

Ivan Jordović
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Novi Sad
Serbia

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XENOPHON ON THE NATURE OF POLITICAL LEADERHIP IN THE *MEMORABILIA* OF SOCRATES

Abstract: This article attempts to reconstruct Xenophon's view on political leadership on the basis of the *Memorabilia* of Socrates. There are two reasons why this work of Xenophon and not some other is in the focus of this study. The first is that this work, as a typical example of the Socratic literature (logoi Sōkratikoi), primarily reflects the views of Xenophon. The second reason is the standpoint that the *Memorabilia* of Socrates is not only an ethical, but also a political work, which is crucial for a proper understanding of the foundations of Xenophon's political thought. The examination of the *Memorabilia* of Socrates reveals that the traditional understanding of politics constitutes the foundation of Xenophon's view about the political realm, while the Socratic ethics represent its ethical superstructure. Thus Xenophon did not seek to in any way discredit the traditional approach to politics, but to it improve it. Another important feature of Xenophon's notion of political leadership is that it is not confined to the political realm, but also includes the social realm. This article finally demonstrates that according to Xenophon reciprocity and philia were the foundations of good leadership.

There are few writers whose opus reflects such a wide variety of subjects – history, biography, encomiums, philosophy—as Xenophon. Works such as *Hellenica*, *Agesilaus*, *Cyropaedia* and *Hieron* are a leading reason behind the tendency to set the *Memorabilia of Socrates* aside when studying Xenophon as a political thinker.¹ This article, however, opposes this viewpoint in the belief that the *Memorabilia of Socrates* form not only an ethical but also a political work of key importance for a proper understanding of the fundamentals of Xenophon's political thought.² Even a superficial reading reveals their political nature.³ More importantly,

¹ See e.g. P. J. Rasmussen, *Excellence unleashed: Machiavelli's critique of Xenophon and the moral foundation of politics*, Plymouth 2009, p. XIV.

² Cf. Th. Pangle, “Socrates in the Context of Xenophon's Political Writings”, in P. A. Vander Waerdt (ed.), *The Socratic Movement*, Ithaca/London 1994, p. 128.

³ Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.12–18, 24–47; 1.6.15; 2.1.1–19, 28; 2.6.14–27, 38–39; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 3.9.10–13; 4.1.2; 4.2; 4.4.15–17.

the fact that the ethical questions they contain, such as justice, self-control, self-reliance, virtue, prudence, gratitude etc., are discussed in a political context (how to behave with young, ambitious individuals who hunger after power, requirements for the proper exercise of authority, what a strategist needs to know etc.). The *Memorabilia of Socrates*, better than other works by Xenophon, enable us to penetrate the thought process which led him to adopt the stances now familiar to readers of his political thought.

The *Memorabilia of Socrates* are probably Xenophon's most complex and most important work. The variety of techniques employed in writing them explains why so many readers of our own day might consider them lacking in coherence. Not only are the *Memorabilia of Socrates* fully coherent, however, but their composition has been thought through in detail. In recent times, numerous studies have shown this to be a carefully written work, which in some of its aspects relied on existing tradition, while in others breaking new ground.⁴ For the present paper, earlier research provides a particularly significant conclusion. This is the realisation that Socrates' literature (*logoi Sōkratikoi*), is not "history" (*Geschichte*), but rather "poetry" (*Dichtung*). The image of Socrates in the works of his disciples is, in essence, the image of the ideal philosopher: a literary character through whom Socrates' followers confront their opposing views.⁵ The *Memorabilia of Socrates*, too, are part of that "poetry", because of which Xenophon's Socrates is no more and no less an historical figure than he is in the writings of other members of the Socratic circle.⁶ Therefore, Xenophon's depiction of Socrates corresponds to his sensibility and personal beliefs. Xenophon, at that, undoubtedly took over many understandings and principles from Socrates, but he also adjusted and formed them according to his own convictions and objectives.⁷

⁴ See V. J. Gray, *The Framing of Socrates: The Literary Interpretation of Xenophon's Memorabilia*, Stuttgart 1998, p. 8.

