

Interpretation

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Socrates's Political Legacy: Xenophon's Socratic Characters in *Hellenica* I and II

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Abstract: This essay seeks to illuminate and interpret Xenophon's portrayal of active Socratic politics in the first part of the *Hellenica* by means of analyses of three characters associated with Socrates. First, I review the speeches and deeds of the two figures who are presented elsewhere by Xenophon as having been Socratic pupils, Alcibiades and Critias. Next, I offer a close reading of the only passage in the *Hellenica* featuring an explicit mention of Socrates, Eurypotemus's defense of the Arginusae generals. I argue that these three figures exemplify three different ways to put Socratic insight to work in the political realm—as a general, as a tyrant, and as an orator—and that each is beset by characteristic difficulties and un-Socratic errors of thought or judgment.

Is the idea of a “Socratic political life” oxymoronic? The Platonic Socrates is known for his public investigations of penetrating political questions and his defense of a philosophic utopia, but he famously abstained from participation in Athenian political life. Socrates's philosophic life, to the extent it was guided or motivated by the question of how a human being ought to live, involved the contemplation of political things but did not culminate in any unqualified endorsement of political activity. But if Socrates thought his own life was best lived in the shadow of Athenian politics, his pupils tended to find their way into the spotlight—either because they could not live up to the standard of their teacher, or because they came to disagree with his practical philosophic conclusions, or else because they believed some differences between the circumstances of Socrates's life and their own called for different courses of action on the basis of fundamentally shared philosophic insights. Yet one can hardly study Socratic political philosophy without wondering

how and how well the comprehensive view of politics purportedly offered by Socratic inquiry actually prepared the student for navigating the stormy seas of Athenian democracy.

Xenophon's *Hellenica* offers an opportunity for the exploration of this question. A military and political history of Greece that appears to pick up the thread of Thucydides's narrative, the *Hellenica* is Xenophon's only non-Socratic work (aside from the *Anabasis*)¹ that mentions Socrates and recounts the political deeds of characters who, elsewhere in Xenophon's works, appear to have learned from Socrates—most notably, Critias and Alcibiades. Do these characters carry some Socratic wisdom with them into the pages of the *Hellenica*? And if so, can we discern Xenophon's judgment of their statesmanship and thus of what would be a "Socratic politics"? Juxtaposed with the (mis)deeds of these Socratics manqués is the oration of Euryptolemus, which follows Xenophon's only explicit reference to Socrates in the *Hellenica*.² We approach Alcibiades, Critias, and Euryptolemus as ostensibly offering three distinct possibilities for how one might attempt to guide oneself through the perilous world of Athenian politics by the light of some Socratic insight: as a general, as a tyrant, and as an orator.³

¹ In this sense, the *Anabasis* and *Hellenica* form an important pair within Xenophon's corpus. Eric Buzzetti, *Xenophon the Socratic Prince: The Argument of the "Anabasis of Cyrus"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), provides an impressive exegesis of the former work along some of the same lines I will attempt to follow, though in a comparatively much abbreviated manner (treating only the first two books), with respect to the latter.

² It should be made clear in the case of Euryptolemus that there is no evidence of his having known or learned from Socrates. One might even wonder whether he is not a character of Xenophon's own invention. We examine his speech in the *Hellenica*, then, not because he represents a concrete example of "Socrates's political legacy," but because Xenophon insists, by his juxtaposition of Euryptolemus with Socrates, that any study of the Socratic elements of the whole work must attend to this passage with special care.

³ Strong cases could be made for the inclusion of other events and characters in a study of Socratic themes in these sections of *Hellenica*, but they cannot be treated in a discussion of such limited scope as this. Particularly noteworthy are Theramenes, who reminds of Socrates by his opposition to the tyranny of the Thirty (discussed below), including his citation of their treatment of Leon of Salamis (2.3.39), and by the scene of his death (2.3.55–56; see John Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times* [London: Routledge, 1995], 151–58 and Vivienne Gray, *The Character of Xenophon's "Hellenica"* [Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989], 26–28, and cf. Diodorus Siculus 14.5.1–4, Pseudo-Plutarch, *Life of Isocrates*), and his fellow trierarch Thrasybulus, who inaugurates the restoration of traditional Athenian democracy after the civil war by an "invocation of the Delphic charge to 'know thyself' famously associated with Socrates" (Bernard J. Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded: Xenophon's Political History in the *Hellenica*," *Polis* 26, no. 2 [2009]: 330). Paul Ludwig, "Xenophon as a Socratic Reader of Thucydides," in *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides*, ed. Ryan K. Balot, Sara Forsdyke, and Edith Foster (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 515–30, and Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," should be consulted for observations on these and other Socratic elements of the *Hellenica* passed over in this essay.

