the betrayal (Cyrus forever insists that he only took the Medes and invaded Assyria at Cyaxares’ bidding)\textsuperscript{750}, but as motivated by an inappropriate, even motherly, concern over the well-being of his soldiers. Cyaxares wants the Medes to return so he can see if they are still safe, an effeminizing suggestion. He is cast as the mother who grows instantly concerned when her children leave her sight. The Medes need not obey Cyaxares’ command: they are safe and certainly don’t need Cyaxares’ ministrations. This motherly panic, Cyrus says, will leave Cyaxares when “he perceives that many of the enemy have been destroyed […] and then he will recognize that now he is not alone, since his friends have been destroying his enemies.” Cyaxares would not have given such an unnecessary command if he had been better informed about how well they were doing. It is perhaps a failure on Cyrus’ part that Cyaxares wasn’t better informed, but once Cyaxares knows what has transpired he won’t want the Medes to return—hence, they can stay with Cyrus. Thus we see that Cyrus undermines Cyaxares’ anger by attributing to it an inaccurate and condescending cause. He then moves on the offensive, associating himself with, and alienating Cyaxares from, the Medes by attacking the Median king.

Cyrus claims that Cyaxares was the originator of this campaign and implies that it is irrational for him to be upset now that the very campaign he initiated is underway. He says,

\begin{quote}
ἀλλὰ μὴν μέμψεώς γε πῶς ἐσμὲν ἄξιοι, εὖ τε ποιοῦντες ἑκέινον καὶ οὐδὲ ταῦτα αὐτοματίσαντες; ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ μὲν ἑκέινον ἔπεισα ἐᾶσαί με λαβόντα ὑμᾶς ἐξελθεῖν· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ ὡς ἐπιθυμοῦντες τῆς ἐξόδου ἠρωτήσατε εἰ ἐξίστω καὶ νόν δὲδρο ἰκετε, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἑκέινου κελευσθέντες ἐξίστων ὑμῶν μὴ ἀχθομένῳ εἴη.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{750} Cyr., E.5.21-22.

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But how do we deserve blame, we who are benefiting him and are not even doing this on our own initiative? For I then persuaded him to allow me to take you and go off, and you, unlike men who might have desired this expedition, did not ask to depart and come here. Rather, you—whoever among you was not annoyed to do so—came only after having been so ordered by him.\footnote{Cyr., ∆.5.21.}

We see in this passage that Cyrus has moved past patronizing and confusing Cyaxares’ motivations: now, Cyrus lies. Whereas, as we have seen, Cyrus initiated this campaign, he suggests to the Medes that Cyaxares initiated it.\footnote{Cyr., ∆.5.21.} Although Cyrus deliberately misled Cyaxares about the scope of the campaign and how many Medes he would borrow, Cyrus claims that all the Medes “came only after having been so ordered by [Cyaxares].”\footnote{Cyr., ∆.5.21.} This is a paradox: Cyrus claims that, because he and the Medes are obeying Cyaxares’ first order, they must ignore his second order.\footnote{As Nadon (2001) notes, ”And, more important, at no point has he ever ‘ordered’ anyone to follow Cyrus” (94). Cyrus is taking advantage of the limited audience in Cyaxares’ tent. The only men present were Cyaxares’ close friends—who were left behind with him (∆.5.8-9)—and Cyrus’ officers, who will certainly help conceal the truth. Cyrus later uses this strategy again to great effect when misleading the Medes about his ‘reconciliation’ with Cyaxares (E.5.37).} Since Cyaxares ordered them to attack the retreating Assyrians, the Medes should ignore his new command and stay.\footnote{Cf. Socrates in the Memorabilia: “after going to war, cities often make peace again. […] Then is there any difference, do you think, between belittling those who obey the laws on the ground that the laws may be annulled, and blaming those who behave well in the wars on the ground that peace may be made” (∆.4.14)? Danzig (2009) paraphrases this as Socrates “points out that the orders given by military leaders also change, but that it is nonetheless just to obey them as long as they are in force” (282). Cyrus’ overly-literal interpretation of Cyaxares’ command would be humorous if he were not so powerful.} Moreover, his command to return home should be disregarded because he was fearful when giving it. Finally, Cyrus returns to the topic of the beginning of his speech—that once Cyaxares realizes what has happened he will rescind the recall order. He says, “His anger, I know clearly, will have been assuaged by these successes and will vanish with the cessation of his fear.” Thus, this problem has arisen due to Cyaxares’ lack of knowledge about the
current situation of the Medes. In his speech to the Medes, Cyrus shows that while he wants to neutralize Cyaxares’ ability to command the obedience of his army through effemenizing him, he also wants to retain Cyaxares as a powerless figurehead from whom he derives some degree of legitimacy.\textsuperscript{756} We will return to the latter concern in more detail when we discuss the reconciliation meeting between the two men.

That Cyrus’ speech to the Medes is not genuine can be determined from the private letter he subsequently sends to Cyaxares.\textsuperscript{757} This private message bears little resemblance of his speech to the Medes. It is aggressive and threatening: in it, he accuses Cyaxares of ingratitude, betrayal, and inequity, and finally implicitly threatens him with isolation, abdication, and physical harm.\textsuperscript{758}

Cyrus begins his letter by specifically contradicting one of Cyaxares’ complaints.\textsuperscript{759} He starts by saying, “Κῦρος Κυαξάρῃ χαίρειν. ἡμεῖς σε οὔτε ἔρημον κατελίπομεν· οὐδεὶς γάρ, ὅταν ἐχθρῶν κρατῇ, τότε φίλων ἔρημος γίγνεται” (Cyrus to Cyaxares: Greetings. We did not leave you all alone, for no one is bereft of friends just

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{756} Nadon (2001), 96, says that Cyrus does not completely break off relations with Cyaxares because he knows he does not yet have the complete loyalty of the Medes.

\textsuperscript{757} My understanding of this letter is different from that of the modern scholars who discuss it. According to Tatum (1989), Cyrus’ “reply is as much as ever a matter of public record” (127). According to Nadon (2001), “This letter he contrives to read out loud before sending it, in order to allay whatever residual worry the Medes may harbor for having disobeyed their king’s explicit command” (94). However, the Greek in Δ.5.26 clearly states that Cyrus reads the letter aloud only to the messenger who was to carry it to Cyaxares so that he might answer any questions Cyaxares might have: “ὁ δὲ Κῦρος αὐτῷ ἐπέστελλε πρὸς μὲν Πέρσας λέγειν ἃ καὶ πρόσθεν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ δεδήλωται, Κυαξάρῃ δὲ ἀποδοῦναι τὰ γράμματα. ἀναγνῶντα τάδε (Δ.5.26).” My emphasis: this is read aloud to one person alone. It is, in fact, crucial for Cyrus that this letter is \textit{not} a matter of public record since it contradicts what Cyrus said to the Medes.

\textsuperscript{758} Gray (2011) does not discuss this letter in any detail—all she says is that “Cyrus clarifies this threat [of mutiny provoked by Cyaxares’ bestial anger] in his letter to Cyaxares” (274)—but it is in the context of her discussion of Cyrus’ patient and kind reaction to Cyaxares’ fury.

\textsuperscript{759} This does suggest, again, that the final and, to the readers, unseen draft of Cyaxares’ message to Cyrus and the Medes is not substantially different than the first draft that is relayed to the readers verbatim.
when he is conquering his enemies).\textsuperscript{760} This rejects Cyaxares’ complaint that he couldn’t believe that the Medes “would be willing to leave me so alone.”\textsuperscript{761} Cyrus deliberately misinterprets Cyaxares. Cyaxares is of course responding to Cyrus’ theft of his army, but Cyrus misrepresents this, and responds by trying to comfort Cyaxares, whom he pretends is scared of being alone. Thus Cyrus claims that he is in fact not alone (despite the obvious) because his friends are off conquering his enemies. In fact, as Cyrus says, Cyaxares has never been safer: “οὐδὲ μὴν ἀποχωροῦντές γέ σε οἰόμεθα ἐν κινδύνῳ καθιστάναι· ἀλλὰ δοσῳ πλέον ἀπέχομεν, τοσοῦτοι πλέονά σοι τὴν ἀσφάλειαν ποιεῖν νομίζομεν” (And we certainly do not think that by going away we put you at risk; but to the extent that we are farther away, we believe that we are making your safety that much greater...).\textsuperscript{762} Of course, Cyaxares, an experienced soldier, is not scared of combat or being alone; he simply wants his stolen army returned.\textsuperscript{763} Cyrus pretends to assume that Cyaxares couldn’t be upset about what he has done—after all, Cyrus literally did what Cyaxares ordered—but rather that he is upset at being alone—something he didn’t foresee about invasion he originated. Cyrus’ response emasculates Cyaxares as well: he reassures Cyaxares that he is, despite his panic, safe, and says that he is not “at risk,” that the Persians and Medes are “making your safety that much greater,” and they are putting Cyaxares “ἐν ἀκινδύνῳ καθιστᾶσι” (in a condition free from risk)\textsuperscript{764} as if, again, Cyaxares’ emotions were due to his terror of the Assyrians. Cyrus thus rejects Cyaxares’

\textsuperscript{760} Cyrus, \textit{D}.5.27
\textsuperscript{761} Cyrus, \textit{D}.5.10
\textsuperscript{762} Cyrus, \textit{D}.5.27
\textsuperscript{763} Tatum (1989) says of this sentence that Cyrus is “indicating clearly that he is sensitive to the pathos of Cyaxares’ situation—thereby suggesting that this situation is entirely one of Cyaxares’ own making”(127).
\textsuperscript{764} Cyrus, \textit{D}.5.28
complaint by misrepresenting Cyaxares’ anger and emasculating him. He then shifts to a new tack and goes on the offensive.

Cyrus then criticizes Cyaxares for the same sorts of ingratiations that he himself has actually committed.⁷⁶⁵ He says,

σκέψαι δὲ οἵῳ ὄντι μοι περὶ σὲ οἷος ὀν περὶ ἐμὲ ἐπειτὰ μοι μέμφῃ. ἐγὼ μὲν γέ σοι ἤγαγον συμμάχους, οὐχ ὅσους σύ ἐπείπτα, ἀλλ’ ὅποιον ἐγὼ πλείστους ἐδυνάμην· σὺ δὲ μὴ ἐδουκας μὲν ἐν τῇ φιλίᾳ ὅντι ὅσους πείσαι δυσασθεῖν· νῦν δ’ ἐν τῇ πολεμίᾳ ὅντας οὐ τὸν θέλοντα ἀλλὰ πάντας ἀποκαλεῖς, τοιαυτοῖς τοῦτο μὲν ὁμήρων ἀμφοτέρος ὑμῖν χάριν ὀφείλειν· νῦν δὲ σὺ μὲ ἀναγκάζεις σοῦ μὲν ἐπιλαθέσθαι, τοῖς δὲ ἀκολουθήσασι πειρᾶσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν χάριν ἀποδιδόναι. οὐ μέντοι ἔγω γε σοὶ ὅμοιος δύναμαι γενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν πέμπων ἐπὶ στράτευμα εἰς Πέρσας ἐπιστέλλω, [...] σοὶ ὑπάρχειν, οὐχ ὅπως ἂν θέλωσιν, ἀλλὰ ὅπως ἂν σὺ ὑπάρχεις, ἀλλ’ ὅπως ἂν σὺ με ὑπάρχεις αὐτοῖς.

Examine how I have acted toward you, and how you have acted toward me, when you then go on and blame me. I brought you allies, not merely as many as you persuaded to come, but fully as many as I was able to get, while you gave to me only as many as I was able to persuade to come, and at a time when I was in a friendly place. Now when I am in a hostile place, you recall not only whoever is willing to go, but everyone. Thus it is that previously I thought I owed gratitude to both of you, but now you compel me to forget you and try to repay all my gratitude to those who followed me. I, however, am not able to be like you, but even now, in sending to Persia for an army [...] for you] to use in whatever way you wish, not only in whatever way they are willing to be used.⁷⁶⁶

This is a most unfair presentation of the history of the two men.⁷⁶⁷ Cyrus claims to be the wounded party, which Cyaxares will see if he investigates the situation. He does not at first give reasons for his status as the wounded party, but he claims that it is self-evident for someone examining the situation to see that Cyaxares is acting unjustly and Cyrus justly. Although we have already investigated the situation and found fault with Cyrus, we shall reconsider the situation in light of Cyrus’ invitation to do so.

Cyrus’ first objection is that “I brought you allies, not merely as many as you

⁷⁶⁵ Nadon (2001) says that “Although Cyrus has himself just committed and continues to commit the offense that he accuses Cyaxares merely of intending—that is, leaving an ally defenseless and exposed in enemy territory—he maintains that his behavior is altogether different and above reproach” (95).
⁷⁶⁶ Cyrt., Δ.5.29-31
⁷⁶⁷ Tatum (1989) says that “Cyrus follows [the beginning of the letter] up with irrefutable arguments, and more than a hint of justified irritation. He is more direct than he has ever permitted himself to be with his uncle” (127).
persuaded to come, but fully as many as I was able to get...” But the only known reason that Cyrus was appointed general is that Cyaxares asked for him—Cyrus’ subsequent disrespect to Cyaxares must be called ungrateful.  

Secondly, Cyrus says that he brought not however many Persians as Cyaxares was able to persuade to come but as many as Cyrus was able to get. We can ignore the farcical suggestion that Cyaxares could have gone begging to Persia to individually persuade Persians to satisfy their treaty obligations—this is, of course, the Persian government’s job. Moreover, Cyrus’ words do not reflect what occurred when the Persian army was formed. Cyrus was not allowed to take part in the deliberation of the Persian council of elders about sending an army: at the time he was appointed general he did not request more troops, but accepted the soldiers offered him by the elders without comment. Yet he now claims that he personally persuaded more Persians than those originally granted him by the council to join his army. Even if what Cyrus says were true, Cyrus has forgotten how insulted Cyaxares was at the small size of the Persian contingent: if a mere 21,000 soldiers are all that Cyrus was bothered to get from the Persian government, 

768 Cyr., Δ.5.29.
769 The narrator makes it explicit that Cyrus was appointed because Cyaxares requested him: “He sent also to Cyrus, asking that he try to come as the ruler of the men […] for Cyrus had already completed his ten years among the youths and was among the mature men. So then, with Cyrus’ acceptance, the elders in council chose him as the ruler of the expedition to Media” (A.5.4-5). This is not to say that Cyrus would have not necessarily been chosen as general of the Persians if Cyaxares had not requested him, but this passage does say that Cyrus was chosen because Cyaxares asked for him.
770 Cyr., A.5.5: “They also allowed him to choose two hundred of the Peers, and in turn they allowed each of the two hundred to choose four, with each of these also to be from among the Peers. So this made one thousand. They ordered each of these one thousand to choose ten targeteers, ten slingers, and ten archers from among the Persian people.” That the Persian council chose to draft soldiers in this manner is curious. It seems to be a unique approach—why not allow Cyrus to personally choose more than only two hundred men of the 31,000 that follow him? Is this to minimize his influence on the men? Is it to ensure the input of men other than Cyrus in picking the composition of the army? Or is it simply for convenience and speed? Cf. Nadon (2001), 55.
Cyaxares might not owe him much at all.\textsuperscript{771}

Cyrus’ second objection is misleading as well: he says that “you gave to me only as many as I was able to persuade to come, and at a time when I was in a friendly place.”\textsuperscript{772} Cyrus makes the two situations seem parallel. He suggests that the Persians honoring their treaty with Media and sending a small number of soldiers is the equivalent of Cyaxares doing Cyrus a personal favor and allowing him to recruit any willing Medes. It’s not yet clear—it will be momentarily—why he stresses the location of the Median camp, ‘a friendly place,’ but he is otherwise straightforward. According to Cyrus, he did Cyaxares a personal favor by leading to Media as many Persian soldiers as he could gather. On the other hand, Cyaxares selfishly allowed him to recruit only whatever Medes were willing to follow him. Cyaxares is ungrateful. He contrasts Cyaxares’ ‘selfish’ recall of the Medes to Cyrus’ own (alleged, but fake) selflessness when he first mustered the Persian army: this contrast exposes Cyaxares’ shocking selfishness in comparison to Cyrus. His implication is that, if Cyaxares should have wanted to repay his obvious debt to Cyrus, he should have given him the Median army to use.\textsuperscript{773} Cyrus continues to attack Cyaxares in increasingly harsh terms.

Cyrus’ hostility increases as the letter continues. He has criticized the current situation; now he comes to Cyaxares’ recall order. Cyrus says, “Now when I am in a hostile place, you recall not only whoever is willing to go, but everyone.” Cyrus again

\textsuperscript{771} Cyaxares is upset by the miniscule number of homotimoi that Cyrus brought with him to Media (B.1.7) and twice requested (B.1.7; B.1.8) that Cyrus summon a larger army from Persia as soon as possible. Cyaxares would also need to forget that Cyrus twice refused outright to summon a larger army from Persia (B.1.7; B.1.8).