⁵ See O. Gigon, Sokrates. *Sein Bild in Dichtung und Geschichte*, Bern 1947, p. 13–16, 50, 62–64, 314; H. R. Breitenbach, "Xenophon von Athen", *RE* IXA.2, Stuttgart 1967, p. 1776; Gray 1998, p. 6; Ch. H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*, Cambridge 1996, p. 1–3, 32–34; R. Waterfield, "Xenophon's Socratic mission", in Ch. Tuplin (ed.), *Xenophon and his World. Papers from a conference held in Liverpool in July 1999*, Stuttgart 2004, p. 87–88, 95; L.-A. Dorion, "Xenophon's Socrates", in S. Ahbel-Rappe – R. Kamtekar (eds.), *A Companion to Socrates*, Malden (Mass.)/ London 2006, p. 93, 105; *Id.*, "The Rise and Fall of the Socratic Problem", in D. R. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, Cambridge 2011, p. 6–18, esp. 8–9; cf. also P. A. Vander Waerdt, "Socrates in the Clouds", in P. A. Vander Waerdt (ed.), *The Socratic Movement*, Ithaca/London 1994, p. 55–56.

⁶ Cf. Gigon 1947, 50–52; Gray 1998, p. 6; Dorion 2006, p. 93.

⁷ Cf. Waterfield 2004, p. 80, 84.

If we were required to sum up in one sentence what Xenophon's Socrates implies by good political leadership, it would be: a blend of the traditional and the "modern", i.e. "Socratic". Xenophon demonstrates his traditional approach in several places in the *Memorabilia of Socrates*. One of these is Socrates' dialogue with Pericles the Younger on restoring the old Athenian virtue and glory.⁸ The dialogue begins with Socrates' saying: "I am looking forward, I must tell you, Pericles, to a great improvement in our military affairs when you are minister of war. The prestige of Athens, I hope, will rise; we shall gain the mastery over our enemies", and continues with a disquisition on military skill, war, the size of the population, fame, the glorious past, obedience, geographical position, etc.

An echo of a conventional approach to politics may also be heard in Socrates' conversation with a young man who is going to go to Dionysodorus in order to learn generalship. After the young man agrees with Socrates that it is necessary for a military leader to be educated but that Dionysodorus has taught him tactics and nothing else, Socrates observes that this is only a small part of strategy. According to him, strategy, in addition to tactics, requires the knowledge of what is necessary to prepare for war and to supply the army. Also, a military leader needs to know how to be resourceful, active, careful, hardy, quick-witted, gentle and brutal, open and cunning, at once straightforward and designing, capable of both caution and surprise, lavish and rapacious, generous and mean, skilful in defence and attack, as well as possessing many other inherent and acquired traits.⁹

In discussion with a cavalry commander, Socrates points out that the commander's main concern is to ensure that the horses and riders are well-trained, to foster a keen spirit among the men, to lead by example and to be able to speak well, so that he may educate his troopers in the proper manner.¹⁰

When persuading the young Glaucon that he is not yet prepared for public life, Socrates asks him what he knows about state revenues and expenditure, the military power of Athens and its enemies, border security, the silver mines and grain reserves.¹¹

The topics selected and the choice of arguments by which Socrates substantiates his views testify conclusively to Xenophon's traditionalist approach to the political. However, this im-

⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.

⁹ Xen. *Mem.* 3.1; esp. 3.1.4–6.

¹⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 3.3; esp. 3.3.4–11.

¹¹ Xen. *Mem.* 3.6; esp. 3.6.5–6, 8–13.

pression is not quite correct, or rather represents only one half of the truth. Xenophon at the same time “modernised” traditional understanding of the political, probably from a desire to show that it did not necessarily need to lead to moral degeneration.