Opinions differ, however, as to whether the *Hellenica* can shed any light on the question of Socratic political wisdom. Scholars were long beset by a terrible prejudice against Xenophon's Socratic-philosophic credentials, and the *Hellenica* in particular was seen as a paltry imitation of Thucydides, devoid of thoughtful reflection and too biased even to be useful as a source of historical information.⁴ The last half century, however, has given way to steadily growing appreciation of the *Hellenica* as a text of considerable artistic, didactic, and historiographic merit.⁵ At the outset of this resurgence of interest, it was Leo Strauss who argued more insistently than anyone before or since that the perspective Xenophon adopts in the *Hellenica* can only be understood in light of the impact Socratic philosophy had on his thought.⁶ If Strauss is right, there can be little doubt that Xenophon has portrayed the characters in the *Hellenica* whose careers were influenced by Socrates with that crucial fact in mind or that the sole mention of Socrates in the work, which is followed by the oration of Euryptolemus, is of great significance.⁷

⁴ The first and most famous critic of this type was probably B. G. Niebuhr, "Über Xenophons Hellenika," *Rheinisches Museum* 1 (1827): 194–98 (cf. Leo Strauss, *Xenophon's Socrates* [South Bend, IN: Saint Augustine's, 1998], 179), but there were many others. See George Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. 8 (London: John Murray, 1850), 155; J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 86; Malcolm MacLaren Jr., "On the Composition of Xenophon's *Hellenica*," *American Journal of Philology* 55, no. 2 (1934): 250; W. P. Henry, *Greek Historical Writing* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1966), 1–3, 53–54; Christos C. Patsavos, "Thucydides and Xenophon as Historians," *Social Science* 45, no. 4 (1970): 210–11. Other critics are well reviewed by Christopher Tuplin, *The Failings of Empire* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993), 12–14.

⁵ See, e.g., Ludwig, "Xenophon as a Socratic Reader," 518–59; Sarah Brown Ferrario, "Historical Agency and Self-Awareness in Xenophon's *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*," in *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry*, ed. Fiona Hobden and Christopher Tuplin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 343; Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," 316–18; Frances Pownall, *Lessons from the Past* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 65–66; Tim Rood, "Xenophon and Diodorus: Continuing Thucydides," in *Xenophon and His World*, ed. Christopher Tuplin (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2004), 341–48, 390, 357–59; Vivienne Gray, "Interventions and Citations in Xenophon, *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*," *Classical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (May 2003): 111; Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 3–5; Tuplin, *Failings of Empire*, 11–18; Gray, "Continuous History and Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1–2.3.10," *American Journal of Philology* 112, no. 2 (1991): 202; Bodil Due, "The Return of Alcibiades in *Hellenica* I.IV, 8–23," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42 (1991): 39; Peter Krentz, *Xenophon: Hellenika I–II.3.10* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1989), 6–8; Gray, *Character of Xenophon's "Hellenica"*, viii, 180; Gerald Proietti, *Xenophon's Sparta: An Introduction* (Boston: Brill, 1987), 3; W. E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1977), 99–102; Henry, *Greek Historical Writing*, 191–93.

⁶ Leo Strauss, "Greek Historians," *Review of Metaphysics* 21, no. 4 (1968): 663.

⁷ *Hellenica* scholars generally persuaded by Strauss's interpretation of Xenophon naturally gravitate to this position (see Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," 316–18, 330–31; Proietti, *Xenophon's Sparta*, 23–25, 52, 63, 72–73; Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian*, 21–22, 127), but cf. Robin Waterfield, "Xenophon's Socratic Mission," in Tuplin, *Xenophon and His World*, 79–80; Gray, "Continuous History and Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1–2.3.10," 6–7; Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 7–9, and Jean Luccioni, *Les idées politiques et sociales de Xénophon* (Paris: Ophrys, 1947), 21, for articulations