\textsuperscript{772} Cyr., Δ.5.29.

\textsuperscript{773} Even though Cyrus disparages Cyaxares for allowing him to take only the willing Medes, Cyrus himself proposed this. He said to Cyaxares, “But do not compel anyone; rather, grant me those who are willing to follow along” (Δ.1.19).
implies that Cyaxares is ungrateful. When Cyrus had asked him to borrow his whole army, Cyaxares selfishly allowed Cyrus to recruit only whichever Medes he could persuade. Now Cyaxares even more selfishly recalls all the Medes—not only those whom he could persuade. Cyrus’ response ignores any responsibility that the Medes might have to obey their commanding officer, and also ignores any responsibility that Cyrus might have to obey his own commanding officer—Cyaxares in both cases. In Cyrus’ rebuttal, he and Cyaxares are now of equal rank and Cyrus had done Cyaxares a favor by bringing his army to Media. Cyaxares is violating this relationship of equals (already ungratefully undermined when he allowed Cyrus to borrow only the Medes he could persuade) by recalling his army even though Cyrus had volunteered to help him. Moreover, we discover why Cyrus had stressed in the previous sentence the friendliness of the Median camp’s locale. Now that Cyrus and his army are in ‘a hostile place,’ Cyaxares’ request is even more unjust and ungrateful: if Cyrus were to allow the Medes to obey Cyaxares’ command, it would put the Persians, the Armenians and Hyrcanians in danger. Since Cyrus does not intend to return to Cyaxares soon, even though this was the plan he had told to Cyaxares (and the plan on which Cyaxares had predicated his decision to allow volunteers to accompany Cyrus), Cyaxares’ order would leave the Persians in a serious amount of danger. This danger could be easily avoided, of course: if

774 This is a hint that Cyrus has perhaps forgotten (or, more likely, is ignoring) the exact wording of the lies he used to convince Cyaxares to allow him to recruit some Median cavalry: he had said, as discussed above, that “We will not even pursue the main body of the enemy, for how would we catch them? But if we catch some part detached from the army, or left behind it, we will bring it back to you” (Δ.1.19). He had sold this campaign as a brief razzia against the retreating Assyrians, avoiding the main body of troops and merely grabbing some portable loot at which point he would return to Cyaxares. Surely, this has been accomplished already. He’s moved farther into Assyria, he has had his skirmish, and, according to his statement of intent, he should be returning to Cyaxares now—there could hardly be any danger to the Persians if Cyrus were following his stated plan because they should be returning along with the Medes.
Cyrus were to return to Cyaxares himself he would be in no danger whatsoever. Yet for Cyrus, there is no alternative: he will go deeper into Assyria, needs the Medes to do so, and opposition to this is incomprehensible and unjust. His personal benefit outweighs any concern for his men, the Medes, or his uncle.

Cyaxares can be perhaps forgiven for this ‘mistake’ of his (not that Cyrus does forgive him): Cyrus has changed his plans and hasn’t updated Cyaxares. When Cyaxares wrote the letter recalling the Medes, if he still believed anything of what Cyrus had told him in his tent, he should have expected Cyrus to return in a handful of days regardless of the number of Medes he took, since this is what he had implied his plan was. Yet Cyrus has forgotten the substance of the lies he told Cyaxares in his tent. That is to say, he attacks Cyaxares for his reckless recall of the Medes from this long-duration and dangerous expedition, even though they and the Persians, according to what Cyaxares had last heard, should be returning from a razzia in a handful of days.

Cyrus then returns to his old habit of attempting to shame Cyaxares. He says that “Thus it is that previously I thought I owed gratitude to both of you, but now you compel me to forget you and try to repay all my gratitude to those who followed me.” Until Cyaxares unjustly dared to give an order to his own army, Cyrus says, he had been deeply indebted to him (if we can believe this). As long as Cyaxares allowed Cyrus to do whatever he wanted without complaint, Cyrus owed him gratitude, however difficult it may be to believe Cyrus here. However, Cyrus says, now he owes no gratitude to Cyaxares and it is Cyaxares’ fault. The Median soldiers remain without blemish—Cyrus will still repay them—but he is chastising Cyaxares for doing something unthinkably...

775 Cyr, Δ.5.30.
rude and dangerous. Cyaxares has done him a favor by temporarily granting him (some of) the Median army, and Cyrus refuses to return the Medes even though Cyaxares has retracted his (abused) favor. This is, of course, ridiculous. Let us remember the king-as-father parallel throughout Xenophon. If Cyrus had asked Cyaxares if he could borrow some of his tools, and then taken all his tools to use as kindling, Cyaxares would be justly upset and right to reclaim them, even if Cyrus needed to cook dinner. Cyrus attempts to guilt Cyaxares one more time before changing topics.

Cyrus attacks Cyaxares by attempting to shame him again: he says that “I, however, am not able to be like you, but even now, in sending to Persia for an army […] for you] to use in whatever way you wish, not only in whatever way they are willing to be used.” There is a certain degree of irony for the reader here. In the context of the letter, Cyrus means that he is unable to be ungrateful like Cyaxares as he has painted him. Even after Cyaxares’ ungrateful command, Cyrus is generously willing to allow Cyaxares to have command of a detachment of Persians being sent to reinforce the Persian army

776 I have mentioned this elsewhere, but the narrator even mentions this parallel in the Cyropaideia’s introduction (A.1.1).
777 Cyr., Δ.5.31.
778 Nadon (2001) points out that “This offer is nothing if not insulting. In exchange for not sending back the borrowed cavalry as Cyaxares has ordered, Cyrus grants the future use of an unspecified force, which may or may not be forthcoming. Moreover, we recall (as must Cyaxares), that at the beginning of the war and when the situation appeared most critical, Cyrus refused to send for a larger army as something altogether impractical. But at least since the time of the Armenian expedition, he has himself been contemplating just such a measure. Indeed, in the time between the arrival of Cyaxares’ envoy and the public announcement of his message, Cyrus has already summoned the peers to a meeting at which they have agreed to send home for reinforcements. This was not done with a view to succoring Cyaxares or to recompensing him for the loss of his cavalry, but in order to have sufficient troops to guard their captured spoils and to assure themselves of ‘rule over Asia and its fruits’. Needless to say, by the time these troops arrive, Cyaxares can neither use nor maintain them, and he immediately sends them on to Cyrus” (95). I would add that it has been well established by this text that Persian infantry without Median cavalry is useless. Even if the Persian infantry were obedient to Cyaxares, it would be virtually useless without the Median cavalry (Δ.1.11).
(the first Cyaxares will have heard of these reinforcements). However, there is a distinct irony in what Cyrus says: he is unable to be like Cyaxares, to be ungrateful. In his insubordination to Cyaxares’ order, though, Cyrus is himself being ungrateful. He is placing himself ahead of his superior officer who had done many favors for him. He is overlooking the fact that without Cyaxares’ request, he may not have been placed in command of the Persian army. Indeed, without Cyaxares’ reluctant agreement, Cyrus would not have even been able to begin his invasion of Assyria because he would have had no cavalry. He is, it is true, unable to be like Cyaxares—Cyaxares has shown himself to be flexible and accommodating with Cyrus, enduring his insults and his sedition because he is family and he wanted to have a good relationship with Cyrus. Cyrus is, in reality, the ungrateful one, unable to compromise or respect Cyaxares because he always puts his own interests first. Thus this section ends on an ironic note.

The final section of Cyrus’ letter to Cyaxares moves from recriminations and ironic accusations of ingratitude to implied threats and a refusal to obey Cyaxares. Cyrus says:

συμβουλεύω δέ σοι καίπερ νεώτερος ὃν μὴ ἄφαιρεῖσθαι ἃ ἂν δῶς, ἵνα μὴ σοι ἀντὶ χαρίτων ἔχθραι ὀφείλωνται, μηδ’ ὅταν τινὰ βούλῃ πρὸς σὲ ταχὺ ἐλθεῖν, ἀπειλοῦντα μεταπέμπεσθαι, μηδὲ φάσκοντα ἔρημον εἶναι ἣμα πολλοῖς ἀπειλεῖν, ἵνα μὴ διδάσκῃς αὐτοῖς σοῦ μὴ φροντίζειν. ήμεῖς δὲ πειρασόμεθα παρεῖναι, ὅταν τάχιστα διαπραξόμεθα ἃ σοί τ’ ἄν καὶ ἡμῖν νομίζομεν πραχθέντα κοινὰ γενέσθαι ἁγαθά. ἔρρωσο.

Even though I am younger, I advise you not to take back what you give, lest enmity be owed you instead of gratitude; when you wish someone to come to you quickly, do not send for him with threats; and when you declare you are alone, do not deliver threats to large numbers, lest you teach them to think nothing of you.

779 Again, Cyrus’ façade is slipping—if, as he told Cyaxares, he was planning only on a short raid farther into Assyria and he doesn’t intend to engage with the main body of the Assyrians, why does he need these Persian reinforcements? He already has well over 100,000 soldiers—what on earth does he need more for? 780 Nadon (2001) notes that “the most galling section of the letter to be read out is its conclusion, in which Cyrus takes it upon himself to give his uncle some belated if well-timed instruction on how best to manage his own men...Implicit in Cyrus’s calm statement of the differences in strength between ‘us’ (we Persians, Medes, Armenians, Chaldeans, and Hyrcanians) and ‘you’ (the singular σοὶ, Cyaxares), is his willingness to take advantage of this imbalance” (95-6).
We will try to be back with you as soon as we accomplish what we believe would, when done, be goods in common for both you and us. Farewell.  

The end of this letter combines an implied threat with a taste of Cyrus’ political education. There are two implied threats in Cyrus’ three statements. First, Cyrus says that if Cyaxares keeps doing what he is currently doing, the Medes and Cyrus will hate him instead of feeling gratitude to him, the Medes and Cyrus will not come quickly, and the Medes and Cyrus will pay no attention to him. Despite what Cyrus says, this is already the situation that Cyaxares finds himself in. Perhaps this is what Cyrus means: it is Cyaxares’ fault alone that the Medes will not listen to his commands, and Cyrus’ actions and promises have nothing to do with their mutiny. However, this seems to be looking toward the future as well: if Cyaxares doesn’t learn from what Cyrus is saying and keeps trying to give orders to his own Median army, his Median army will no longer respect him or obey him, and will think of him as an object of mockery. Either way, whether Cyrus is talking about the present or the future, there is little for Cyaxares to do but be quiet and allow Cyrus to do whatever he wants: either way, the Medes will not obey him. Either he has ruined his ability to command the Medes by trying to contradict Cyrus, or the only way he can maintain respect, authority and the (theoretical) ability to command the Medes in the future is by not using his power to command them. There is also the hint in this section of a personal threat to Cyaxares, suggesting that if Cyaxares does not completely obey Cyrus something unpleasant might happen to him.

781 Cyr., Δ.5.32-33
782 Cyrus makes this threat despite the fact that in the previous portion of the letter, discussed above, he has already informed Cyaxares that he no longer feels gratitude toward him. He denies he feels gratitude to Cyaxares any longer and then moments later threatens that he will no longer feel gratitude to Cyaxares. He is perhaps getting lost in his threats and recriminations.
I would suggest that Cyrus is hinting abdication—or worse. Either Cyaxares can yield to Cyrus (and receive “goods in common for both you and us”) and *de facto* abdicate his throne, or be forced to *de jure* abdicate the throne. Cyaxares’ choice is to collaborate or lose everything. There is nothing Cyaxares could do at this point to avoid such a possibility except collaborate with Cyrus. Thus, this letter informs Cyaxares of his new responsibilities as figure-head monarch of Media—Cyrus has the real power and would prefer to maintain Cyaxares as king of Media as long as Cyrus himself controls the Median army.\(^7\) The choice is up to Cyaxares: either he can remain a quiet figurehead or he can (be forced to) abdicate.

Cyrus, in the conclusion of his letter, advises Cyaxares how to behave, notably overlooking the question of justice. Cyrus says,

> συμβουλεύω δὲ σοι καίπερ νεώτερος ὢν μὴ ἀφαιρεῖσθαι ἃ ἂν δῷς, ἵνα μὴ σοι ἀντὶ χαρίτων ὢφείλουσιν, μηδὲ ὅταν τινὰ βούλῃ πρὸς σὲ ταχὺ ἐλθεῖν, ἀπειλοῦντα μεταπέμπεσθαι, μηδὲ φάσκοντα ἔρημον εἶναι ἅμα πολλοῖς ἀπειλεῖν, ἵνα μὴ διδάσκῃς αὐτοὺς σοῦ μὴ φροντίζειν.

I advise you not to take back what you give, lest enmity be owed you instead of gratitude; when you wish someone to come to you quickly, do not send for him with threats; and when you declare you are alone, do not deliver threats to large numbers, lest you teach them to think nothing of you.\(^8\)

This advice is focused on the external and superficial, not justice, as would perhaps be appropriate for the situation. We see here an example of Cyrus’ general tendency to value the façade over the reality.\(^9\) In this situation Cyrus’ advice is informed by his tendency

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\(^7\) Nadon (2001) says that Cyrus is “careful to avoid an open breach with his uncle and still holds out the possibility of their sharing ‘common goods’ in the future. Outright disobedience or the staging of an open coup might cast doubts on the justice of his dealings with Cyaxares and perhaps raise suspicions in the minds of his other allies about his reliability or their own ultimate fate” (96).

\(^8\) *Cyr.*, Δ.5.42.

\(^9\) It would be possible to suggest that Cyrus is just trying to defend a situation in which, if he focuses on the morality of his and Cyaxares’ actions, he would come out the worst, so he concentrates on the superficial. However, this focus on the superficial and external parallels his focus in other sections in the text. For example, Cyrus, when talking with his father says, “You are saying, father, that for having obedient subjects, nothing is more effectual than to seem to be more prudent than they[…] And how, father would someone be able to furnish himself with such a reputation as quickly as possible”
to focus on the superficial: do not take back what you gave\textsuperscript{786} lest the recipients start to feel enmity for you. Secondly, when a person wants someone to come quickly he should not threaten. Finally, when someone is alone he should not threaten large numbers of subordinates, lest they ignore him. These three statements can all be characterized by a disregard for the justice of the situation. Cyrus does not consider whether the man is justified in taking back what he gave, in summoning other men angrily, or threatening large numbers. In other words, Cyrus’ advice advocates skill in manipulating men regardless of justice—it is pure utilitarianism.\textsuperscript{787} It looks bad for Cyaxares to recall the army he ‘gave’ to Cyrus: it makes him look ungrateful to Cyrus. He should not threaten a subordinate when he wants him to come quickly, because it makes him seem harsh (even if the subordinate has done something heinous). Finally, he should not threaten, as a solitary person, a group of subordinates because it makes him seem impotent and easy to disregard (regardless of what they have done). Presumably Cyrus would, with honeyed words, lure in a subordinate/group of subordinates before ambushing them once they are in his power. This is not justice.

Cyrus has completely forgotten (or rejected) the one lesson from his childhood that the narrator has explicitly related for his readers. When discussing his knowledge of justice with his mother, Cyrus says that he knows that

\footnotesize{(A.6.22)}? Appearances matter more to Cyrus to substance. His father tells him the best road to seeming virtuous is to be virtuous, but Cyrus seems to have been unconvinced by this.

\textsuperscript{786} This in itself is an audacious statement: Cyaxares did not give the Median army to Cyrus, he merely lent a small portion of it. Cyrus steals the whole of it without giving Cyaxares a chance to object. Given that the army was not given by Cyaxares, how can Cyrus honestly object to its recall? He does not own it—he was borrowing it. That he was not done with it yet should not enter into the question. It’s not Cyrus’ to reject Cyaxares’ recall of his own army.

\textsuperscript{787} Xenophon’s Socrates does not think rhetorical flourishes and manipulative persuasion is unimportant. He, however, uses such tactics to teach justice, not obscure it (A.2.1 ff.)
ὁπότε δὲ κρῖναι δέοι ποτέρου ὁ χιτὼν εἴη, τοῦτ’ ἔφη σκεπτέον εἶναι τίς κτῆσις δικαία ἐστί, πότερα τὸ βία ἀφελόμενον ἔχειν ἢ τὸ ποιησάμενον ἢ πριάμενον κατεύθυνε: ἐπεὶ δὲ [ἔφη] τὸ μὲν νόμιμον δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ ἄνομον βίαιον, σὺν τῷ νόμῳ ἐκέλευεν ἑνὸς τὸν δικαστὴν τῆς ψῆφου τίθεσθαι.

one must judge to whom the tunic belongs, then one must examine, he [the teacher] said, what is just possession, whether it is what is taken away by force or to possess what [one has] made or purchased. Since, he [the teacher] said, the lawful is just, and the unlawful violent, he ordered that the judge always cast his vote in conformity with the law.  