While he dissuades Glaucon from political engagement by way of examining traditional political aspects, Socrates chooses an entirely different approach when demonstrating to young Euthydemus that he is still not ready to take part in public life.¹² After Euthydemus admits that he strives towards the noblest of kind of excellence and the greatest of the arts, that which is entitled “kingly” (*basilikē technē*), Socrates leads him on to admit that he knows nothing about the most important questions such as: what is just, unjust, beautiful and good.¹³ When Euthydemus then says that he no longer knows which way to go to become better, Socrates draws his attention to the inscription on the temple in Delphi – “Know thyself” (*gnōthi sauton*), thus indicating to him that that is the path of self-examination since it leads to self-knowledge.¹⁴ Although we need to say here that the focus of this conversation about political engagement is on self-examination, this is not evidence that Xenophon is propagating some entirely new approach to the political. He does not cite Pythia’s prophesy from Plato’s *Apology*, according to which Socrates is the freest, most righteous and most reasonable man, i.e. the wisest of all.¹⁵ Delphi is, therefore, not mentioned in terms of Socrates’ excellence and outstanding qualities, and its mention rather serves to place the words addressed to Euthydemus in the context of generally accepted traditional wisdom. In this way, a coalescence occurs between the ideas of Socrates and traditional thought. It explains why Socrates speaks in positive terms about Themistocles, saying that the art of statesmanship is the greatest of all accomplishments and evoking examples from *Realpolitik*; at the end of their conversation Euthydemus believes that he will become an eminent man if he follows Socrates.¹⁶ For the same reason, the subject of a third conversation with Euthydemus, which serves as an example of how Socrates tried to make his companions efficient in action (*prak-*

¹² Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.1–4, 11, 36.

¹³ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.12–22.

¹⁴ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.23–30.

¹⁵ Xen. *Ap.* 14; Pl. *Ap.* 20e–21a; see E. de Strycker, *Apology of Socrates. A Literary and Philosophical Study with a Running Commentary. Edited and completed from the Papers of the late E. de Strycker by S. R. Slings*, Leiden 1994, p. 74–82; E. Heitsch, “Apologie des Sokrates: Übersetzung und Kommentar”, in E. Heitsch, W. Müller (eds.), *Platon Werke: Übersetzung und Kommentar*, vol. I.2, Göttingen 2002, p. 73–7, 91–92.

¹⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.1–2, 11, 15–17, 29, 36–38, 40.

tikōterous), is self-control (*enkratēia*).¹⁷ According to Socrates, self-restraint is not only a pre-condition for virtue. Without it there is no freedom for the state or the individual, nor can man be of use to the state or his friends.¹⁸

Xenophon's idea of linking the ethical elements of Socrates' thought with traditional pragmatic understanding of the political in order to avoid reducing it to the unscrupulous logic of *raison d'état*, may also be seen in his defining of political systems. On the one hand, he uses a variation of the standard classification: a kingship is when the ruler rules in accordance with the will of the citizens and the laws of the country. In contrast, tyranny is when an autocrat rules at his own whim, contrary to the will of the citizens and flouting the laws. Aristocracy is when the rulers are appointed by the laws; plutocracy is when wealth is the main criterion for participation in power; democracy is when everyone exercises power.¹⁹ On the other hand, Socrates says that kings (*basileas*) and rulers (*archontas*) are not those who wield the sceptre, or who were elected by no-matter-whom, or who acquired power on a turn of the dice, or those who seized it by deceit or force, but rather those who know how to rule. These, therefore, dispose of the necessary knowledge.²⁰ This knowledge, as revealed by the dialogue with the youth who goes to Dionysodorus to study generalship, implies not only practical knowledge (tactics, geographical conditions etc), but also the ability to differentiate between good and bad.²¹ For this reason Socrates, in the dialogue with Euthydemus, once both conclude that *dikaiosynē* is a necessary requirement for carrying out the *basilikē technē*, demonstrates to his young companion, by means of elenchus, that he does not know what righteousness or unrighteousness are and that there is knowledge (*epistēmē*) and teaching (*mathēsis*) about righteousness which need to be mastered.²² After this, Socrates points out to Euthydemus that the way to knowledge lies through self-knowledge, since he who knows himself knows what is good for him and what he can do, while he who does not know himself does

¹⁷ Xen. *Mem.* 4.5.1.

¹⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 4.5.2–4, 10-1; cf. 1.5.1–4.

¹⁹ Xen. *Mem.* 4.6,12; cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.86-8; Hdt. 1.97.2–3; 3.80–82; Thuc. 3.82.8; Arist. *Pol.* 1279a26–b10; Pl. *Resp.* 338d, 445d, 544c-e, 545b-c; see M. Ostwald, *Oligarchia: The Development of a Constitutional Form in Ancient Greece*, Stuttgart 2000, p. 13-20.

²⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 3.9.10–11; cf. C. McNamara, “Socratic Politics in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*”, in D. Gish, W. Ambler (ed.), *The Political Thought of Xenophon, Polis* 26, 2 (2009), p. 227.

²¹ Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.10.

²² Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.11–23.

not.²³ Further, just before the second dialogue with Euthydemus, Xenophon points out that Socrates believed *sōphrosynē* to be the foundation of all abilities, and therefore strove first to instruct his companions in this.²⁴ Finally, in the third dialogue with Euthydemus, Socrates emphasises that *enkratēia* is the prerequisite of freedom, both of the individual and of the state.²⁵

From all of the above it can be seen that at the base of Xenophon's understanding of the political lies a traditional understanding of politics, while the moral superstructure is comprised of Socrates' ethics. Xenophon acted thus not in order to discredit the traditional approach to politics in any way, but rather to further and strengthen it.

Another important feature of Xenophon's understanding of leadership is that it is not limited to the political realm. In the *Memorabilia of Socrates*, as well as in his other works, we find numerous examples in which administering the state is equated with the management of an estate, since the only difference between them is the number of people to be taken into account.²⁶ Through such an approach, Xenophon again demonstrates his intention of merging the political and the social, i.e. of overcoming the democratic division into the common and individual – public and private realm – the social and political. Perhaps this is what lies behind his tendency to use metaphors such as, for instance, the steersman and the physician.²⁷

The metaphor in the *Memorabilia of Socrates* which seems to be the most important for understanding Xenophon's perception of the nature of leadership is the one which compares the statesman with a shepherd taking care of his flock.²⁸ By citing that even Homer had used this metaphor for Agamemnon, Xenophon clearly lets us know that he follows tradition.²⁹ It is of no less importance that, at the very beginning of the *Memorabilia of Socra-*

²³ Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.23–33.

²⁴ Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.1–2.

²⁵ Xen. *Mem.* 4.5.2–4. *Enkratēia* is a necessary prerequisite for a good military leader (Xen. *Mem.* 1.5.1); cf. also Isochr. *or.* 2.29–30.

²⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 3.4.6–12; see also 2.6.38; 3.4.7; 3.6.14; 4.1.2; 4.2.11; *Oec.* 4.4–25; cf. V. J. Gray, *Xenophon on Government*, Cambridge 2007, p. 3–4.

²⁷ Xen. *Mem.* 1.7.3; 2.6.38; 3.3.9; 3.9.11; 4.2.5; see also R. Brock, "Xenophon's Political Imagery", in C. Tuplin (ed.), *Xenophon and his World. Papers from a Conference held in Liverpool in July 1999*, Stuttgart 2004, p. 252.

²⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.32; 3.2.1 see also 2.3.9; 2.7.13–14; 2.9.2, 7–8; *Cyr.* 8.2.14.

²⁹ Xen. *Mem.* 3.2.1; cf. Hom. *Il.* 2.243; Aeschyl. *Pers.* 73–76, 241–42; see Brock 2004, p. 249–50.

tes, Xenophon tells how Socrates, by talking about how strange it was to him that no one wanted to admit to being a bad herdsman, although the herds were being depleted and becoming increasingly thinner, criticized the terror of the Thirty Tyrants, headed by Critias.³⁰ Xenophon's Socrates, by means of this comment, takes a view completely opposed to the theory in the *Republic*, where Thrasymachus believes that herdsmen tend their herds only for their own advantage.³¹ Thrasymachus uses this metaphor to substantiate his view that justice is the advantage of the stronger and damages the subjugated, citing the rule of tyranny as the ultimate example of the truthfulness of this theory.³²