For our purposes, however, it is not necessary to resolve the question whether the *Hellenica* must be understood in the context of Xenophon's Socratism. The broad agreement in contemporary scholarship that has restored to the *Hellenica* its status as a thoughtfully written work, carefully ordered for the sake of educating the patient and diligent reader, is enough to justify the hypothesis that its characters have been portrayed so as to reflect any commonalities Xenophon considered significant. And Xenophon has elsewhere emphasized the importance of the Socratic common denominator shared by Critias's and Alcibiades's political careers.⁸ In the second chapter of his *Memorabilia*, Xenophon defends Socrates against the accusation that "both Critias and Alcibiades did the greatest evils to the city after having become Socrates's associates" (1.2.12). The examination of Critias and Alcibiades in the *Hellenica* below is informed by Xenophon's complex response to this charge, of which, however, we emphasize here only the two most important and relevant features.⁹ First, Xenophon portrays both Alcibiades and Critias in the *Memorabilia* as having acquired shockingly critical or dismissive views of traditional, democratic, Athenian law (1.2.39–46, 1.2.29–38). Second, Xenophon says explicitly he does not oppose (*ouk antilegō*) those who charge that Socrates should not have taught his associates "the political things" before teaching them to be moderate (1.2.17). To be sure, Xenophon argues in the *Memorabilia* that the faults of Alcibiades and Critias reflect their *failure* to follow the course of Socratic education, which had held the only possibility of their successful reform. It is not our purpose here, however, to consider the details of the (probably quite different) relationships between Socrates and these pupils in the course of which he taught them "the political things," but rather to consider whether and how those teachings eventually manifested themselves in the understandings and decisions of the mature political actors.

of similar notions without reference to Strauss's judgment on the matter. Rood ("Xenophon and Diodorus") stands out as an author who is both sharply critical of Strauss (342n5, 379n93) and recognizes the significance of Socrates's enigmatic appearance (379).

⁸ Gabriel Danzig shares the view that Xenophon cannot have portrayed Alcibiades and Critias in the *Hellenica* without thinking of their connection to Socrates ("The Use and Abuse of Critias: Conflicting Portraits in Plato and Xenophon," *Classical Quarterly* 64, no. 2 [2014]: 517). For a more general argument for the need to read Xenophon intertextually, see Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 5–9.

⁹ For a fuller treatment of Socrates's instruction of Alcibiades and Critias, see Thomas Pangle, *The Socratic Way of Life: Xenophon's "Memorabilia"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 26–28, 31–37; Gabriel Danzig, "Alcibiades versus Pericles: Apologetic Strategies in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*," *Greece & Rome* 61, no. 7 (2014): 7–28; Danzig, "Use and Abuse of Critias," 515–16; Vivienne Gray, *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes: Reading the Reflections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 251–54; Louis-André Dorion, *Xenophon Mémorables*, vol. 1 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2000), clx–clxix; Strauss, *Xenophon's Socrates*, 12–15; Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 151–52.

ALCIBIADES AND CRITIAS

Xenophon's portrayal of Alcibiades's tactical and strategic acumen in military affairs invites us to conclude that his quick decision-making, commanding manner, tactical cunning, and rhetorical ability are responsible for Athens's early successes in the *Hellenica*.¹⁰ Hundreds of ships (1.1.7–8, 13) lumber toward a chaotic draw in the Battle of Abydus until Alcibiades, arriving with eighteen ships, scores a decisive victory. After a month of imprisonment in Sardis, Alcibiades orchestrates his escape, somehow gets together “five triremes and a skiff,” and, having made rendezvous with the Athenians, begins to give orders to the other generals (1.1.9–13). He is in total command of the fleet, and seems to be the only admiral who appreciates the importance of stealth: among other measures, Alcibiades “proclaims death as the penalty for anyone caught sailing” away from his camp at Proconnesus, “so that no one could inform the enemy of the number of their ships” (1.1.15; see also 1.1.13, 17).¹¹ By contrast, the fighting that takes place without Alcibiades seems hopelessly clumsy (1.1.1–6, 2.1–11, 5.12–14, 6.13–23, 33ff.). Every move Alcibiades makes is a coup. He sees through the Chalcedonians' attempt to hide their money in Bithynia (1.3.2–3), and his care to extend the wall around Chalcedon to the river proves decisive in taking the city (1.3.4, 7). It is Alcibiades's cunning and adaptability to circumstances that deliver Byzantium to the Athenians by fraud when force proves inadequate (1.3.16, 20).