This is precisely what Cyrus is refusing to do here: he is refusing to examine just possession: it is unjust for Cyrus to possess Cyaxares’ army, having taken it away unlawfully and, therefore, violently. His emphasis on the external covers up (or at least means to do so) this obvious truth. He has stolen his superior’s army and it is unjust for him to refuse to return it. Cyaxares, though Cyrus might disparage him, is completely justified in recalling the army he ’lent’ to Cyrus; he is equally justified in threatening them when ordering them to come quickly; finally, he is similarly justified in threatening the whole of the Medes if they don’t comply. Cyrus has committed a serious injustice by stealing Cyaxares’ army and he has lead the Medes, knowingly or unknowingly, into committing an injustice as well.  

The School would require Cyrus to investigate this situation from a non-selfish point of view. The discipline of the Medes would require them to obey their superior and legitimate officer, despite the greed that Cyrus has stirred up. Cyrus, in ignoring Cyaxares, is acting unjustly. He has effectively stolen Cyaxares’ army—he has,

788 Cyrc., A.3.17

789 Even if the Median army ‘fits’ Cyrus better, it is not his to wear. Danzig (2009), however, argues that this is in fact the point of the Cyropaideia. He argues that “As long as we assume that the most politically and militarily useful distribution of goods and offices is also the most useful to the leader, and also the most just distribution, the problem of distribution and redistribution will find a natural solution in practice” (274). In other words, Cyaxares loses control over the Median army because he is less effective at paying off his subordinates than Cyrus is; this is justified because “By saving his uncle from his enemies (4.5.27-33; 5.5.8-38) and allowing him to retain the throne of Media, Cyrus grants him a degree of authority consistent with the pressures of military and political realities” (293).
like one boy, stolen another boy’s shirt—but, since he has also appointed himself judge, he has decided that his actions are just and Cyaxares’ unjust. Surely, if the bigger boy were asked to judge his theft, he would say it was just—if he had thought it incorrect he would not have stolen the shirt in the first place. Cyrus pretended to learn as a boy: he created a façade of conformity behind which he hid his own unjust and violent beliefs. Cyrus’ action is a complete perversion of justice, yet efficacious politics, or, perhaps, criminal effectiveness.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that we see a change in the dynamics of the relationship between Cyrus and Cyaxares. At the beginning, Cyrus uses his position as leader of the Persian army to discredit and undermine Cyaxares by humiliatingly questioning his intelligence and tactical skill. After obtaining control of the Median army through a combination of lies and manipulation, Cyrus further discredits Cyaxares by effemenizing him before the Median soldiers and threatening him in a private letter. We have seen, in other words, how Cyrus operates: he has no commitment to truth, virtue or moderation. Everything he does is to further his own acquisition of power and everyone is expendable once they obstruct his plans. He gives Cyaxares bad tactical advice in an attempt to humiliate him before his men; he lies and manipulates him in an attempt to get him to lend some of his cavalry; he manipulates the Medes by dismissing Cyaxares’ concerns as effete and meaningless; he threatens Cyaxares with abdication or death to encourage him to isolate himself from the Median army. At no point does Cyrus consider whether his actions are in the best interest of the Persian state or the Median state,
whether Cambyses would approve, or whether his actions were just or defensible: everything he does is to aid his acquisition of power in order to further his attempts to create a world-empire. The total lack of empathy he showed when living in Media as a child is very much on display here as well: that he has betrayed his uncle, emasculated him, humiliated him before his soldiers and subordinates, that he has removed his ability to function as king of Media—none of this concerns Cyrus, since he always puts himself first. In the next chapter, we will see this behavior taken to its natural, if extreme, conclusion, when Cyrus and Cyaxares are reunited; Cyaxares has realized what kind of man Cyrus is and attempts to get Cyrus to see the truth about himself.
Chapter Five: Domination

In Chapter Three I argued that it is possible to see that Cyrus wears a mask of human decency when it is in his interest, but it is only a mask; in Chapter Four I argued that once Cyrus felt he could no longer benefit from Cyaxares he began to undermine him until he has usurped his authority, at which point he began to treat him as an enemy. In this chapter, I discuss the reunion of Cyrus and Cyaxares. I argue that during this meeting, Cyaxares attempts to convince Cyrus to return his army to him by proving to Cyrus, in increasingly vivid and harsh terms, the true depth of Cyrus’ injustice in stealing his army. Cyrus, on the other hand, wants to get Cyaxares to admit that Cyrus was completely correct in what he did not only to Cyrus but before the Median army. As Cyrus comes to realize that Cyaxares is not going to yield to him, he stops listening, forces Cyaxares to stop talking, and then manipulates Cyaxares into ’admitting’ to the Medes that Cyrus was correct after all.

This passage has been singled out as being of particular interest to scholars: it is generally agreed that Cyaxares at least seems to speak the truth. Gera says that “Cyaxares’ reply is the most interesting and curious feature of our dialogue” because she finds Cyaxares’ words here so surprising. She says that “Cyaxares’ method of argument here is a variation on Socrates’ technique of applied analogies in the Memorabilia” and notes that “Cyaxares, like his father Astyages before him, is a tyrant and one would not have expected him to describe his rule in such terms. The Mede, in seeing excellence as

790 Gera (1993), 103.
the real source of his power, sounds like his brother-in-law Cambyses, or, for that matter, Socrates. Tatum explicitly states that Cyaxares is right, but in keeping with his overall approach, argues that the truth is wrong and Cyrus is correct to suppress it: he says that “Cyaxares’ analogies are to the point and dangerously compelling. The further he goes, the closer he gets to a true description of the matter.” Tatum later notes that Cyaxares’ complaints have the ring to truth to them and must be stopped at once. Cyaxares is coming dangerously close to articulating Cyrus’ strategies by exposing their effect, if not their artifice. Nadon similarly notes that Cyrus does not want the truth to be discussed at this meeting. Gray views this as an example of Xenophon’s leadership skills, how a good leader reconciles himself to an offended subordinate.

When Cyrus returns from his first invasion of Assyria, he summons Cyaxares to publicly approve of what he has done with the Perso-Mede army and approve of any future plans he would come up with. Cyrus apparently expects Cyaxares to be so emotionally broken that he would act as a rubber stamp, granting Cyrus clear and undisputed authority over the Medes. In his confidence he summons Cyaxares and makes no special preparations for his arrival. Cyaxares, however, has not yet been broken: he retains enough pride to publicly embarrass Cyrus. When Cyaxares arrives, he

εἶδε σὺν μὲν τῷ Κύρῳ πολλούς τε καὶ καλούς καὶ ἀγαθούς ἑπομένους, σὺν αὐτῷ δὲ ὀλίγην τε καὶ ὀλίγου ἀξίαν θεραπείαν, ἄτιμόν τι αὐτῷ ἔδοξεν καὶ ἄχος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν. ἐπεὶ δὲ καταβὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου ὁ Κῦρος προσῆλθεν ὡς φιλήσων αὐτὸν κατὰ νόμον, ὁ Κυαξάρης κατέβη μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου, ἀπεστράφη δὲ·

792 Tatum (1989), 131.
793 Tatum (1989), 132.
794 Nadon (2001), 97.
796 Cvr., E.5.1.
καὶ ἐφίλησε μὲν οὔ, δακρύων δὲ φανερὸς ἦν.

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, and he was seized by grief. When Cyrus got down from his horse and approached in order to kiss him according to custom, Cyaxares got down from his horse but turned away. He did not kiss him but was crying visibly.  

His tears and silence are extremely dangerous to Cyrus: more persuasively than any speech he could have given, Cyaxares instantly proves that Cyrus’ speech to the Medes, in which he had claimed Cyaxares completely approved of Cyrus’ use of the Median army, was a lie. Cyrus sees that Cyaxares threatens to destroy all his pretenses and deceptions with his silent tears.

Cyrus must think quickly: Cyaxares will clearly not publicly rubber-stamp Cyrus’ theft of the Median army; he may even start to say things hostile to Cyrus at any second. Cyrus leaps into action and “next bade all the others stand apart and be at ease, and he himself took Cyaxares’ right hand and led him away off the road and under some palm trees. He ordered some Median rugs to be put down for him, and he sat him

797 Cyr., E.5.6. Here we see the narrator make a brief return to his old habit of interpreting the actions of his characters. Cyaxares’ tears are not left entirely ambiguous until they are later explained in the conversation between Cyaxares and Cyrus, but he gives a rough and vague reason for them. I do not consider this a full return to his previous custom, however, as his analysis of Cyaxares' tears does not mislead and does not (implicitly) present cryptic information that the narrator alone has access to: rather, Cyaxares wears his emotions on his sleeve here and his tears are clearly connected to what he says to Cyrus in the subsequent meeting. That is to say, the narrator is supplying additional information in order to explain something otherwise potentially obscure; he is not interpreting but explaining.

798 Cyr., Δ.5.20-22. I discuss this speech in Chapter Four.

799 Gera (1993) notes that the Cyropaideia becomes Herodotean here, since we see Cyrus overcoming a hostile Median king, even if it is not Astyages (100). Too (1998) argues that “In book 2 Cyrus fails to attire himself to impress the Indian leader as Cyaxares had commanded (2.4.1-8); however, in book 5 the prince takes a cohort of allies, including Medes, Armenians, Hyrcanians, and others, to impress and in this way to disclose his power […] to his uncle when he meets him. So effective is this display of power that when Cyaxares observes his nephew's army, he considers himself dishonoured […] by his own motley retinue […]” 294-5. Cyaxares is not upset by the apparent strength of Cyrus' army, however, but its actual strength: inasmuch as more than half of Cyrus' army is comprised of Median soldiers who should be obedient to Cyaxares, Cyaxares is upset because he has been left effectively impotent by one who should not have betrayed him.

800 Tatum says that “With this attempt at a public show of affection out of the way, Cyrus abruptly changes course. He becomes an intimate and confidant, ordering all his men to draw back and wait” (129).
Cyrus quickly sends the Medes and Persians back and leads Cyaxares into an isolated part of the camp before he has a chance to speak. Cyrus ensures that nobody but himself can hear him. We thus see Cyrus reenact, in a small way, his entire history with Cyaxares: he and Cyaxares argue, which problem Cyrus resolves by isolating Cyaxares from the Median soldiers. This time, however, Cyaxares is not forced to the recourse of letters to address the injustice of Cyrus’ actions: face-to-face with Cyrus, he verbally attacks his nephew.

Cyaxares is given the opportunity to prove that what Cyrus has done is unjust: his arguments prove to be powerful. Although Cyrus tries to defend himself, we will see that he eventually loses interest in this conversation. Cyaxares’ first attack on Cyrus’ actions is quite powerful:

"Ὅτι, ὦ Κῦρε, δοκῶν γε δὴ ἐφ' ὅσον ἀνθρώπων μνήμη ἐφικνεῖται καὶ τῶν πάλαι προγόνων καὶ πατρὸς βασιλέως πεφυκέναι καὶ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς νομιζόμενος εἶναι, ἔμαυτὸν μὲν ὄρω ὦτῳ ταπεινός καὶ ἀναξίως ἔλαυνοντα, σὲ δὲ τῇ ἐμῇ θεραπείᾳ καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ δυνάμει μέγαν τε καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῆ παρόντα. καὶ ταῦτα χαλεπὸν μὲν οἶμαι καὶ ὑπὸ πολεμίων παθεῖν, πολὺ δ', ὦ Ζεῦ, χαλεπώτερον ψφ' ὅν ἦκιστα ἔχρην ταῦτα πεπονθέναι. ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ἄρα δεκάκις ἂν κατὰ τῆς γῆς καταδῦναι ἥδιον ἢ ὀφθῆναι οὕτω ταπεινὸς καὶ ἰδεῖν τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐμοὶ ἀμελήσαντας καὶ ἐπεγγελῶντας ἐμοί. οὐ γὰρ ἀγνοῶ τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ σύ μοι μόνον μείζων εἶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἐμοὶ δοῦλοι ἰσχυρότεροι ἐμοὶ ὑπαντιάζουσι καὶ κατεσκευασμένοι εἰσίν ὥστε δύνασθαι ποιῆσαι μᾶλλον ἐμὲ κακῶς ἢ παθεῖν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ.

Because, Cyrus, I think that I am a natural descendant of a father who was a king and of ancestors who were kings for as far back as the memory of human beings reaches, and I believe that I myself am a king. Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this humiliating and unworthy fashion, and I see you present here, great and magnificent, accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power. I think that it is harsh to suffer these things even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them: I think that 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. I am not ignorant of this, that not only are you greater than I, but even my slaves are stronger than I in this present encounter, and they have been so prepared that they have the power to do me more harm than they can suffer at my hands."

The following are Cyaxares’ first complaints: although a king descended from kings he

801 Cyr., E.1.7. Gera (1993) notes that when Cyrus begins to cry in response to Cyaxares’ tears, “Cyrus’ tears are less heartfelt: in any event, he is the first to recover from weeping” (101).
802 Cyr., E.5.8-9
feels humiliated because his junior Cyrus has become more magnificent than him; this
disparity has come about because Cyrus has stolen the obedience of the Medes; it is
even worse that he lost his power because of Cyrus, rather than an enemy; finally, even
Cyaxares’ slaves now have more power than he does.

Cyaxares speaks calmly and reasonably: he summarizes the situation without the
froth of a man in the grips of an animal fury.\textsuperscript{803} Cyaxares’ initial critique runs along three
lines: he defines kingship; he states how Cyrus has violated his rights; then he defines
Cyrus’ rights. Thus his first attempt to regain his army is an attempt to logically prove to
Cyrus that he has acted unjustly.

Cyaxares views the power of a king deriving from two points of origin.\textsuperscript{804} First, he
notes that “I am a natural descendant of a father who was a king and of ancestors [who
were kings] for as far back as the memory of human beings reaches, and I believe that I
myself am a king.”\textsuperscript{805} Cyaxares argues that one justifies occupying a throne (partially)
through the legitimacy derived from dynastic ancestry: Cyaxares deserves to be king, and
is king, because his father, grandfather, and further ancestors occupied the same throne
that he occupies today. A kingdom is something like an \textit{oikos}: one cannot simply steal an
estate and claim to justly own it: the kingdom was Cyaxares’ inheritance from his father
and he alone can justly control it.

Secondly, Cyaxares argues that a king also derives legitimacy from his army: the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{803} Contra Gray (2011), 272; 273.
\textsuperscript{804} Gera (1993) says that “The emphasis here on Cyaxares’ ancient royal lineage […] is curious, for Cyrus
of the \textit{Cyropaedia} is also the son of a long-established royal house […], so Xenophon may be hinting
here at other versions of Cyrus’ origins” (99). I think the distinction that Cyaxares is making, though, is
between himself as scion of the Median dynasty and Cyrus as Persian dynast: while Cyrus is the son of
Mandane, that claim in itself does not trump Cyaxares’ rights as Median king.
\textsuperscript{805} \textit{Cyr.}, E.5.8.
\end{flushright}
royal army is (or at least should be) obedient to the king: “Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this humiliating and unworthy fashion, and I see you present here, great and magnificent, accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power.”

Because of the power of a king’s loyal army, the manifestation of the king’s power, that king is respected and glorified: he gains legitimacy. Cyrus has taken Cyaxares’ army—the king’s power—and now it is Cyrus alone who possesses the power and respect which had previously been Cyaxares’. Whereas the Median army should be loyal and obedient to the Median king, they now, as Cyaxares says, seem to be “neglecting [...] and laughing at” him. Cyaxares portrays this as a violation of what is normal and just:

In essence, Cyaxares accuses Cyrus of usurping him as king of Media in all but name. First, Cyrus has deliberately ignored Cyaxares’ legitimacy claim to the throne of Media which derives from his connection to the Median dynasty. Secondly, Cyrus has caused the Median army to treat Cyrus as if he is king of Media. Cyrus controls the Median army so he is de facto king of Media. They treat Cyaxares as if he is not the king of Media even though he is the, of course, the king. Despite reservations on the part of

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806 Cyr. E.5.8.
807 Luccioni (1948) says, “Le monarque, disposant d’une grande force militaire, indispensable au maintien de son autorité” (206).
808 Cyr. E.5.9.
809 Gera (1993) says that Cyrus is “in effect on trial, facing a charge of ἀδικία, for the question to be decided is whether or not Cyrus has done wrong” (102). Seager (2001) develops an argument from the Mem. that is relevant here: he argues that Xenophon “is far more concerned with another civic duty, that of doing what one is told, τὸ προστατόμενον. Some passages deal with the essential question of what constitutes a legitimate source of such an order. An anonymous interlocutor makes a fundamental point, with which Socrates seems to agree (M. 3.9.11): the right to give orders is an attribute of the ruling power, whatever that may be” (392). Not only does this help explain why Cyrus’ behavior is unjust—by refusing to obey a legitimate command from a superior he has failed to uphold this civic virtue—but why Cyaxares is so upset at what has occurred. If “the right to give orders is an attribute of the ruling power,” and Cyaxares no longer has the right to give orders to his army because he will be ignored, then he is, in effect if not legally, no longer the king of Media.