However, this does not mean that Xenophon's views entirely coincide with Plato's. There is one crucial difference. Xenophon defines reciprocity (and *philia*) as one of the key principles of good leadership.³³ While in the *Republic* it is claimed that Thrasymachus' standpoint resulted from the logic that it is righteous to return to everyone that which is received from them, i.e. to do good to friends and bad to enemies, in the *Memorabilia of Socrates* Xenophon's Socrates, by way of reciprocity and *philia* elaborates why the shepherd only has use from the flock when he acts for its welfare. Xenophon, however, does not do this by citing the literal metaphor shepherd – statesman. Instead, he uses the comparisons of watchdog – flock and shepherd – watchdog, which in essence result from this metaphor. All these comparisons are cited within the second book of the *Memorabilia of Socrates*, in which reciprocity is one of the central topics. A graphic example of this is provided in Aristarchus' dialogue with Socrates. After Socrates convinces him to employ his female cousins, refugees due to the civil war, left without work, Aristarchus was again capable of taking care of them and they loved him as a guardian for it, and he loved them as useful household members. The only thing the cousins objected to was that Aristarchus was the only one in the house who ate but did not do anything. To this objection, which was obviously made more in jest than serious since Aristarchus retells it merrily, Socrates advises him to tell his cousins the fable about the dog. According to this fable, the sheep complained to the shepherd that, even though they gave wool, lambs and cheese, they only thing he gave them was what they

³⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.32; cf. Pl. *Grg.* 516; see O. Gigon, *Kommentar zum ersten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien*, Basel 1953, p. 59; Brock 2004, p. 250.

³¹ Pl. *Resp.* 343b, 345c-e.

³² Pl. *Resp.* 343 b-c.

³³ Cf. D. M. Johnson, "Aristippus at the Crossroads: The Politics of Pleasure in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*", in D. Gish, W. Amber (eds.), *The Political Thought of Xenophon, Polis* 26,2 (2009), p. 211.

took off the ground, while with the dog, who gave nothing of this, he shared his bread. Upon hearing this, the dog replied to the sheep that he guarded the sheep from people and wolves and that without him they would not be able to graze without fear of death. After this, the sheep accepted that the dog should take precedence.³⁴ A second comparison occurs when Criton complains to Socrates of being persecuted by sycophants. Socrates then asks him whether he feeds the dogs so as to repel wolves from the sheep. In this way, Socrates advises him to befriend the poor but skilled orator Archedemus. Taking his advice, Criton provides material support for Archedemus, who returned this benefaction by very successfully defending him from sycophants. After that many friends approached Criton so that Archedemus would help them as well, since, according to Xenophon, what took place was that which happens to a shepherd who has a good dog – everyone wanted to drive their flocks close to him so that he would serve them too.³⁵

In spite of these comparisons, Xenophon was obviously aware that reservations existed towards acting in accordance with the principles of reciprocity. He makes this clear by Socrates' collocutors in the second book of the *Memorabilia of Socrates*, at first being reserved towards his proposal for them to be the first to do good, since they believe that they will not be reciprocated in the same measure or even fear that they will be reciprocated by evil.³⁶ Notwithstanding their fears and doubts, Socrates in the end succeeds in convincing each interlocutor of the usefulness of acting according to the principles of reciprocity.

Xenophon was, apparently, not entirely convinced that these Socrates' successes were in themselves sufficiently convincing in respect to founding political leadership on the principle of reciprocity. Aware that the objection could be made to this approach of being far too naïve, Xenophon satisfied his need to elaborate deeper on his standpoint by way of Socrates' conversation with Critobulus. In it, as has already been cited, Socrates takes the standpoint that bad men are not capable of *philia* and are prone to hostility.³⁷ After this claim, Socrates concludes that, even besides this, the problem remains that even those who strive towards virtue, in the struggle for first position in the state, squabble and hate each other. He explains this by saying that people are by nature prone to *philia*, but are also prone to enmity and fighting when

³⁴ Xen. *Mem.* 2.7.2–12; esp. 2.7.12; see Brock 2004, p. 251.

³⁵ Xen. *Mem.* 2.9; esp. 2.9.2, 7–8.

³⁶ Xen. *Mem.* 2.2.1, 14; 2.3.6, 17–8; 2.4.4; 2.6.1–4; 2.9.2; 2.10.3.