But is Alcibiades's well-honed knack for tactics and strategy particularly Socratic?¹² As we know from the *Memorabilia*, Alcibiades's Socratic education was a somewhat delicate matter for Socrates's supporters, since it contributed to capital charges being laid against him. By writing both the *Memorabilia* and the *Hellenica*, Xenophon takes a risk that Plato did not allow himself: he shows Alcibiades as a pupil of Socrates in one place, and in his political activity in another. The Alcibiades of the *Hellenica* has learned that ruling requires a combination of force and persuasion (1.3.16). In the *Memorabilia*, Socrates suggests that a general, in addition to having tactical know-how, must be “both friendly and cruel, both simple and treacherous, both protective and

¹⁰ Proietti, *Xenophon's Sparta*, 1–9; Ludwig, “Xenophon as a Socratic Reader,” 517; cf. Strauss, “Greek Historians,” 664; Due, “Return of Alcibiades,” 39–40; Rood, “Xenophon and Diodorus,” 366.

¹¹ Compare this with the decisive failure of the other generals noted by Alcibiades at Aegospotami (2.1.25). I have mainly consulted E. C. Marchant's Oxford Classical Texts edition of the Greek of the *Hellenica*. Translations into English are generally my own, though I have made regular reference to the translation of John Marincola in Strassler's Landmark edition (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009).

¹² Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 27–38, sees some Socratic influence in the emphasis Xenophon puts on Alcibiades's and other leaders' ability to instill order (*taxis*).

a thief, lavish and rapacious, gift-giving and greedy, cautious and ready to attack” (3.1.6). The political upshot of what is Socratic in Alcibiades, then, may be on display more in what he says at Proconnesus than in what he does at Cyzicus, more at Byzantium than at Chalcedon.¹³ But this also means that what Alcibiades has been enabled (though perhaps not encouraged) to do by Socrates will sometimes fall beneath the bar of “things worthy of being remembered,” which Xenophon appears to have set for himself throughout the *Hellenica*.¹⁴ In what follows, then, we look not only at what is most striking in Alcibiades’s deeds, but also at that about which Xenophon is more reticent.

Alcibiades’s most momentous decision is indeed presented by Xenophon with baffling indifference. After the battle of Notion, Alcibiades makes what seems to be his only mistake in the *Hellenica* by trusting command of the fleet to a subordinate who, directly disobeying Alcibiades’s orders, engages Lysander’s fleet and loses fifteen triremes in the battle (1.11.12–14)—no insignificant loss, but nothing compared to the gains Alcibiades has won. Yet the fickle Athenian demos blames Alcibiades for the setback and elects a new set of generals (1.5.16). Alcibiades’s subsequent desertion of the Athenian navy is described in fewer than twenty words: “So Alcibiades, being treated poorly even within the army, took one trireme and sailed to his fortress in the Chersonese” (1.5.17). Alcibiades disappears as suddenly as he had arrived, and Xenophon at first gives very little indication as to why he decides to leave. But Xenophon juxtaposes Alcibiades’s departure with the events surrounding the Battle of Arginusae, after which the victorious Athenian generals are tried and sentenced to death en masse for failing to rescue their stranded comrades, or to recover their corpses, in stormy seas. It seems Alcibiades correctly interpreted the rumblings of the demos, audible even among his soldiers, as an ominous indication of its mood.¹⁵ His defection may (yet again) have saved his life.

¹³ Here I refer to the *Memorabilia* to help illuminate what is Socratic in the *Hellenica*. Indeed, it would be too much to expect to learn about Socratic politics from the *Hellenica* alone. Rather, the *Hellenica* can help us to clarify and refine our hypotheses concerning Socratic politics formed elsewhere, as only depictions of political speeches and deeds could. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 19b3–20c3 and *Republic* 466d6ff.

¹⁴ See 4.8.1, and cf. *Anabasis* 5.8.26. Strauss suggests that the *Hellenica* is “devoted above all to the serious deeds of perfect gentleman” (“Greek Historians,” 662). For other accounts of the *Hellenica*’s unifying themes, see Gray, “Interventions and Citations,” 111ff.; Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian*, 123–25; Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 241–49.

¹⁵ To say that the demos was fickle, in other words, is not to say that it acted unpredictably; its fickleness was a characteristic trait, as Alcibiades understood. Rood notes the foreboding signs Xenophon includes from the moment of Alcibiades’s return (“Xenophon and Diodorus,” 369).