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some, Cyaxares indirectly accuses Cyrus here of usurping his authority and role as king of Media in all but the most irrelevant trappings of the throne.810 Cyaxares has thus argued logically: using uncontentious definitions of kingship, he has argued that Cyrus has overstepped what is just and violates Cyaxares’ rights as king. His next attempt is to persuade Cyrus emotionally.

Cyaxares argues that the part of this most difficult for him to accept is that this situation has befallen him even though he has not lost a war: “I think that it is harsh to suffer these things even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them.”811 Cyaxares states that it would be terrible but endurable—or at least something he had mentally prepared for—if he had seen his country captured, his army suborned to another man, and his power broken—by the Assyrians. Cyaxares led the Medes to a total victory over the Assyrians but, amid this victory, suffered from his nephew what he would have suffered from the Assyrians. That he says he suffered these things “at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them”812 is an attempt to produce an empathetic response in Cyrus through appeals to their close bonds.

Cyaxares draws Cyrus’ attention to their close relationship. First, they are closely related: Cyrus is the son of Mandane, Cyaxares’ sister. Secondly, Cyrus is not a king and so, if we recall Cyaxares’ first point, he possesses no inherent right to an army or power. In fact, the only reason he was appointed leader of the Persian army at all was because Cyaxares had personally asked for him to be appointed. Not only is Cyrus Cyaxares’

810 Due (1989), 60.
811 Cyr., E.5.9.
812 Cyr., E.5.9.
junior relative and subordinate officer, but he is in a position of power solely because of a favor Cyaxares did him. What Cyrus has done is unjust for all these reasons: he has disrespected Cyaxares as his uncle, trampling on their familial relationship; he has disrespected Cyaxares as a superior officer, disregarding his obligations of loyalty and subordination; he has disrespect Cyaxares even though he owes a great amount of gratitude to him due to being appointed to this position of power solely through Cyaxares’ intercession. He argues that Cyrus has acted viciously and ungratefully.

At the end of this first speech, Cyaxares changes his approach again. First, he used logic; second, he used an appeal to empathy; now, he attempts to use an analogy to drive his point home. He says, “(ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἐμοὶ δοῦλοι ἰσχυρότεροι ἐμοῦ ὑπαντιάζουσί μοι καὶ κατεσκευασμένοι εἰσὶν ὥστε δύνασθαι ποιῆσαι μᾶλλον ἐμὲ κακῶς ἢ παθεῖν ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ (I am not ignorant of this, that not only are you greater than I, but even my slaves are stronger than I in this present encounter, and they have been so prepared that they have the power to do me more harm than they can suffer at my hands).” The Greek, particularly the verb ὑπαντιάζουσί, makes it clear that Cyaxares is not referring to slaves he owns but that he, in fact, calls the Median soldiers his 'slaves.' Because of Cyrus, he has encountered his slaves—his army—and is powerless before to them. At first, this seems to be the evidence we need to confirm that Cyaxares is truly a tyrant: he calls free Median citizens, his own soldiers no less, ’slaves.’ If Cyaxares thinks of these men as

813 Cyr., A.5.4-5. Due says that although Cyaxares is technically Cyrus’ superior officer, Xenophon is not interested in this fact (60). This seems to be contradicted, however, by the detail of this conversation in which Cyrus attempts to justify to Cyaxares what he has done.

814 Cyr., E.5.9.

815 A more literal (if more awkward in English) way to translate the important clause would be “…that not only are you alone greater than I, but my slaves also come to meet me stronger than I…” My translation.

his slaves, one may suspect that he does indeed have a tyrannical nature. Yet, before we rush to agree that Cyaxares is a slave, let us consider an alternate reading of this line.

Cyaxares has already defined how a monarch may be legitimate—a logical argument—and has attempted to appeal to Cyrus’ empathy—an emotional argument. What Cyaxares attempts in these initial arguments is to prove to Cyrus that what Cyrus has done is unjust. Should Cyrus realize this, there is a possibility he would do the just thing and return Cyaxares’ army. Cyaxares wants to persuade Cyrus to do a thing that is contrary to what Cyrus thinks is in his own best interest. Thus when he labels his soldiers his ‘slaves,’ we must place this in the context of Cyaxares’ near-impossible attempt to persuade Cyrus to return his army.

We may suggest an interpretation of Cyaxares’ labeling of his soldiers as ‘slaves’ that does not unexpectedly and belatedly prove his tyranny. Rather, he employs an analogy as a third method of proving to Cyrus that his actions are unjust. He moves the register of his argument from the political to the domestic level to show the injustice of this situation from another angle. The once all-powerful master of a household is now weaker than his domestic slaves! Rather than pointing out for a third time that he is a king ignored by his army, he paints himself as the master of an oikos disrespected by his own slaves; his slaves are now able to harm him and he cannot defend himself against them. This inverts the natural order of things. In other words, Cyaxares does not think of the Medes as his slaves, but instead he is varying his argument by comparing the

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817 Gray (2011) indeed says that “There is also a perceived threat in the offence, in this version of the story; Cyaxares believes his former ‘slaves’ may do him some harm after joining Cyrus” (237).
818 The parallel between king/general and father/master of a household is raised by the narrator in the Cyropaideia’s introduction (A.1.1; A.1.2).
relationship between king and soldiers to that between a master and his slaves. This is an attempt to awaken a degree of empathy in Cyrus by encouraging him to view the situation through another lens: Cyrus has, in effect, violated his uncle’s household by robbing him of his domestic staff.

Cyaxares has drawn an analogy between what has transpired politically between Cyrus and Cyaxares and a hypothetical domestic parallel. This parallel is not difficult to understand. Cyrus’ actions are as if a man woke up the morning after lending his nephew two of his slaves only to find that his nephew had taken all but two of his slaves. When he sent a message to his nephew asking for his slaves back, his nephew replied with a patronizing letter about how his uncle was deficient in leadership skills. He then mocked his uncle in a speech to the slaves. The nephew simultaneously assures his uncle that, whatever he is doing with the slaves, it is in the uncle’s best interest. The nephew thereby justifies his refusal to return the slaves by claiming he is also concerned that his immoderate uncle, who is actually mad at the slaves and not him, might beat the slaves in his fury and admits he will never return them because of this. This is of course all ridiculous. The nephew has justified his actions by saying that it is in his uncle’s best interest that the nephew continue to possess the slaves— that he is better suited to control them— but the uncle might fairly object that his nephew has appointed himself both judge and primary beneficiary of his judgment: he is hardly the most appropriate or fair judge.819 In reality, of course, this entire situation is risible: the uncle would simply go to

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819 Danzig (2009) argues that this is the point of the Cyropaideia. He says that “Cyrus’ career consists primarily of acts of redistributive justice by which he removes ‘big coats’ from their small owners, and the principles he relies on in doing so may be taken to represent his principles of just redistribution. Cyrus almost invariably distributes goods and offices in relation to merit, understood as the ability to contribute to the community’s victory over its enemies in political and military confrontations” (272). He later adds that “One of Xenophon’s aims in Cyropaedia is to show how such a leader could arise by
the courts and his nephew’s actions would be condemned as the theft. This is the difficulty Cyaxares faces and where his analogy breaks down: the judge he must convince of the injustice of Cyrus’ actions is, of course, Cyrus himself. Although we—and likely Cyaxares—should not expect Cyaxares to succeed, we can appreciate that his analogy exposes one of the great threats of Cyrus’ system of government: Cyrus sets himself up as judge even of the matters in which he has personal interest. There should be no expectation of a fair trial with Cyrus as judge.

Cyaxares breaks off his speech at this point. Cyrus responds, starting by deliberately confusing and misinterpreting what Cyaxares said. Cyrus speaks as if he had just listened to Cyaxares froth and foam about the behavior of the Medes, instead of giving a logical and passionate argument exposing Cyrus’ crimes. Cyrus says,

Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν, ὦ Κυαξάρη, οὔτε λέγεις ἀληθῆ οὔτε ὀρθῶς γιγνώσκεις, εἰ οἴει τῇ ἐμῇ παρουσίᾳ Μήδους κατεσκευάσθαι ὥστε ἱκανοὺς εἶναι σὲ κακῶς ποιεῖν· τὸ μέντοι σε θυμοῦσαι και φοβεῖσθαι οὐ θαυμάζω. εἰ μέντοι γε δικαίως ή ἀδίκως αὐτοῖς χαλεπαίνεις, παρήσω τοῦτο· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι βαρέως ἄν φέρουσι ὑπὸ ἕμους ἑυποτικών ἐκείνων ἕπερ ἄρχοντα πᾶσιν ἁμα χαλεπαίνειν τοῖς ἀρχομένοις, τοῦτο ἐμοί δοκεῖ μέγα ἁμάρτημα εἶναι. ἀνέκη γὰρ διὰ τὸ πολλοὺς μὲν φοβεῖν πολλοὺς ἔρημος θυμοῦσιν ποιεῖσθαι, διὰ δὲ τὸ πάσιν ἁμα χαλεπαίνειν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς χαλεπαίνειν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς ἐμούς ἐμφάσεων ἐμμίσθησαν. ὃν ἔνεκα, εὖ ἴσθι, ἐγὼ σὺν ἀπέστειλαν ἁν ἐμαυτοῦ τούτους, ψευδώς καὶ τούτους ἡμᾶς κακοῦσιν. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐμοῦ παρόντος ἄσφαλεῖς ἔχει σοι·

But in this, Cyaxares, you neither speak the truth nor judge correctly, if you think that Medes have been so prepared by my presence that they are capable of harming you. I do not wonder, however, that your spirit is roused and that you are afraid. As for whether you are justly or unjustly severe with them, however I shall let this go, for I know that you would not take it well if you should hear me making a defense on their behalf. It seems to me to be a great error, however, for a man who is a ruler to be severe with all his subjects at the same time: He must of necessity, by frightening many, make many enemies, and by being severe with them all at the same time, he must of necessity instill the same attitude in them all. This is why, I assure you, I did not sent these troops back without me, for I was afraid that your anger might provoke something painful for all of us. Since I am now present with the gods’ [help], this is now no danger for you.590

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a process of ’natural selection’. On this view, political realities generate pressures which encourage the promotion of leaders competent in distributive and redistributive justice. Those leaders who distributions and redistributions are so useful that hey gain them political and military power have an inherent tendency to gain control of the political community and will do so if social conditions permit” (274).

820 Cyrr., E.5.10-12
Instead of admitting that Cyaxares’ words contained any truth, Cyrus pretends to not understand Cyaxares’ domestic allusion. He responds as if Cyaxares had attacked the Medes; Cyrus uses this as a platform to criticize Cyaxares anew. He quickly glosses over his own role in what has occurred by limiting his own involvement to a brief denial—I did not corrupt the Medes—but attacks Cyaxares for criticizing the Medes in such a shocking way: Cyaxares does not “judge correctly” if he thinks the Medes could harm him.\footnote{Cyr., E.5.10.} Cyrus is not arguing honestly, although we should not expect him to.

After this brief attack, the majority of Cyrus’ response is taken up with human resources-style advice of the sort that he gave in his letter to Cyaxares which I discussed in Chapter Four. As in that case, this advice is meant to confuse and patronize Cyaxares: Cyrus makes it seem that Cyaxares has caused this situation to come about through his own poor management skills.\footnote{Cyr., Δ.5.27-31. Gray (2011) does not see this advice as patronizing. She says, “Cyrus begins his response by warning Cyaxares of the dangers of his previous savage treatment of his followers, which party caused his loss of his following. This background indicates that Cyaxares is an offended king without a cause, because his lack of management skills never could retain a greater following than Cyrus” (239).} Cyrus ignores whether Cyaxares is justly upset; instead he claims he will not address this issue because Cyaxares would not enjoy hearing Cyrus defending the Medes. This is misdirection: Cyaxares did not complain about the Medes in this conversation but about Cyrus. Perhaps Cyrus hopes that Cyaxares will become sufficiently distracted by his frustrating tangent; in the end, Cyrus does use this to seize the initiative in this conversation.

Cyrus thus begins to teach Cyaxares an aggressive and hostile lesson about managing people. He teaches Cyaxares that “It seems to me to be a great error, however, for a man who is a ruler to be severe with all his subjects at the same time: He must
necessity, by frightening many, make many enemies, and by being severe with them all at
the same time, he must of necessity instill the same attitude in them all.\footnote{Cyr., E.5.11.} This is the
same type of teaching of which Cyrus informed Cyaxares in his letter to him after the
theft of his army.\footnote{Cyr., Δ.5.27-33.} As in the letter, Cyrus discusses only the superficial. A ruler should
not be severe with everyone, since, if everyone is frightened, everyone becomes an
enemy. The implication is that it is the ruler’s fault he loses power for managing his
people so poorly. Although this is a true and fair statement, Cyaxares should view this
advice as offensive for two reasons. First, Cyrus is the younger and more inexperienced
of the two and certainly Cyaxares is well aware of this nearly-meaningless cliched
platitude. Second, Cyaxares was not hostile to the Medes. He was hostile to Cyrus alone.
Cyrus listen to what Cyaxares says and ignores it. He does so to frustrate Cyaxares, to
avoid engaging with the issue of justice on Cyaxares’ terms, and to confuse the
conversation. There is little point investigating Cyrus’ words here, as he is spouting
irrelevant platitudes regardless of what Cyaxares says.

Cyrus, having taught Cyaxares about how to manage men, goes on the offensive.
He says, “This is why, I assure you, I did not sent these troops back without me, for I was
afraid that your anger might provoke something painful for all of us. Since I am now
present with the gods’ [help], this is now no danger for you.”\footnote{Cyr., E.5.12.} This is, of course, untrue:
this is not why Cyrus refused to return the army to Cyaxares and even contradicts what he

\footnote{823 Cyr., E.5.11.} \footnote{824 Cyr., Δ.5.27-33.} \footnote{825 Cyr., E.5.12. In connection with this passage, Gera (1993) claims that “Cyaxares’ short temper is
notorious” (101), yet I would point out that the only time we see Cyaxares angry is after he realizes that
Cyrus has stolen his army.}
had said to Cyaxares previously.\textsuperscript{826} Cyrus has made two previous excuses about why he would not return the army. First, he said to the Median troops that “[Cyaxares’] anger, I know clearly, will have been assuaged by these successes and will vanish with the cessation of his fear.”\textsuperscript{827} Thus Cyaxares’ command was given in error, motivated by fear and a concern for his own safety. The Medes need not obey a mistaken order. Second, Cyrus said in the letter he sent Cyaxares that “Now when I am in a hostile place, you recall not only whoever is willing to go, but everyone. Thus it is that previously I thought I owed gratitude to both of you, but now you compel me to forget you...”\textsuperscript{828} Here Cyrus argues that he cannot return the Medes because, in shock at Cyaxares’ ingratitude, returning them would be too dangerous for the rest of Cyrus’ army. Cyrus has now given three distinct reasons for refusing to return the Median army to Cyaxares: Cyaxares didn’t really mean his order; Cyaxares’ order was too dangerous (for Cyrus); now, he says that Cyrus was afraid that Cyaxares would have harmed the Medes in his wrath. Cyrus crafts his arguments for his audiences. The Medes, although they want to stay with Cyrus, cannot deny the justice of Cyaxares’ command: Cyrus thus convinces them that Cyaxares’ command was not serious. Cyaxares is rightfully indignant about the injustice of Cyrus’ theft: thus Cyrus in the letter to him attempts to recall the army is unjust. Now that he and Cyaxares have reunited and, as we shall see, Cyrus wants Cyaxares to publicly approve of what he has done, Cyrus attempts to play the friendly and loyal subordinate by claiming that he refused to return the Medes because he was looking out for Cyaxares’ best interest. Three reasons, all contradictory, all crafted to respond

\textsuperscript{826} Nadon (2001), 97.
\textsuperscript{827} \textit{Cyr.}, Δ.5.20-21. I leave out Δ.5.22, because it is not relevant to this discussion.
\textsuperscript{828} \textit{Cyr.}, Δ.5.29-30
specifically to different situations: we may comfortably disbelieve all three as manipulations meant to further Cyrus’ own interest.\textsuperscript{829}

Thus we have seen how this conversation has thus far developed. Cyaxares reasonably lays out a series of complaints against Cyrus’ behavior, relying on logical, emotional, and analogical examples in an attempt to convince Cyrus to view the situation from Cyaxares’ perspective. Cyaxares wants to convince Cyrus that what Cyrus has done is unjust, that Cyrus has trampled on the bonds of family and subordination that should have prevented him from committing a crime against his uncle in this manner. In his response, Cyrus ignores Cyaxares’ words, preferring to misunderstand his indignation; Cyrus pretends that Cyaxares had given a scathing condemnation of the Medes’ behavior. He then refuses to listen to such scandalous criticism of the Medes; he thus uses his fake indignation to launch into an irrelevant lesson in leadership which, so he claims, he hopes will teach Cyaxares to be a better leader. This pedagogy, the second time Cyrus has presumed to teach Cyaxares in this manner, is an attempt to confuse, frustrate, and distract Cyaxares so that Cyrus can seize control of this conversation.