³⁷ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.1–4, 14–16, 19–20.

they hold the same things to be honourable and pleasant.³⁸ However, it is possible to overcome the tendency towards enmity through *philia*. According to Socrates, those who strive for virtue with the help of *enkrateia*, *karteria* and *autarkeia* are able to overcome all four kinds of argument (*eris*, *orgē*, *pleonexia* and *pthonos*) and so *philia* will connect *kaloi kagathoi*.³⁹ Since, because of their virtue, they are satisfied in daily life with moderation and prepared to share what they have with others, the beautiful and good are also open for cooperation in political life. As opposed to them, those who want position and power so as to get rich, commit violence against people and lead a pleasurable life, are unjust and bad. Therefore they are not capable of agreeing with others. Unlike them, the *kaloi kagathoi* want a place of honour in the state so as not to suffer injustice, so that they can help their friends and do good for their country. They are therefore willing to cooperate for the mutual benefit with those like them, since they can achieve more than. As an example for this standpoint, Socrates cites that the stronger would, if they were allowed to join together, beat the weaker at gymnastic competitions. Therefore it is also useful for the *kaloi kagathoi* to win over the best to be their friends than to have them as opponents, in the same way that allies are necessary in war and as more as possible if the beautiful and good are the opponents. Socrates then again emphasizes how it is necessary to do good to allies, and then adds that it is much better to show kindness to the best, since there are fewer in number and they know, unlike the bad, to reciprocate. Not only are there much more bad people than good, they also demand a lot more benefactions.⁴⁰

This Xenophon's approach to politics is interesting because it essentially combines two approaches. The first emanates a pessimistic view of human nature and therefore easily fits in with the logic of *Realpolitik*. Xenophon so admits that in daily life even people who act nicely and know shame, get into mutual conflicts in the worst possible way. Of the bad ones he says that there are more of them in politics than there are good ones, that they only look after their own interest and ask for more than they give because of which they are incapable of (sincere) cooperation. According to him, the main reason because of which advantage should be given to cooperation with the good, over association with the bad, is advantage. The good are better allies, i.e. more useful. Xenophon's Socrates does not advise a blind belief in the

³⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.20–2. Xenophon is possibly emulating Hesiod in this respect, too (Hes. *Op.* 11–26) see O. Gigon, *Kommentar zum zweiten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien*, Basel 1956, p. 143.

³⁹ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.21–23; Gigon 1956, p. 145–47.

⁴⁰ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.22–7.

goodness of others and in nice words, but rather that one should take as friends (political allies) only those who have proven themselves, i.e. who have done good to their friends before. This was something that was easy to verify in a *face-to-face* and *open-air society* such as the Greek one.⁴¹ The second approach exudes idealism, for it takes moral as its starting point for overcoming the destructive logic of polities, or rather starts from the point of the ethical approach to politics being superior to the unscrupulous one. According to Xenophon, the beautiful and good are more useful, since they are more capable and respect reciprocity. The *kaloi kagathoi*, again, are more capable and respect reciprocity because they strive towards virtue, i.e. by *enkratēia*, *karteria* and *autarkeia* they suppress their lusts and passions.⁴²

Xenophon's strong advocacy of the principle of reciprocity is quite understandable if we take into consideration that reciprocity is a culturally universal phenomenon. It not only represents one of the central values in pre-modern societies, and especially those which are pre-state or proto-state, and also plays an important role in modern societies.⁴³

The fact that Xenophon lists the principle of reciprocity among the key principles of political leadership is, however, for several reasons irreconcilable with Athenian democratic ideology.⁴⁴ An important consequence of acting according to the principle of reciprocity by way of doing services, presenting gifts and benefactions is that, in this way, a “chain” or “network” of personal relations is created. On one hand, this can be a powerful component of social integration. On the other hand, however, this contradicts the development of a state order in which power is, from a personal plane transferred onto the plane of impersonal institutions and laws which carry out the authority on behalf of something abstract such as “the people”.⁴⁵ Another feature of reciprocity which is in collision with the democratic ideal of equality is that it stimulates the development and establishment of asym-

⁴¹ Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.6–7, 20–21, 24–27; see also Isoc. *or.* 1.24–25.

⁴² Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.22–27.

⁴³ See R. Seaford, “Introduction”, in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1998, p. 4; D. Braund, “Herodotus on the Problematics of Reciprocity”, in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1998, p. 160, 163.