The suggestion that Alcibiades cared little enough for the Athenians to be willing to abandon them in this way might seem to be at odds with the unforgettable scene of his triumphant homecoming in 407. Yet here, too, Xenophon's reticence with respect to Alcibiades's motives sends us hunting for clues. Alcibiades is simply said to "wish to sail home with the soldiers"—clearly he is still concerned that he will be received harshly (1.4.8, 11, 18). He is only willing to disembark at the Piraeus once he has seen his companions waiting for him (1.4.19), though he then stays for two months (1.4.21). It seems to be *only* for the sake of these "companions" (*epitēdeious*) that Alcibiades is willing to disembark and return to the city, and even then he comes protected by bodyguards (1.4.18). The cause of Alcibiades's trepidation is somewhat obscured by the fact that Xenophon spends twenty-one lines describing the arguments of those who welcomed Alcibiades back, and only three on his detractors: "others said that he alone had been the cause of their past evils, and that he alone risked becoming a bringer of fearful things to the city" (1.4.17).¹⁶ The prophetic character of their reported concern, however, directs us to what must in fact have been the most prominent feature of arguments among the Athenians against Alcibiades's return. Those in the city who believe that he was truly guilty of impiety must fear that his return will bring a pollution to the city.¹⁷ But Alcibiades knows the Athenians well; their fear of him is matched by his of them. He has synchronized his visit with a religious festival on which "no one would dare to take up a serious deed" (1.4.12),¹⁸ and he makes several public speeches, not narrated by Xenophon, defending his piety (1.4.20). The *pièce de résistance* is Alcibiades's leading of the first procession to Eleusis by land since the Spartan occupation of Deceleia had made it too dangerous: aside from the fact that the Mysteries had already been performed earlier that year (1.4.20), it must be recalled that Alcibiades

¹⁶ Rood, "Xenophon and Diodorus," 368–69, surveys a number of possible explanations for this disproportion before suggesting for his own part that comparison with Thucydides's more balanced judgments helps us to see how sharply Alcibiades polarized Athenian opinion. Xenophon's reticence with respect to the Athenians' concern over Alcibiades's impiety seems of a piece with his relative silence on pious observance in the *Hellenica* up to the victory of the restored democracy over the Thirty at the end of Book 2. For a fuller treatment of this theme, see Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," 327–31, and cf. Strauss, "Greek Historians," 663–64.

¹⁷ See Due, "Return of Alcibiades," 46–47, and cf. Gray, *Character of Xenophon's "Hellenica,"* 92. Cf. Thuc. 8.53.2.

¹⁸ Blaise Nagy, "Alcibiades' Second 'Profanation,'" *Historia* 43, no. 3 (1994): 275, 282–85, takes this coincidence to have been *unfortunate* for Alcibiades (see also Due, "Return of Alcibiades," 42), and rather outlandishly suggests that it was orchestrated by Alcibiades's enemies (see Frances Pownall, "Condemnation of the Impious in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," *Harvard Theological Review* 91, no. 3 [1998]: 262n74). He does not consider the possibility that the danger to Alcibiades is mitigated by the timing of his return. Cf. 4.4.2; Plato, *Phaedo* 58a6–c5.

had been exiled for profaning the Eleusinian Mysteries and had been the one to advise the Spartans to fortify Deceleia. Alcibiades understands the gravity and reverence demanded by Athenian piety. He knew he had to flee when the *Salaminia* came to retrieve him at Catana, and he knows he must assuage the pious fears of the Athenians upon his return.

To Alcibiades's apparent recognition of the need to address the demands of Athenian piety in this episode one might oppose his flippancy and disregard for the importance of the oaths to be sworn over the treaty following his victory at Chalcedon (1.3.8–12). In this case, as in many others, one concern of Alcibiades's appears to trump all others: the collection of money. From his very first words in the *Hellenica*, this is the most consistent feature of Xenophon's presentation of Alcibiades.¹⁹ Most astoundingly, Alcibiades is said to collect one hundred talents in a single trip to the Ceramic Gulf on his way back to Athens (1.4.8–9). Alcibiades naturally needs money to support his army, but this is in fact never emphasized: it is never said that Alcibiades pays his troops (cf. 1.2.17). Alcibiades's numerous and lucrative money-making expeditions (1.1.20, 3.8–11, 4.23; cf. 1.4.21), and the gaps in the narrative of his activities (1.4.11), naturally leap to mind when Xenophon casually announces that Alcibiades has his own fortress in the Chersonese to which he will retire (1.5.17).²⁰ Now, there is nothing Socratic about preoccupation with money, and Alcibiades is by no means a Socratic philosopher (*Memorabilia* 4.1.5; cf. Plato, *Alcibiades* 134b4–5). But he is clear-sighted about the precariousness of his situation: his safety in Athens is anything but certain given the nature of the crime for which he was exiled, and living without a homeland is eminently dangerous if one cannot provide for one's own protection.²¹ Alcibiades seems to know from the start that he must plan for the possibility of his separation from Athens. Dissembling may be required for the sake of money.