Although Cyrus has mostly neutralized Cyaxares’ control over the Medes, he seems to want to preserve him as a cooperative subordinate and royal figurehead. After rejecting—ignoring—Cyaxares’ attempt to show him the injustice of his actions, he now attempts to force Cyaxares to admit that his actions were \textit{just}. Having seized control of the conversation, Cyrus defines justice in his own terms by forcing Cyaxares to answer a series of narrow yes/no questions. Ironically, he chooses Socratic \textit{elenchus}—and apportions for himself the role of Socrates—to prove to Cyaxares that his injustices are

\textsuperscript{829} Nadon (2001), 100.
just. The first section of his *elenchus* is uncontroversial—he starts with easy questions, perhaps to ensure that Cyaxares will play along, before addressing the more controversial issues. In this section, I argue that we see Cyrus attempt to force Cyaxares to agree that everything Cyrus has done is just by asking such narrow and leading questions that Cyaxares cannot but agree. The first questions are uncontroversial and Cyaxares readily agrees with them. I pass them over and rejoin the conversation when Cyrus says, “Τί γάρ, ἔφη, ἐπεὶ οἱ πολέμιοι ἦλθον καὶ διαγωνίζεσθαι ἐδει πρὸς αὐτους, ἐν τούτῳ κατενόησας ποῦ με ἢ πόνου ἀποστάντα ἢ τινος κινδύνου φεισάμενον; Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δι’, ἔφη, οὐ μὲν δῆ” (‘What about when the enemies came,’ he asked, ‘and it was necessary to contend against them, did you detect somewhere in this that I either withdrew from labor or avoided risks?’ ’No, by Zeus,’ he said, ’certainly not.’). We see from this how Cyrus’ questioning will work. Here is addresses the time when, as I argued in Chapter Four, his insubordination becomes open. In asking this question in this way, he attempts to force Cyaxares to overlook the problematic aspects of his behavior by focusing on his ’good’ behavior: did I not enthusiastically fight the Assyrians? We note, however, that Cyrus does not ask Cyaxares whether the Mede believed that Cyrus had acted loyally at this time, or whether he quickly and obediently obeyed Cyaxares’ commands, or whether Cyrus tried to publicly humiliate him. By asking such a narrow question, Cyrus attempts to compel Cyaxares to agree that his behavior was exemplary. Indeed, answering the question Cyrus asked, Cyaxares can only answer in the affirmative: no one could ever

830 Gera (1993), 101. Gray (2011) says “Cyrus then spends the rest of his speech securing Cyaxares’ agreement through Socratic questioning to the fact that Cyrus has bestowed a sequence of favours on him in friendship, whereas Cyaxares has done no favour to him and not even repaid his favours” (239).

831 *Cyr.*, E.5.18-19
claim that Cyrus was unenthusiastic when closing with an enemy.

Yet Cyrus’ questions have no reached the most fraught part of his history with Cyaxares. He asks,

Τί γάρ, ἐπεὶ νίκης γενομένης σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς ἡμετέρας καὶ ἀναχωρησάντων τῶν πολεμίων παρεκάλον μέγερον σε ὧν κοινὴ μὲν αὐτούς διώκομεν, κοινὴ δὲ τιμωρούμεθα, κοινὴ δὲ εἰ τι καλὸν κἀγαθὸν συμβαίνοι, τοῦτο καρποίμεθα, ἐν τούτοις ἔχεις τινά μου πλεονεξίαν κατηγορῆσαι; ὁ μὲν δὴ Κυαξάρης πρὸς τοῦτο ἐσίγα·

‘What about then, after victory became ours, with the gods’ [help], and the enemies retreated? When I proposed to you that we pursue them in common, that we take vengeance in common, that, if any noble and good thing should result, we harvest it in common, are you able to accuse me of seizing the advantage in this?’ Now Cyaxares fell silent at this.832

This is a clear attempt to whitewash Cyrus’ behavior: of course Cyaxares thinks that Cyrus took advantage in this.833 Cyaxares fell into a fury and sent a letter recalling the Medes once he realized what Cyrus had done. The reader knows that Cyaxares cannot possibly agree with Cyrus’ epitome of these events. Yet instead of denying the truth of Cyrus’ words, Cyaxares falls silent. Something in Cyrus’ words has struck Cyaxares in such a way that he falls silent as a result. In one sense, what Cyrus says here is true: he came to Cyaxares’ tent, proposed they pursue the Assyrians in common, and proposed to share the booty in common.834 Cyaxares cannot deny this. We may conclude that if Cyaxares is not driven into silence by what Cyrus does say, he can only have been silenced by what Cyrus does not say.835 Perhaps Cyaxares expected that Cyrus would try to justify the theft of Cyaxares’ army, or perhaps he hoped that Cyrus would admit that he had accidentally recruited more Medes than he had intended to recruit. Cyaxares would

832 Cyr., E.5.19-20
833 Nadon (2001), 96.
834 Cyr., Δ.1.12-21.
835 Gera (1993) says that Cyrus’ questions “touch on more sensitive points, and his uncle does not reply” (102).
be able to use such half-admissions to better argue that Cyrus had wronged him. Yet Cyrus’ question reveals to Cyaxares that Cyrus intends to always maintain that everything he did was done at the express command and agreement of Cyaxares. Perhaps for the first time, Cyaxares has realized that Cyrus is fully committed to passing off this lie as the truth—even to his face. What can Cyaxares do in the face of such an obvious lie told by the man commanding over a hundred thousand soldiers but remain silent?

Cyaxares’ sudden refusal to participate immediately annoys Cyrus; perhaps he realizes that Cyaxares is not going to be as pliant as he had hoped. He says,

Ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ πρὸς τοῦτο σιωπᾶν ἥδιόν σοι ἢ ἀποκρίνασθαι, τόδε γ’, ἔφη, εἰπὲ εἴ τι ἀδικεῖσθαι ἐνόμισας ὅτι, ἐπεὶ σοι οὐκ ἄφησαν ἔδοκεν εἶναι τὸ διώκειν, σὲ μὲν αὐτὸν ἀφῆκα τοῦ κινδύνου τούτου μετέχειν, ἵππεας δὲ τῶν σοῦ συμπέμψαι μοι ἐδέομη σου· εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὸ τοῦτο αἴτων ἡμῖν, ἄλλως τε καὶ προπαρεσχηκὼς ἐμαυτόν σοι σύμμαχον, τοῦτ’ αὖ παρὰ σοῦ, ἔφη, ἐπιδεικνύσθω. ἐπεὶ δ’ αὖ καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἔσήγα ὁ Κυαξάρης,

’But since in this case it is more pleasing for you to be silent than to answer, tell me whether you believed you were at all unjustly treated because, when going in pursuit did not seem to you to be safe, I excused you from sharing in this risk yourself but asked you to send some of your knights with me. If I was unjust in asking this, even though I had stood by you before as an ally, show it.’ […] Cyaxares fell silent at this too.’

What can Cyaxares say to a man telling such an easily disproved lie, a lie that flies in the face of obvious reality? Cyrus, in defending what he has done to Cyaxares, says that he asked “to send some of your knights with me,” even though he is currently in command of all Cyaxares’ knights and all Cyaxares’ infantry. Cyrus’ words are obviously untrue—simply look at the army standing within sight of the pair!—yet Cyrus insists he is

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836 Cyr., E.5.20-21. We have twice in close succession seen the narrator fail to explain Cyaxares' silence and refusal to continue his conversation with Cyrus. This is in keeping with the narrator's habit of letting the story of Cyrus' adult life tell itself.

837 Gera (1993) says that “Cyrus, despairing of receiving answers to his questions, now abandons the cross-examination of his uncle and continues his defence in a speech. Any further questions put by Cyrus are purely rhetorical” (103).

838 Cyr., E.5.20. My emphasis.
speaking the truth. What can Cyaxares do? His nephew insists he has borrowed only a portion of the Median army while he commands—and refuses to return—the whole of the Median army. In response to this impossible conversation, Cyaxares simply quits participating. How can he participate in this conversation when a simple glance at the Median army belies Cyrus’ words?

Cyrus’ subsequent response to Cyaxares’ second period of silence I will mostly pass over, since for a time this conversation continues in a similar manner: Cyrus asks some loaded questions, Cyaxares reluctantly begins to participate again, and the elenchus continues for some time.

After this conversation continues for a while, Cyaxares is finally provoked into making an attack, unrestrained by fear, on Cyrus’ behavior. This speech is a devastating rejection of Cyrus’ general behavior, not simply his treatment of Cyaxares. This speech falls into two sections: first, Cyaxares claims that what Cyrus has done has shamed him; second, he uses a series of analogies to expose Cyrus’ behavior as fundamentally vicious. Cyaxares has realized that Cyrus was not swayed by his first, circumlocutory, arguments: his second attempt is more harsh and direct.

Cyaxares begins his attack on Cyrus by drawing a distinction between what Cyrus has achieved and how he achieved it:

Ἀλλ’, ὦ Κῦρε, ὡς μὲν ταῦτα ἃ σὺ πεποίηκας κακά ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως χρή λέγειν· εὖ γε μέντοι, ἔφη, ἴσθι ὅτι ταῦτα τάγαθα τουαῦτά ἐστιν οὐδ’ ὅπως πλείων φαίνεται, τοσσοῦτοι μᾶλλον ἐμὲ βαρόνει. τὴν τε γὰρ χώραν, ἔφη, ἐγὼ ἂν τὴν σὴν ἐβουλόμην τῇ ἐμῇ δυνάμει μείζω ποιεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ τὴν ἐμὴν ὑπὸ σοῦ ὁρᾶν οὕτως αὐξανομένην· σοὶ μὲν γὰρ ταῦτα ποιοῦντι καλά, ἐμοὶ δὲ γέ ἐστι πῃ ταῦτα ἀτιμίαν φέροντα. καὶ χρήματα ἄν μοι δοκῶ ἥδιόν σοι δωρεῖσθαι ἢ παρὰ σοῦ οὕτω λαμβάνειν ὡς σὺ νῦν ἔμοι δίδωσι· τούτοις γὰρ πλουτιζόμενοι υπὸ σοῦ καὶ μᾶλλον αἰσθάνομαι οἷς πενέστεροι γέγονοι. καὶ τούς γ’ ἐμοὺς ὑπηκόους ἰδὼν μικρὰ γε ἀδικουμένους ὑπὸ σοῦ ἦττον ἂν δοκῶ λυπεῖσθαι ἢ νῦν ὁρῶν ὅτι μεγάλα ἀγαθὰ πεπόνθασιν υπὸ σοῦ.

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 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 to you who do them, but somehow the same deeds bring dishonor to me. And as for valuables and the way you are now giving them to me, I think it would be more pleasant to bestow them upon you than to receive them from you like this, for being enriched in them by you, I perceive even more those things in which I am becoming ever more impoverished. And I think that if I should see my subordinates unjustly treated by you, at least in small things, it would cause me less pain than seeing now that they have experienced great goods at your hands.  

Cyaxares does not disapprove of what Cyrus has done \textit{per se:} Cyrus has made Media greater; he has turned over (some) spoils to Cyaxares and the Medes; he has treated the Medes in his army well. Rather than attacking Cyrus’ ends, he attacks Cyrus’ means: by acting in a manner that benefits Cyaxares but does not allow his involvement shames Cyaxares. This objection is rooted in Cyaxares’ conception of kingship: as Cyaxares discussed earlier, he is the heir of the \textit{ancien régime} and had until recently been a most powerful king. Yet he now realizes that his power has come to an end: he says he is ashamed because Cyrus has rendered him impotent. As he says, “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 to you who do them, but somehow the same deeds bring dishonor to me.”  

840 In other words, Cyaxares perceives that the ability to use power and that which results from the use of power are distinct: a man who stands by and benefits from the use of power without participating in the process is shamed through his inaction. To most, it is obvious that these are different; Cyrus, however, insists they are functionally identical. Thus even though Cyrus claims that he has treated Cyaxares beneficially by using his army to increase Cyaxares’ empire, Cyaxares claims that this action has in fact harmed him.

839 \textit{Cyr., E.} 5.25-27

Thus for Cyaxares, the essence of kingship is not the trappings, the purple, the fancy food, the slaves and women, that are associated with the Median monarch, but the exercise of power. He says that “it would be more pleasant to bestow [valuables] upon you than to receive them from you like this, for being enriched in them by you, I perceive even more those things in which I am becoming even more impoverished.”841 The essence of a king is action and the ability to personally benefit and harm one’s friends and enemies, respectively. Despite this, Cyaxares sees his subordinate nephew render him impotent and replace him in the minds of the Medes as the one who exercises the royal Median power. Cyaxares ends this portion of his speech by returning to the subject that has so brought about this situation: the theft of the Median army.

Cyaxares, in the largest and most moving part of his speech, addresses what has transpired between Cyrus, Cyaxares and the Median army through the use of analogies.842 He has already used this rhetorical strategy in this speech when he compared his (former) soldiers to domestic slaves; now, however, he employs greater detail and emotion in his analogies. Cyrus does not understand (or has ignored) his argument thus far: Cyaxares thus makes his argument more vehement and vivid in an attempt to get his point across. The first thing Cyaxares addresses is the corruption of the loyalty of the Median army. Cyaxares says,

841 Cyr., E.5.27
842 Gera (1993) says “Cyaxares’ method of argument here is a variation on Socrates’ technique of applied analogies in the Memorabilia. Socrates, as we have seen, asks his interlocutor to judge a series of hypothetical situations and only then applies the analogous verdict to the speaker himself, but here the Median king announces at the very start that his hypothetical examples relate to their present situation. While Cyaxares’ questions are plainly rhetorical and Cyrus is not actually meant to judge these analogous cases, there is a Socratic air to the interrogation” (107).
Cyaxares uses three different analogies, of increasing seriousness and criminality, to express his point here. Although he moves from a private setting (raising dogs) to a public setting (corrupting the Persian army) to a private setting again (adultery), all three analogies have the same substance: a third party unjustly and for his own benefit seduces the loyalty of a person or group from their master; as Cyaxares says, it is impossible to claim that these are the actions of a benefactor or friend.

The first example Cyaxares makes is that of dogs: he says, “If you were raising dogs to guard yourself and what belongs to you, and if someone were attentive to them and thereby made them more familiar to himself than to you, would he delight you by this attention? [...] If someone should so dispose your attendants, whom you maintain for the sake of your protection and military expeditions, such that they wish to be his rather than yours, would you owe him gratitude in return for this good deed? [...] If someone is so attentive to your wife that he makes her love himself rather than you, would he delight you by this good deed? Far from it, I think, and I know well that in acting like this, he would be unjust to you to the highest degree.”

843 Cyr., E.5.28-30
844 Cyr., E.5.28.
own? Why would a man deliberately destroy all the time and effort his friend had put into
training his dogs? This is undeniably an aggressive act: the second man has destroyed
months of time and effort, the cost of the dogs, and has even misappropriated his friend’s
property. The second man was wrong to misuse his friend’s property in this way: can
Cyrus admit his behavior is appropriate if he himself would grow annoyed and feel
betrayed if a friend of his stole his dogs?

The second example is similar but moves to a martial context. Cyaxares asks, “If
someone should so dispose your attendants, whom you maintain for the sake of your
protection and military expeditions, such that they wish to be his rather than yours, would
you owe him gratitude in return for this good deed?” This is also intended to appeal to
Cyrus’ own interests. Cyaxares essentially asks Cyrus how he would feel if some third
party did the same thing to Cyrus that Cyrus did to Cyaxares. If someone corrupted
Cyrus’ soldiers to such a degree that they would not obey him any longer, Cyrus would
obviously consider this an unjust deed. Not only does this situation parallel that of the
hunting dogs—Cyrus has put time and effort into training his men, organizing his army,
learning their names and re-arming them as heavy instead of light troops—but losing
control of his army to a third party would also leave Cyrus in a vulnerable and dangerous
position, unable to protect himself from enemies, such as the Assyrians. Cyrus must
admit that it would be a hostile and unjust act if someone came along and corrupted his
soldiers’ loyalty. Even if the person who corrupted the loyalty of the Persian soldiers
turned some of the spoils they captured over to Cyrus, Cyrus would still be the victim of
injustice, and Persia would still remain in danger and defenseless. In a sense, this is

845 Cyr., E.5.29.
Cyaxares’ equivalent of the Biblical golden rule: if Cyrus would not want his army corrupted away from under him, he should not have corrupted Cyaxares’ army. Cyaxares then takes his argument to an extremely personal level.