⁴⁴ See S. von Reden, *Exchange in Ancient Greece*, London 1995, p. 85–89, esp. 87.

⁴⁵ See. H. van Wees, “Reciprocity in Anthropological Theory”, in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1998, p. 21, 25, 47; W. Donlan, “Political Reciprocity in Dark Age Greece: Odysseus and his *hetairoi*”, in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1998, p. 55, 63.

metrical relations and accumulation of personal power.⁴⁶ With the individual “generously” doing favours for the less wealthy and influential than himself and presenting gifts which they cannot entirely reciprocate, he makes them feel indebted and brings them into a dependant position, i.e. turns them into his followers. In the example of Criton and Archedemus, Xenophon himself exalts this very kind of reciprocity. By, at the instigation of Socrates, financially supporting Archedemus, Criton secures Archedemus’ protection from sycophants. Xenophon clearly shows that Archedemus has *de facto* arrived at a submitted position in relation to Criton, by Socrates, in using the metaphor of the shepherd, flock and dog, comparing the first with the watchdog, while comparing the second with the shepherd, i.e. master.⁴⁷ That a wealthy person had, by means of the principle of reciprocity, led a second person to place his abilities from public life in his service can also be understood from Xenophon’s comment that Criton’s friends begged him to give them Archedemus as protection, as well as that opponents criticized Archedemus that he was ingratiating (*kolakeuō*) himself to Criton out of self-interest.⁴⁸ Because of all this, it does not surprise that Xenophon’s advocacy of reciprocity in public life can be interpreted as a reflection of a significantly different thinking on the relation between the *polis* and *oikos*, and thus also on relations in political life, than the one which was held to be correct and desirable in Athens under democracy.⁴⁹

In conclusion, it is necessary to underline another feature of reciprocity in political life which is very important for understanding Xenophon’s view of leadership. It was well-spotted and described in the following way by Hans van Wees:

“From genuine generosity to exploitation in disguise, all forms of reciprocity in political life share one key feature: they deny, in effect, that a relation of power exists. Notionally, no one sur-

⁴⁶ See von Reden 1995, p. 87, 109–110; D. Konstan, “Reciprocity and Friendship”, in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1998, p. 279–280, 296–297, 300.

⁴⁷ Xen. *Mem.* 2.9.4–7; esp. 7; cf. 2.7.12–14. The subordinate position of the recipient of gifts and favours in relation to the benefactor is reflected in the fact the interlocutors of Socrates compare the recipient with a slave and servant.

(Xen. *Mem.* 2.7.6; 2.8.4); see Gigon 1956, p. 187.

⁴⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 2.9.4–8; esp. 8. It is quite possible that the above mentioned Archedemos is identical with the *prostataēs tou dēmou* who initiated the Hellenic Arginusae trial, the same person to whom Aristophanes and Lysias pejoratively refer to as a demagogue (Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.2; Ar. *Ran.* 417; Lys. *or.* 14.25); see Gigon 1956, p. 184.

⁴⁹ See S. von Reden, “The Commodification of Symbols: Reciprocity and its Perversions in Menander”, in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1998, p. 257.

renders his autonomy, as was pointed earlier; supposedly, everyone gives gifts and performs favours of his own free will. Followers and subjects believe in their own independence, and feel justified in asserting it when leaders and rulers make demands which stretch any pretence of mutual generosity beyond breaking point.”⁵⁰

The tendency of reciprocity to cover up and/or deny relations of power is important inasmuch that it reveals the reason why many scholars, when analysing the *Cyropaedia*, have inclined to the so-called *Ironic/Darker Reading* of this, Xenophon’s longest work.⁵¹ Instead of seeing in Xenophon’s description of Cyrus’s rise a strong advocacy of reciprocity in political life, in the tendency of this principle to cover up relations of power they “read” the author’s subversive intention to condemn the methods of rule with the help of which the Persian emperor became the most powerful man of his age.

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⁵⁰ van Wees 1998, p. 47.

⁵¹ Cf. V. J. Gray, *Xenophon’s Mirror of Princes*, Oxford 2010, p. 25, 56–67, 117–18, 131, 170–74, 263–89, 354, 363–64.

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