In the third of his analogies, Cyaxares calls Cyrus an adulterer: “If someone is so attentive to your wife that he makes her love himself rather than you, would he delight you by this good deed?” This third analogy pierces through all of Cyrus’ lies and obfuscations by going to the heart of the relationship among Cyrus, Cyaxares, and the Median army. As Cyaxares sees it, there is a closed system between the Median army and himself analogous to marriage. Cyaxares rules, the Medes are obedient, and there is no legal or just room for a third party to insert himself. Cyaxares and his army—a husband and wife—are legally united: no matter how much a third party wants to seize control over the wife/army he cannot legally or justly do so. The adulterer, by seducing a married woman, has betrayed and violated the rights of the husband, his supposed friend. It is even worse in this situation, since Cyaxares accuses Cyrus of (analogically) seducing the wife of his uncle. As his nephew, Cyrus should deeply respect and work to benefit his uncle, not seduce his aunt.

Of course, Cyrus has already argued that, by using Cyaxares’ army against Cyaxares’ desires, he has benefited Cyaxares without making him work himself. Yet Cyaxares’ argument exposes to Cyrus that his behavior is like that of the adulterer who impregnates his friend’s wife and presents the child to his friend, saying, ’here is the child you have always wanted! Why are you unhappy? You have always wanted kids...’ That Cyrus maintains that what he has done to Cyaxares is just and right betrays a fundamental

ignorance of the rules of society, laws, and justice. Cyaxares argues that the benefits that the 'benefits' he receives from Cyrus, which Cyrus insists justify his use of Cyaxares’ army, are made irrelevant by the first act of injustice. One cannot steal a friend’s dogs, give the carcasses to the friend, and claim to benefit him; one cannot steal a friend’s army, give some booty to the friend, and claim to benefit him; one cannot impregnate a friend’s wife and claim to have done a favor in producing him an heir.

Cyaxares, in frustration, rejects Cyrus’ depiction of the events in the tent as a lie. We have seen Cyaxares move through a series of arguments in an attempt to make Cyrus admit that what he did was unjust, a truth so plainly obvious (to Cyaxares) that Cyaxares seems baffled by Curs’ refusal to admit it. First Cyaxares used logical, emotional, and analogical—and restrained—arguments to convince Cyrus. When Cyrus remains unconvinced, and even pretends that Cyaxares said things that he did not say, Cyaxares becomes more aggressive in proving his point. He next expands on his definition of kingship in an attempt to show Cyrus that what he had done was wrong and how Cyaxares has been harmed by his nephew. When this in turn fails, he moves onto analogies: Cyrus, would you think it just if someone stole your hunting dogs? Cyrus, would you think it just if someone induced your soldiers to mutiny? Cyrus, would you think it just if someone had sex with your wife? Cyrus’ stony refusal to admit that anything Cyaxares says is true finally provokes Cyaxares to abandon his politeness: he finally challenges Cyrus directly.

σὺ γὰρ ἀληθῆ λέγεις· εἰπόντος ἐμοῦ τοὺς θέλοντας ἄγειν λαβὼν ὄχι τὸν πάσαν μου τὴν δύναμιν, ἐμὲ δὲ ἔρημον κατέλιπες· καὶ νῦν ἃ ἔλαβες τῇ ἐμῇ δύναμις ἄγεις δή μοι καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν χώραν αὔξεις σὺν τῇ ἐμὴν ρώμῃ.

Admit the truth: When I said to lead those who were willing to go, you took my entire power and left,
leaving me deserted. And what you took with my power, now, of course, you bring to me, and my country you enlarge with my power.\textsuperscript{847} 

Cyaxares here openly accuses Cyrus of theft and of taking advantage of him. He no longer couches his argument in analogies but simply says ’you betrayed me.’ Cyaxares knows that both he and Cyrus understood that he intended to lend Cyrus only a few of his horsemen, and that Cyrus knowingly took advantage of this. If Cyaxares had wanted Cyrus to borrow his whole army, he would have told him so. Cyaxares thus accuses Cyrus of ignoring the obvious and taking advantage of him the moment his back was turned. Cyaxares has returned to the issue that had previously shocked him into silence: Cyrus still maintains he did \textit{exactly} what Cyaxares told him to do when he took the whole of the Median army, yet, as Cyaxares now points out, no sane person could believe that what Cyrus insists happened could have happened. Cyaxares said ’borrow some of my cavalry;’ in no way could this possibly be interpreted to mean ’take all my cavalry and infantry and never return them.’ In rhetorical desperation, Cyaxares calls Cyrus a liar. Cyaxares knows what happened in that tent, and knows that Cyrus knows it as well. Cyrus, however, refuses to admit it. How can Cyrus refuse to admit what they both know is true?

Cyaxares adds one more dimension onto his accusations before ending his speech: he accuses Cyrus of making him effeminate and completely dishonoring him, something he would not do if he in the slightest degree cared about Cyaxares. He says,

\begin{quote}
\textit{ἐγὼ δὲ δοκῶ οὐδέν συναίτιος ὃν τὸν ἄγαθὸν παρέχειν ἐμαυτὸν ὁσπερ γυνὴ ἐν ποιεῖν, καὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ ΄όλους ἀνθρώποις καὶ τοῖς ἔμοις ὑπηκόοις σὺ μὲν ἀνήρ φαίνῃ, ἐγὼ δ’ ὁκ ἄξιος ἄρχῃ, ταῦτα σοι δοκεῖ ευεργετήματ’ εἶναι, ὦ Κῦρε; εὖ ἴσθ’ ὅτι εἰ τι ἐμοῦ ἐκήδου, οὐδενὸς ἂν οὕτω με ἀποστερεῖν ὡς ἀξιώματος καὶ τιμῆς. τί γὰρ ἐμοὶ πλέον τὸ τὴν γῆν πλατύνεσθαι, αὐτὸν δὲ ἀτιμάξεσθαι;
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{847} Cyril. E.5.33
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 and I unworthy of rule. 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. What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonored?848

By moving to this personal dimension, Cyaxares keeps up his attack on Cyrus. It is obvious, Cyaxares says, that he has been dishonored. As he has already said, he can tell this from the mockery and disrespect in the eyes of the Medes when he arrived at Cyrus’ camp. Even worse, based on Cyrus’ own admission that he is working for Cyaxares’ benefit with Cyaxares’ own soldiers, Cyaxares knows that Cyrus has effeminized him.849 Cyaxares is being treated as if he were Cyrus’ wife, as if he is the queen, not king, of Media. Yet Cyaxares knows that he is a brave warrior, not a dainty thing that needs protection. Cyaxares is offended and ashamed because Cyrus has compelled him to remain at home in safety, organizing and marshaling the palace resources, while Cyrus is out in the (battle)field making profit. This is a close approximation of the relationship between husband and wife exemplified by Ischomachus.850 Cyaxares must act as if he is Cyrus’ wife. How can a nephew treat his uncle this way and yet insist it is just?

This is, as Cyaxares is well aware, a vicious and cruel action on Cyrus’ part: as Cyaxares says, if Cyrus did to any degree care about Cyaxares, he “would guard against depriving [him] of nothing so much as my dignity and honor.”851 Cyaxares makes a fair

848 Cyr., E.5.33-34
849 Gera (1993) says that “We would not expect Cyaxares to reject this feminine role so explicitly: elsewhere great stress is placed upon his love of luxury and finery […] Cyaxares’ moment of Socrates-like wisdom is short-lived […] but we should note that he is granted such a moment” (108).
850 Ischomachos’ presentation of the ideal domestic duties of his wife is outlined between IX.2-IX.19 of the Oikonomikos.
851 Cyr., E.5.34.
and accurate argument about how unjustly he has been treated: Cyaxares has had everything that defines a king (or at least how he defines the role) stripped from him except the very title, which is meaningless without the (formerly) associated power. He has no power, he has no armies, he has no respect or honor, and there is no way for him to recoup his losses and regain respect unless he persuades Cyrus. Cyaxares tries to trigger any compassion Cyrus may still have. In this, he fails.

Cyaxares’ final words are poignant: he says, “For I was not ruler of the Medes because I was stronger than all of them but rather because they esteemed us to be better than they in everything.” Although he cannot know, Cyaxares defines himself, prior to Cyrus’ theft, as a good leader in precisely the same terms that Cambyses used to define a good leader: Cambyses says to Cyrus that “what is far superior to [gaining obedience through compulsion], to their being willing to obey, there is another road that is shorter, for human beings obey with great pleasure whomever they think is more prudent about their own advantage than they are themselves.”

Cyaxares was, according to Cambyses’ definition, a good leader: he was, through his superiority and concern for his followers, justified in being their leader. Thus we finally complete Cyaxares’ definition of what legitimates a leader: he is descended from leaders, he has the willing obedience of his followers, and his obtains this leadership through his superiority in all his personal qualities and also in the concern he has for his followers’ well-being. Thus Cyaxares did not rule over the Medes with a heavy hand, with fear, with compulsion, but obtained the willing and free obedience of his followers because of his excellence. Cyrus has violated this relationship, Cyrus has destroyed the respect and obedience the Medes once showed

852 Cyr. A.6.21.
to Cyaxares, by tricking Cyaxares and corrupting the Medes in order to lead them astray.

Although we see Cyaxares move from argument to argument, increasingly angry and frustrated at Cyrus’ refusal to admit anything he says is true, we should see that at the heart of Cyaxares’ speech is a rejection of Cyrus’ utilitarian style of *Realpolitik*. For Cyaxares, there are things more important than a quick and efficient accumulation of political power, such as Cyrus’ rise. While Cyrus showed, in his conversation with his father in the first book,\(^{853}\) that he was interested in getting power as quickly as possible, Cyaxares was interested in ruling well what he already possessed. For Cyaxares, justice is more important. A good relationship with family members, friends and subjects is more important than obtaining maximum power. Keeping his soldiers safe is more important than unnecessarily risking them in a grab for world power. At a basic level, Cyaxares values doing what is just rather than what is expedient or profitable. Cyrus and Cyaxares have always disagreed on this point: after the battle against the Assyrians in the fourth book.\(^{854}\) Cyaxares did not want to pursue the Assyrian army, even though they were retreating, because he did not want to press his luck, he did not want to unnecessarily risk his soldiers, he did not want to provoke the Assyrians into extending the war, and he did not want to prevent the Medes from celebrating their victory. These reasons amount to the same point: the battle has been won, the war is over and there is no point in risking Median soldiers needlessly. Whatever gains Cyaxares could achieve from pursuing the retreating Assyrians, he believes they are not worth the lives of his soldiers. Cyaxares does not want to capture the whole of the Assyrian kingdom; he is quite content with the

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\(^{853}\) Cyr., A.6.1-46  
\(^{854}\) Cyaxares’ arguments for peace are found in Δ.1.14-18
kingdom he already has. He, seemingly, does genuinely care enough about his men that he does not even want to risk losing even the few that might die in the pursuit of a retreating army.

Cyaxares has grown angry and frustrated and he has, as I have argued, made increasingly persuasive and vivid arguments that expressed in straightforward terms his perception of Cyrus’ injustice. In response, Cyrus

Καὶ ὁ Κῦρος ἔτι λέγοντος αὐτοῦ ὑπολαβὼν εἶπε· Πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, ἔφη, ὦ θεῖε, εἴ τι κάγώ σοι πρότερον ἐχαρισάμην, καὶ σὺ νῦν ἐμοὶ χάρισαι ὃ ἂν δεηθῶ σου· παῦσαι, ἔφη, τὸ νῦν εἶναι μεμφόμενός μοι· ἐπειδὰν δὲ πεῖραν ἡμῶν λάβῃς πῶς ἔχομεν πρὸς σέ, ἔδω καὶ δὴ σοι φαίνηται τὰ ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ πεπραγμένα ἐπί τῷ σῷ ἀγαθῷ πεποιημένα, ἀσπαξομένου τέ μοῦ σε ἀντασπάζου με εὐεργέτην τε νόμιζε, ἐὰν δ’ ἐπὶ θάτερα, τότε μοι μέμφου.

Interrupt[s] him as he was still talking, Cyrus said, 'By the gods, uncle, if I ever gratified you before in anything, gratify me now in what I ask: For the time being, stop blaming me. When you get more evidence of how we are disposed toward you, then, if what I have done comes to light as having been done for your good, greet me in turn when I greet you and believe me to be a benefactor, but if the reverse, blame me then.'

Cyrus’ response is almost unbelievable: he makes Cyaxares shut up, says to him that he should calm down and seriously investigate whether Cyrus and the Medes are really benefiting Cyaxares or not.\(^{856}\) *Cyrus did not listen to a word Cyaxares just said.* Let us remember that Cyaxares just argued that when Cyrus benefits him without his participation, he emasculates him, treats him as if he is his wife: it is shameful. Yet Cyrus now says to Cyaxares, “When you get more evidence of how we are disposed toward you, then, if what I have done comes to light as having been done for your good, greet me in turn when I greet you and believe me to be a benefactor...”\(^{857}\) This completely misses

\(^{855}\) Cyr., E.5.35

\(^{856}\) Gera (1993) says that “[Cyrus] does not argue with the Mede, and indeed Xenophon lets us see that Cyaxares’ charge is true, for Cyrus certainly is foremost in the hearts of the Median soldiers. Instead, Cyrus suggests that Cyaxares should end his reproofs and put his nephew’s loyalty to the test” (108).

\(^{857}\) Cyr., E.5.35.
Cyaxares’ point! Cyaxares already admitted that Cyrus’ actions have benefited Media but this is not what upset him.\textsuperscript{858} He says that when Cyrus benefits him it shames and emasculates him; in response, Cyrus says 'look close and you’ll see I’m actually benefiting you.' Cyaxares spoke but Cyrus did not listen.\textsuperscript{859}

It is clear from Cyrus’ bizarre response to Cyaxares’ speech that Cyrus simply doesn’t care. At some point he tuned out Cyaxares’ words, which is why his response to Cyaxares doesn’t take into consideration anything that Cyaxares had said. We may conclude that Cyrus interrupted Cyaxares, forced him to stop talking, not out of anger or guilt but out of boredom. Cyrus believes that he has better things to do than listen to his old and impotent uncle groaning at him, so once he feels he has let him ramble on long enough, he tells him to be quiet and that they can discuss these issues later (which they never do). Cyrus could not care less about the feelings of his uncle or about the injustices that he perceives that he has suffered at Cyrus’ own hands, since these are trivial—literally not even worth apologizing for or explaining—compared to Cyrus’ grand scheme of becoming world-king. Cyaxares, the advocate for law, justice, and respect makes an impassioned speech in favor of these principles, yet Cyrus is apathetic to listen. He is focused on hurrying on to what comes next, his true purpose in calling this meeting.

\textsuperscript{858} Gray (2011) agrees with Cyrus: she says that Cyrus proves “that [he] has bestowed a sequence of favours on him in friendship, whereas Cyaxares as done no favour to him and not even repaid his favours. This establishes Cyrus' past record of 'increasing' his uncle in spite of the present offence. Cyaxares falls silent when his worst failures are raised: that he refused to fight the enemy but left Cyrus to do it alone; that he did not wish to send him troops; that he did not even allow Cyrus to ask for troops, but said he must come and persuade them, and then he admits that in fact Cyrus has done him no wrong. The greatest and noblest favour is that Cyrus had let him see 'your territory increasing and the enemy territory diminishing' (239). Gray notes Cyaxares’ response to this, that “Cyrus has made him like a woman” (239) and she says that it gives “this version of the dilemma of friendship a greater depth and complexity” (239), but she does not say how it impacts our understanding of Cyrus’ position, which I have argued is crucial to understanding this passage.

\textsuperscript{859} Indeed, Cyrus listened so little to his uncle that he was stunned when Croesus later makes a similar argument (Z.2.29).
Cyrus does not want or need a genuine reconciliation with Cyaxares—if he did he might have actually listened to his uncle—but simply wants to spread among his men the perception that he and Cyaxares have reconciled.

This conversation has been, as we noted at the beginning, private: only the two men involved can hear what is being said. Yet, it has also been viewed from a distance, beyond earshot, by the Median and Persian soldiers. Let us consider this situation from their perspective. They have seen: Cyaxares weep, and then speak angrily to Cyrus; Cyrus respond to Cyaxares; Cyaxares speak again to Cyrus; and Cyrus speak briefly to Cyaxares. They do not know what has been said, but only understand in the vaguest way what has transpired. Yet it is at this stage that they witness Cyrus’ *coup de grâce*:

\[ \text{Ἀλλ' ἴσως μέντοι, ἔφη ὁ Κυαξάρης, καλῶς λέγεις: κἀγὼ οὕτω ποιήσω. Τί οὖν; ἔφη ὁ Κύρος, ἦ καὶ φιλήσω σε; Εἰ τού θεοῦ, ἔφη. Καὶ οὐκ ἀποστρέψῃ με ὥσπερ ἄρτι; Οὐκ ἀποστρέφομαι, ἔφη, καὶ ὃς ἐφίλησεν αὐτόν. Ως δὲ εἶδον οἱ Μῆδοί τε καὶ οἱ Πέρσαι καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πᾶσι γὰρ ἔμελεν ὅ τι ἐκ τούτων ἐσοτό, εὐθὺς ἠθεῖσαν τε καὶ εὐφαινόθεσαν.} \]

'Perhaps,' said Cyaxares, 'you speak nobly [when asked for an adjournment]. I will do so.' 'Well then,' said Cyrus, 'shall I kiss you?' 'If you wish,' he said. 'And you will not turn from me as you did just now? 'I will not turn from you,' he said. So he kissed him. When the Medes, Persians, and the many others saw this (for the result was a matter of concern for all of them), they took immediate pleasure and beamed with joy.

Cyrus stage-manages this entire reconciliation meeting magnificently: the two men argue and talk until Cyaxares finally yields to Cyrus’ demand for an adjournment (what else could he do?). Although Cyrus and Cyaxares know they have not reconciled, Cyrus asks

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860 Tatum says that “Just how theatrical an occasion this really is becomes clear as soon the royal acts leave their stage. The assembled audience cannot hear Cyaxares’ long speech and its increasingly accurate description of Cyrus’s strategies. All they can see is uncle and nephew shaking hands in apparent concord” (132). Gera (1993) notes that the Medes are “carefully following the proceedings from a distance” (108). Whidden (2007a) says that “Remarkably, the soldiers who are willing participants in Cyrus’s manipulation of Cyaxares apparently never suspect that when they witnessed the embrace between Cyrus and Cyaxares they too were being manipulated by Cyrus” (138).

861 *Cyr.*, E.5.35-37. We see another example of the narrator describing what he would have previously explained in greater detail. The Medes are said to be happy, their happiness is briefly and vaguely (why is this a matter of special concern?) explained, and the narrator moves on.
his uncle for a kiss, the kiss which Cyaxares had denied him at the beginning of the conversation. Cyaxares has calmed down somewhat and no longer sobs, yet when Cyrus asks him for this kiss, Cyaxares responds so flaccidly—“if you wish”— that Cyrus must ask a second time to ensure Cyaxares won’t stage a minor revolt and turn away at the last moment again. He must be sure that Cyaxares will not spoil the moment for which he called this meeting in the first place. Cyaxares promises not to turn away and Cyrus kisses him. Mission accomplished.

This meeting was not Cyrus’ attempt to genuinely reconcile with Cyaxares—it would be a plus, but is clearly not something Cyrus seriously attempted. **Cyaxares is not the target of Cyrus’ machinations here: the Median soldiers are.** From the first moment that the Median soldiers realized that they had possibly accidentally betrayed their king, had continued to be somewhat uneasy about obeying Cyrus alone. Although Cyrus had given a persuasive speech proving to them why they no longer needed to obey Cyaxares, and they had mostly been won over, they clearly remained somewhat nervous about whether they had acted—continued to act—unjustly. Thus Cyrus manages everything in this scene for the benefit of the distant, Median, audience. When Cyaxares arrived, he refused to kiss Cyrus and wept; Cyrus took him aside, they chatted, Cyaxares stopped weeping, and kissed Cyrus. Cyrus has created a clear implication through this scene: this kiss clearly suggests to all the Medes—what else are they to think?—that Cyaxares and Cyrus have been fully reconciled. Cyaxares has approved of Cyrus’ behavior and command of the Median army because Cyrus was able to convince him it was for the best; the Medes are simultaneously assured that their behavior was not mutinous—they

862 Cyr., E.5.36.
need fear no future punishment—but fully permitted by their king. Their relief at this turn of events is obvious: The narrator says, “When the Medes, Persians, and the many others saw this (for the result was a matter of concern for all of them), they took immediate pleasure and beamed with joy.”

Cyrus was able to make it appear to the Median soldiers that Cyaxares had completely approved of everything they, and Cyrus, had done and to reassure all the Medes that their serving of Cyrus is just. He does this without needing Cyaxares to say a word to the Medes or actually approving.

In this case, the kiss is not a kiss: Cyaxares does not understand that Cyrus has not summoned him to the Perso-Mede camp in an attempt to actually reconcile the two, but to trick Cyaxares into apparently and publicly admitting that Cyrus was completely right, that there was a conciliation between the two. Thus although Cyaxares’ words, which attack and persuasively reject Cyrus’ treatment of him as unjust and vicious, may persuade the reader, they cannot persuade Cyrus: he didn’t listen because he didn’t care what Cyaxares said. Thus the reader is presented with Cyaxares’ convincing rejection of Cyrus’ utilitarian and cold political maneuvering at the same time as Cyrus enacts a new, cold, and utilitarian plot against him. Cyrus’ methods are juxtaposed with a convincing rejection of them as unjust: Cyrus succeeds in finally and completely isolating Cyaxares from the Median army, but we should see that his methods are vicious.

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863 Cyriac of Cyzicus, E.5.37.

864 Tatum (1989) sees this a little differently: he understands Cyrus’ purpose is reconciling the Medes and Cyaxares: “And this is how Cyrus fulfills his promise not to alienate the Medes from their king” (132). Gera (1993) says the “reconciliation is complete” (108), but I suspect it is not so: Cyaxares’ limp and passive end to this conversation suggests that he has given up trying to argue, not that he has begun to agree with Cyrus.

865 Tatum (1989), for his part, argues that what the reader should learn from this section is that “The story of Cyaxares is instructive to those princes who would like to know how to manipulate recalcitrant relatives to their advantage, rather than exterminate them” (133).
Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that we see another side of Cyrus: he comes to this reunion with the sole intention of forcing Cyaxares to admit that everything he has done was just and to put his stamp of approval on Cyrus’ theft of his army. Cyaxares, for his part, intends to prove to Cyrus that his actions were unjust in an attempt to persuade Cyrus to return his army to him and undo the injustice he had done. Cyaxares repeatedly addresses speeches at Cyrus that first, logically and calmly, and later with increasing vividness and anger, argue in clear and undeniable terms that Cyrus has committed a serious injustice. Cyrus, however, refuses to listen to a word Cyaxares says. At first, he pretends to misunderstand Cyaxares’ arguments, responding as if Cyaxares were foaming at the betrayal of the Median troops; he uses this as a pretext to patronize and frustrate Cyaxares. Later, he attempts to compel Cyaxares to agree with him by demanding he answer a series of yes/no questions that are so narrow in their scope it is impossible to disagree with them. In response, Cyaxares refuses to speak. When Cyaxares finally loses his temper and begins to directly and openly accuse Cyrus of violating his rights as king and shaming and effeminizing him through his benefactions, Cyrus simply stops listening. It is at this stage that Cyrus brings his alternate plan into action, forcing a kiss out of Cyaxares that proves, to the distant, but watching, Medes that Cyaxares has finally given his official and public approval to what Cyrus has done.

In this section, Cyrus treats Cyaxares as nothing more than an obstacle to be overcome. The injustices that Cyrus has committed, Cyaxares’ feeling of betrayal and righteous indignation—all of these are things that Cyrus must figure out how to sweep
under the rug. He views this meeting with his uncle as a puzzle: he must figure out how
to get the one outcome he desires. Cyrus’ behavior in this section can be categorized as
extremely utilitarian: he feels no compassion or love for his uncle but views him as a
thing that is temporarily blocking his path. Cyaxares proves that Cyrus has constantly
humiliated him and shamed him and treated him as his enemy, yet Cyrus remains
completely unaffected by this. This failure to register his uncle as a human being, much
less as a close relative to whom he should feel sympathy, is the pinnacle of Cyrus’
disturbing behavior in the *Cyropaideia*. In the conclusion I will discuss the implications
of Cyrus’ personality which as I have again shown here, is lacking in empathy or
sympathy for any human other than himself.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have argued that the general contemporary—and historical—interpretation of the *Cyropaideia*, according to which Cyrus is a model of good leadership, depends on two incorrect assumptions. Scholars have focused on Xenophon’s practical leadership virtues so much that they have overlooked that Cyrus does not fulfill the qualities of a good leader according to the Socratic definitions in the *Memorabilia*. Secondly, scholars have assumed that the *Cyropaideia*’s narrator is reliable. I argued that the narrator, just like Cyrus and his lieutenants, presents Cyrus’ actions in the best light possible. The narrator consistently waves away problems and contradictions whenever they appear in his narrative. In the middle chapters, I examined the consequences of my initial conclusions: when Cyrus’ ends are proved to be vicious, and when the narrator’s interpretation is viewed as unreliable, it should have a significant effect on how the reader understands the text. No longer is Cyrus a model for virtuous and excellent leadership; rather, I have argued that he is a cruel manipulator lacking in empathy or emotion who uses all whom he encounters for his own benefit. What remains to be addressed is why Xenophon would write the *Cyropaideia* in this way.866

In the introduction to the *Cyropaideia*, the narrator identifies a problem endemic to mankind, the solution to which, he claims, can be found in Cyrus’ life. The narrator

866 Whidden (2007b) points out that Xenophon might have wanted to use this indirect method of teaching in case Cyrus’ knowledge “turns out, as we will suggest, not entirely to be good for human beings” (541). Carlier (2010) argues that Xenophon writes this way to show to his readers that “after the Greek conquest of Asia the Greeks [would] relinquish their traditional constitutions and submit to an absolute monarch” (359).
notes that this problem infects not only the political sphere of human life but the domestic sphere as well: “We have had occasion before now to reflect how often democracies have been overthrown by the desire for some other type of government, how often monarchies and oligarchies have been swept away by movements of the people […] The same lesson, we had little doubt, was to be learnt from the family: the household might be great or small—even the master of few could hardly count on the obedience of his little flock.”

The problem solved by the *Cyropaideia* is one that plagues the master of an *oikos* as much as the master of a *basileia*. It is thus a text that any man should read.

Yet, as I have argued in this dissertation, Cyrus’ politics lead to the collapse of Persian and Asian society for the benefit of himself alone. Cyrus is, in this, not unique: history is full of similar examples. Yet this conclusion suggests that such ambitious, cold, charming yet vicious men cannot be stopped from harming others through normal means. Education, laws, public pressure, social debts: none can persuade this man to cease from his destructive behavior. That this is so is shown when Cyrus and Araspas, prompted by Araspas’ desire to rape Pantheia, discuss the power of love. Araspas is quite confident that love, unlike hunger, is completely voluntary. Cyrus rejects this position, saying

Πῶς οὖν, ἔφη ὁ Κῦρος, εἰ ἐθελοῦσιν· ἐστι τὸ ἐρασθῆναι, οὐ καὶ παύσασθαι ὅταν τις βούληται; ἀλλ’, ἐγὼ, ἔφη, ἔστι ἐκείνοι, ἐστι τὸ ἐρασθῆναι, ἐστι καὶ παύσασθαι ὅταν τις βούληται. ἀλλ', ἐγὼ, ἔφη, ἔστι ἐκείνοι, ἐστι τὸ ἐρασθῆναι, οὐ καὶ παύσασθαι ὅταν τις βούληται.

How then […] if falling in love is voluntary, is it not possible to stop when one wishes? But I have even seen people in tears from the pain of love; and people enslaved to those they love, even though before they fell in love they believed that it was bad to be enslaved; and people giving away many things of which it was better that they not be deprived; and people praying that they get free from it, just as they would from a

867 *Cyr.*, A.1.1.
868 *Cyr.*, E.1.11.
disease, and yet not being able to get free, but being bound by some necessity stronger than if they had been bound in iron. At any rate, they surrender themselves to serve the many whims of those they love. They nevertheless do not even try to run away, even though they suffer these evils, but they even stand guard so that those they love do not run off.\textsuperscript{869}

Although Cyrus in his idiosyncratic way depicts love as a sort of disease of utilitarianism, causing the sick man to give his things away, to enslave himself, to serve the whims of their new master—receiving nothing in exchange for his self-destruction—, he also reveals that he believes it impossible to break from the iron grip of this compulsion. Once a man recklessly gazes upon a beautiful person and is seized by love, he loses all control over himself. Love is a powerful compulsion that overrides everything, including one’s personality, beliefs, educated moderation, and feelings of self-preservation. It commands and directs every aspect of a man.

Yet we may recall that Cyrus has exhibited similar behavior himself. As a youth, Cyrus’ mask of normalcy always slipped away when he was about to kill either animals or people. In these moments, Cyrus instantly forgets education: “So Cyrus was learning [how to hunt] with enthusiasm. But when he saw a deer leap out, he forgot everything he had heard and pursued it, seeing nothing but the way it fled.”\textsuperscript{870} Cyrus instantly forgets feelings of shame: “the guards, when they got near to him, reproached him and told him of the danger into which he had gone, and said that they would report him. So Cyrus stood there, dismounted, and was distressed by what he heard. But when he perceived a shout, he leaped up on his horse as would one possessed; and when he saw a boar bearing down upon them, he rushed straight toward it...”\textsuperscript{871} Cyrus instantly forgets about self-preservation: “None the more did Cyrus slacken, but in his battle joy called out [...] and

\textsuperscript{869} \textit{Cyr.}, E.1.12.
\textsuperscript{870} \textit{Cyr.}, A.4.8.
\textsuperscript{871} \textit{Cyr.}, A.4.8.
continued the pursuit […] When Astyages saw the one side pursuing without forethought […] he was afraid that […] Cyrus might suffer some harm from falling in disorder on others who were prepared to meet him.”

Cyrus loses the power of speech and can only groan and shout when about to kill. Cyrus cannot stop himself—cannot even consider stopping himself—from ogling corpses, even though it produces horror in onlookers.

When Cyrus argues that the compulsion of love seizes a man with an iron grip, it seems that his argument is based on personal experience. Cyrus also experiences a compulsion, but his is kill, to dominate, to control: his compulsion, like love, forces him to forget his education, his plans, his desire for self-preservation and approval; he cannot speak, he cannot control himself, he cannot stop.

Yet, from a Socratic perspective, what should trouble us is not that men with such compulsions exist, but that such compulsions are beyond the control of the restraints of law or the moderation ingrained by education. From Cyrus’ depiction of this compulsion, it seems that even philosophy has little chance of protecting a man from it. Socrates essentially admits as much when he advises Kritoboulos to avoid kissing pretty men and to travel abroad to clear his head of such desires. Socrates advises Kritoboulos to go

872 *Cyr.*, A.4.22.
873 *Cyr.*, A.4.15.
874 *Cyr.*, A.4.24. Reisert (2009) sees this as in keeping with his general behavior—he says “Xenophon’s Cyrus delights in killing, lording it over the senseless corpses of the slain. Unlike Xenophon’s unhappy tyrant, Hiero, who longs to be loved indiscriminately by the human beings in his city, Cyrus has no need of anyone’s affection” (301). Reisert conflates Cyrus’ true personality with his mask here, however: he consistently tries to win the affection of his grandfather while in Media, albeit for vicious reasons. Although it would be to use his words outside of their intended purpose, I would suggest that Higgens’ words are provocative in this context. He (1977) says, “Cyrus is enterprising because he knows next to nothing of fear. Fear is something he has to learn about from others, and he receives his best instruction from the Armenian prince Tigranes” (48). Perhaps Higgens would not agree with my strictly literal reading of his words, but he suggests another way in which Cyrus does not seem to possess the normal human emotions and must ‘learn’ about them from others.

abroad before he harms himself: Socrates apparently believes that years abroad, years of
Socratic education lost, are healthier than falling in love: “you, Critobulus, I advise to
spend a year abroad. It will certainly take you at least as long as that to recover from the
bite.”\footnote{Mem., A.3.13. Socrates in fact says, “What do you think will happen to you through kissing a pretty
face? Won’t you lose your liberty in a trice and become a slave, begin spending large sums of money on
harmful pleasures, have no time to give anything fit for a gentleman, be forced to concern yourself with
things that no madman even would care about” (A.3.11)? Unlike Cyrus, Socrates at least realizes that
the compulsion of love is in pursuit of pleasure, even if he knows this pleasure is harmful.} If Kritoboulos came to Socrates already in the throes of compulsive love, it
seems that there is little Socrates could have done. Men in the grips of compulsions are
beyond help. They cannot be restrained by the laws, teachers, or their own self-interest:
they must do what they must do.

Let us then reconsider Cyrus. He has a compulsion to dominate and kill;
education, the judgment of his peers and superiors, self-preservation, and even family
bonds fail to restrain or moderate him. In an incompetent, talentless, ignoble,
impoverished fool, such a compulsion is almost certainly dangerous to no one but
himself. Yet there are men like Cyrus even (or perhaps especially) today, men who are
extremely intelligent and capable, educated and prepared, from good families and well-
connected, who also have the compulsion to kill, slaughter, dominate, to shape the world
for their own benefit through their ability to charm and convince others—many others—
to serve them. This is a problem that troubles the modern world as much as the ancient.

There are always competent men, men who have “attain[ed] the utmost proficiency in
speech and action”\footnote{Mem., A.2.15.} “for political ends”\footnote{Mem., A.2.16.} because “Ambition [is their] very life-
blood,”879 who use mastery of speech and action to pursue “greed and violence,”880 and “licentiousness and insolence,” 881 or, worse still, “to get control of everything and to outstrip every rival in notoriety.”882 Society tries to eliminate or at least moderate the vice in all men, but in such men its normal methods cannot succeed. The teacher cannot fix problems his students have hidden or develop after they leave him,883 and even if the teacher learned of their compulsion it is doubtful he could eliminate it.884 Laws will not hinder such men because they are capable of seducing those who ultimately enforce the laws—the general population—with charming and persuasive words.885 Once such a man has attained power there is little anyone can do but risk one’s own life in vain attempts to undermine him.886 Having obtained power, they often can only be removed by force—civil conflict—that results in the death of many innocents. Such men, the sort of men with whom the reader of Xenophon—or Plato—should be familiar, pose a real and eternal danger to society. They, unlike the ambitious but incompetent man who lacks empathy, harm not only themselves but society as a whole: they cause the deaths of hundreds, thousands, or, in modern times, millions. Patroklus dies because Achilles values himself over the Achaeans. Thousands of Athenians in the last two decades of the fifth century died pointlessly because two men, skilled but without empathy or scruples, put their personal political ambitions above the interests of Athens. Thousands of Greeks and Persians died because a vicious younger brother placed his ambition above the good
of the Persians as a whole. When ambitious men without the ability to empathize value
themselves over society and obtain political power, harm to society and the deaths of
innocents results. Education cannot stop these men; laws cannot stop these men; yet
perhaps the Cyropaideia can stop these men.

Cyrus’ life cannot be replicated. Too many of Cyrus’ stunning successes, the
lessons the narrator promised concerning politics and the ruling of other men, depend
entirely on luck. Cyrus was born the son of a king, which put him in a position to seize
the power he seized. He was fortunate that Astyages, a foreign king, was his grandfather.
He was also fortunate that he summoned him to live in Media for many years. Without
these three strokes of luck—so basic to Cyrus’ life that it is with these events that the
story of his life begins—, Cyrus would never have had access to any power, much less
the combined royal power of Persia and Media he needed to conquer the whole world. He
needed the Persian army to gain enough leverage over Cyaxares, whom he had
learned how to undermine in his childhood in Media, to steal his army. If he had not
seized the leaderless Median army, he could never have successfully invaded Assyria. If
he never destroyed Assyria, he would never have become world-king. Thus not only was
Cyrus fortunate in his parentage, grand-parentage, and the invitation to Media as a child,
but he was fortunate that Assyria and Media went to war when he was still young and

887 Cyr., A.2.1; A.3.1.
888 Carlier (2010) makes the point that “The Persia found at the beginning of the Cyropaedia has all the
traits of a Greek πολιτικός; Cyrus himself, before the conquest, makes one think of a Spartan prince or
more generally of a young and brilliant aristocrat from any Greek city. Xenophon thus suggests that a
few political and pedagogical reforms would be sufficient to render possible the appearance of a Greek
Cyrus anywhere in the Greek world of the fourth century” (339-40). Despite this, I would argue that
many of Cyrus’ strokes of luck cannot be replicated. Perhaps a Greek Cyrus could be born and
educated, but beyond that he would by needs diverge drastically once he reached adulthood, as we will
see below.
more fortunate still that Cyaxares asked for him, rather than Cambyses, to be appointed
general of the Persian army. He was fortunate that Cyaxares and Astyages were
incredibly patient and tolerant with him, for if they had distrusted or hated him, it would
have been impossible for Cyrus to manipulate them and maneuver within the Median
political system. These are just a few examples of the strokes of luck that made Cyrus’
life and successes possible. A combination of luck that cannot be replicated and political
circumstances virtually impossible in Greece allowed Cyrus to become world-emperor.
Cyrus’ methods depended on his context: thus one cannot imitate Cyrus. Why, then, does
the Cyropaideia exist?

Reisert notes that “Xenophon’s description of Cyrus’ rise to power and rule is so
attractive that his critique of Cyrus can be difficult to perceive.” 889 I would propose that
the purpose of the Cyropaideia is two-fold. There are, as I have argued, two levels of
meaning in the text: on the surface is the story and lesson of the narrator, a depiction of
Cyrus as a just and good man, an exemplary model for imitation in both political and
domestic life. Yet, as I have argued, if the reader applies Socratic philosophy, especially
Socrates’ discussions of the telos of leadership in the Memorabilia, and if he realizes that
the Cyropaideia’s narrator is unreliable, the reader should conclude that Cyrus is a
monster. He cheats and lies, he manipulates and murders, he uses and abuses; if he did
such things for the benefit of his society they would (perhaps) be excusable, as Cambyses
says. 890 However, as I argued in the introduction, over the course of his life Cyrus brought
great harm even to the Persian homotimoi in respect to both their finances and virtue.

889 Reisert (2009), 298.
890 Cyr., A.6.27.
Cyrus, for many reasons, becomes a catastrophe that almost destroys Persia. One conclusion of this, that Xenophon uses Cyrus to emphasize the incompatibility of the political and philosophical lives, has to a greater or lesser degree been argued by Tatum, Nadon, Gera, and Rasmussen. A philosophical lifestyle is not conducive to pursuing political goals; naturally, the political lifestyle is also not conducive to philosophical contemplation.

This conclusion would suggest that philosophical inquiry should take priority over, and certainly be mastered prior to, political participation, that education should precede action, that men should learn “prudence before politics.” Such men can see in Cyrus countless reasons for his failure (beyond his compulsion) to benefit society or create an empire that lasts beyond his death: the violent indoctrination of the School; Cyrus’ self-satisfied arrogance that he knows everything already; Cyrus’ preference for hierarchy over independent thought; his reliance on motivating his men through corruption; or his attempts to sow discord among all men for his own benefit. In addition, Cyrus is not philosophically inclined: he has no time for second thoughts, no willingness to hear the other side, and no ability to doubt himself. Not only does Cyrus’ personality disqualify him from being a student of Socrates, but his societal reforms make the study of philosophy impossible and would even label (and prosecute) philosophical pursuit.

891 Tatum (1989), 234; Nadon (2001), 178-179; Gera (1993), 298-299; Rasmussen, 94.
892 Mem., A.2.17.
893 Cyr., A.3.17.
895 Cyr., Г.1.38-40.
896 Cyr., А.5.7-13; Nadon (2001), 56-60.
897 Cyr., Н.1.16-23.
898 This is Field (2012)’s argument concerning the fundamental flaw in Cyrus’ character. For my part, I see it as one of many flaws in his personality.
conversations as treasonous. For the reader who understands this level of Cyrus’ character, for the reader who sees horror lurking in the *Cyropaideia*, the text thus becomes protreptic. One should follow Socrates, learn to philosophize, put contemplation before action, lest one, like Cyrus, destroy oneself and one’s friends through ignorance and arrogance. Yet I would suggest that the philosophically-inclined readers are not the primary target of the *Cyropaideia*. The *Memorabilia*, the *Agesilaus*, and, in fact, much of Xenophon’s corpus target such men.\(^{899}\) Xenophon’s Socrates has expressed an interest in benefiting society through ensuring that only qualified individuals—good men—involves themselves in politics. Thus, I would suggest that it is the other sort of reader, the ambitious young man who will become a master of politics but lacks any empathy or scruples, whom the *Cyropaideia* targets.

The *Cyropaideia* is an exciting adventure story of a young man who realizes his near limitless potential, humiliates superiors arrogant enough to oppose him, flouts the law, dominates his family, kills whomever he wants, has the pick of the most beautiful women and boys, shapes the world in his image, forces humanity to all but worship at his feet, and lives better than many demi-gods.\(^{900}\) The power, prestige, glory and promise of

\(^{899}\) Indeed, on one level the esoteric reading of the *Cyropaideia* targets such men. As Whidden (2008) notes, “Those like Xenophon who are led to philosophize about what is and is not possible to achieve through politics can learn from the *Cyropaedia* that the sort of stability that requires man’s debasement is always a possibility under a born leader like Cyrus who understands that legions of people will be willing to part with their freedom and even their humanity in exchange for gain and security. But though such stability is possible, it is in Xenophon’s judgment not good” (236).

\(^{900}\) Or, as Carlier (2010) puts it, “From the story of Cyrus’ conquest in the *Cyropaedia* comes a general lesson: it is possible for the leader of a small band, allied to a powerful sovereign who is idle against a powerful, unpopular sovereign, to make himself master of an immense empire, if he shows energy and strategic skill, and especially if he knows how to gain the sympathy and support of all” (345). Johnson (2005) says “Xenophon would similarly have his readers recognize the perilous attractions of empire, for both rulers and subjects, by falling prey to those attractions themselves. In this way Xenophon’s manipulation of his readers is every bit as cunning as Cyrus’ manipulations of his allies and subjects” (205). I think Johnson is right; I argue, however, that the *Cyropaideia* is targeted at a specific group of people, not the general readership as he suggests. Whidden (2008) adds that “Xenophon compels his readers to wonder whether Cyrus’s remarkably effective methods were in fact good and thereby cast
Cyrus—unjust, un-Socratic and ultimately repulsive to the philosophically-inclined reader—are calculated to seduce in particular the young, ambitious, capable man who lacks empathy or scruples. The Cyropaideia promises to fulfill every desire the ambitious and vicious teenage boy would want—power, influence, sex, killing, and control—by offering to teach such a boy how to achieve near-limitless power: Cyrus was uniquely successful, so if his success is to be imitated, so too should his methods. If one would to replicate his success, one should replicate his methods. The text thus encourages the young, ambitious, and vicious reader to begin replicating Cyrus’ success by replicating his methods. Yet, as I noted above, Cyrus’ methods cannot be replicated since they depend so fundamentally on strokes of luck that cannot be replicated.

The Cyropaideia contains a trap for such young men, the sort who, when they acquire political or military power, tend to harm society and kill innocents for their own benefit. Not only can Cyrus’ fortunate opportunities not be replicated, especially in Athenian society—no Athenian will inherit monarchical powers, no Athenians inherit the command of the Athenian army or navy—but Cyrus’ methods themselves would not

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901 Field (2012) argues a similar, if not parallel, point. She says of Xenophon’s depiction of Cyrus that Cyrus is “Xenophon’s preeminent representative of a recurring and significant political problem: the extremely talented and ambitious youth who, however well-meaning, is insufficiently thoughtful about the most important human concerns. This failure points to characteristic, but not inevitable, limitations of extraordinary political men, and close study of the text suggests that it has at least three obvious political dimensions” (733-4). The three dimensions she highlights are 1) Persia’s failure to sufficiently educate Cyrus, 2) Cyrus’ rule fails to enact good laws, growing increasingly brutal (partially because of his education), and 3) Cyrus’ lacks the introspection required to consider the proper end of politics (734). I substantially agree with Field; where we differ is my perception that Cyrus’ acts of brutality and viciousness are deliberate, not misguided.

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Higgens (1977) speaks of the literary freedom given to Xenophon by the extreme distance in geography and time, saying that “More likely he was prompted by the opportunity of a legendary figure provided for presented an ideal of action on the largest scale possible. Xenophon wished to discuss how government succeeded. In view of the fact that in his own age none seemed to; and Cyrus, having become a figure of myth, was a happy convenience, since he ruled successfully the largest kingdom known to Xenophon's time. The ideal and the historical could merge to create the first novel, a mimesis in prose. History turned to fiction could permit the elucidation of ideas concerning the typical and the timeless” (44).
produce the results the *Cyropaideia* promises they would produce. If a young Athenian
man, in his first position of authority, offered his men huge amounts of money to transfer
their loyalty from the state to him personally, or tried to induce them to abandon Athenian
values in favor of his own, or treated his superior officers with sneering insubordination,
he would find himself quickly, at the very least, seen as seditious. If, as Cyrus does, such
a young man attempted to plot the deaths of his personal opponents, steal from his family
members, or usurp an elder’s position as patriarch of his family, he would, at the very
least, alienate everyone who knows him. If, as Cyrus does, the young man went so far as
to refuse commands from a military superior, to attempt to usurp his commander’s troops,
or to set off on his own personal military campaign, he would find himself executed or
assassinated very quickly. Cyrus’ methods are, for Cyrus’ imitators, self-destructive:
people are simply not as tolerant, oblivious, or pliant as the Persians and Medes whom
Cyrus manipulates.

This is the secret at the heart of the *Cyropaedia*: it promises that manipulating
people individually or in groups is easy and without consequence. Cyrus manipulates
Astyages over and over yet never suffers for his behavior. Cyrus manipulates Cyaxares
over and over, yet Cyaxares insists on remaining so damnably tolerant that Cyrus never
sees any consequences. Cyrus lies to the Persian soldiers again and again, manipulating
them into corruption and destroying Persian society, yet the Persian commoners and
*homotimoi* are so pliant that they never seriously object. Astyages never punishes Cyrus;
Cyaxares never—until far too late—realizes that Cyrus is disloyal; no dedicated
republican ever attempts to assassinate Cyrus to protect the Persian constitution, or
organizes a mutiny, or reports Cyrus’ treason to Cambyses and the Persian Elders. Astyages, Cyaxares, the Persians, and the Medes all act with such mild tolerance and obedience to Cyrus that they display barely any independent thought at all. Thus the Cyropaideia prepares a reader for insubordination and revolution, but does not prepare him for the serious consequences that would, in the real world, almost certainly result.

The depiction of cause and effect in the Cyropaideia is, thus, manipulative. Realistic consequences do not proceed from realistic causes. The text shows Cyrus lie—and get caught lying—but does not teach that one detected lie makes the next lie more difficult. Cyrus is repeatedly caught manipulating and humiliating his family members, yet doing so does not give him a bad reputation. He arrogantly hijacks his grandfather’s army and risks the lives of countless Medes, yet the Medes scream his praises. The Persians sit tolerantly by and watch Cyrus dismantle their society for his own benefit and grow more loyal as a result. The reader thus learns how to corrupt an army (badly, I would argue), but does not learn how to deal with the repercussions once his superiors discovered his crime.

Thus ambitious and vicious men, Greek Cyruses, are those to whom the Cyropaideia is designed to particularly appeal: it promises to help them fulfill all their ambitions by teaching them how to dominate and control. Should they read the Cyropaideia and, persuaded, imitate Cyrus’ methods, they would quickly alienate those around them, develop reputations as vicious or untrustworthy men, or commit crimes and be punished. They may even be ostracized or executed, if they imitated some of Cyrus’ more bold and aggressive behavior.
Cyrus’ successes can be replicated of course: a man can unjustly overthrow the government of his city, through corruption or lies. A general can unjustly lead a successful revolt by corrupting his soldiers. A capable man can establish a world-empire and unjustly exploit all humans for his personal benefit. A man can take advantage of relatives for his own personal benefit, stealing or embezzling from, tricking or lying to, his family members. Successful con-men, tyrants, murderers, sociopaths, and thieves have always existed and always will exist. Humanity has always had its monsters. Yet the methods of these successful monsters are not those offered in the Cyropaideia: a man may use his soldiers to lead a coup, but he will not succeed if he does so as the Cyropaideia recommends. A man may rob his uncle, but he will not escape punishment if he does so as Cyrus recommends. A man may take advantage of his friends, but they will not stay his friends long if he acts as Cyrus acts. By tacitly promising quicker and more effective means of manipulative, criminal, and vicious behavior, the Cyropaideia attempts to direct ambitious and vicious young men towards methods that are self-destructive and ineffective: to remove such men from society, or to at least destroy their reputations and good names, is to remove one of the major causes of the political instability endemic to human society which the narrator emphasized in his introduction. Human societies are often unstable—governments often collapse—because there are certain vicious and selfish people who are very good at manipulation and persuasion.

If such vicious and competent men are hindered from becoming experienced soldiers or politicians well-placed and capable of seizing power and destroying their society for their own benefit, a greater stability and calm would come upon humanity.
Xenophon’s work would bring about a world which possesses a certain degree of calm in which Socratic philosophy—and happiness in general—can more easily flourish. Societies will always crumble and collapse, but it is often individuals of a particular sort, vicious men lacking empathy, who cause such crises. As promised in the *Cyropaideia*’s introduction, Cyrus does offer a solution to the political instability endemic in human society. The solution offered by the narrator is not, however, the solution offered by Xenophon.

There is, of course, a personal dimension to this: Xenophon’s teacher was executed because he became associated in the mind of the public with his own two, uncontrollable Cyruses. Perhaps if Alcibiades and Critias had been taught these self-destructive methods of seizing power, they would not have been able to so damage Athens that Socrates was caught, and killed, by the fallout.902 Perhaps the Alcibiades or Critias of the next generation will be induced to destroy themselves when young, allowing the next Socrates to live out his life in peace.

902 As Whidden (2008) puts it, the tragedy of history for Xenophon is that “Cyrus’s subjects prostrate themselves before him, but the Athenians put Socrates to death” (237).
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Primary Texts


Secondary Texts


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