Alcibiades's motives may in some cases have been questionable, but Xenophon has not generally allowed him to sink beneath the bar of gentlemanliness. If, however, we take seriously the indication in the *Memorabilia* that Alcibiades is to be considered together with Critias, we find ourselves facing the most overtly ungentlemanly character in the *Hellenica*, the leader of the Spartan-sponsored oligarchy of the Thirty Tyrants that ruled for a short,

¹⁹ 1.1.12, 14, 20–22; 3.2–4, 8; 4.8–9. See also Proietti, *Xenophon's Sparta*, 6–7; Due, "Return of Alcibiades," 40.

²⁰ The suggestion emerges later that some Athenian money from the Hellespont, where Alcibiades had established a strategically located custom house (1.1.22), has gone missing (1.7.1).

²¹ *Memorabilia* 2.1.14, *Anabasis* 7.8.1; cf. Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 387–421.

bloody period after Athens's defeat.²² His disposition and preoccupations are quite different from Alcibiades's. Alcibiades spends only two months in Athens in the *Hellenica*, and those mysteriously, whereas Critias is at home until his regime begins to fall. Accordingly, Xenophon's Alcibiades does not seem particularly eager to *rule* (at home) so much as to *command* (on campaign), whereas Critias is obviously hungry for political power over a polis. Thus, of all Critias's failings, his performance as a military leader is the matter in which he compares least favorably to Alcibiades. He appears to have neither the grasp of tactical theory nor the ability to earn the valuable trust and devotion of the ruled that are the hallmarks of good Xenophontic leadership. He makes use almost exclusively of (Spartan) mercenaries, both as bodyguards and as soldiers, and strips the majority of the Athenians of their arms (2.3.14, 20, 2.3.42). In his attack on the rebels at Phyle, he is unable to control his hot-headed young soldiers (cf. 2.3.23) and loses valuable personnel to defection (2.4.2–3). The cavalry he thereafter sends to accompany the Spartan garrison is disorganized, lacking in stealth, and quick to flee (2.4.5–6). Critias dies in battle, leading an army on a road too narrow to make use of his superior numbers, apparently without any light-armed troops at all, up a hill (2.4.10–12, 15–16, 19).

But whereas Alcibiades hardly speaks in the *Hellenica*, Critias has dialogues, legislates, and orates, and in this way gives us more to think about regarding questions of justice and government than Alcibiades has. In the opening of his speech condemning the moderate Theramenes, who has been increasingly critical of the extremist policies of the Thirty, Critias defends his government's excessive use of executions by pointing out that "these things always happen wherever regimes change" (2.3.24). This is typical of Critias's unswerving commitment to the use of force, however unpalatable or supported by deceit (2.3.23, 4.8), in the apparent belief that violence and terror are sufficient to accomplish all his ends. Indeed, Theramenes simply and correctly observes that the Thirty are establishing "the rule of violence" (2.19–20). But while Critias can certainly be malicious and vindictive (2.3.15, 21), his violence is far from mindless; his defense of harshness in the wake of revolution reflects his thinking on the question of what ruling requires. His central political insight is brought out by the following juxtaposition. When

²² It is generally agreed that Xenophon significantly exaggerates the monstrosity of Critias in the *Hellenica*, but scholars disagree as to why this is. See Danzig, "Use and Abuse of Critias," 514ff.; Frances Pownall, "Critias in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 31 (2012): 1–5; Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 159–63; Tuplin, *Failings of Empire*, 43–47; Martin Ostwald, *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 481–83.

Theramenes objects that it is unfair or unreasonable to kill those who are honored by the people, Critias responds that such killing is a necessary measure for the avaricious and that it is naive to think that the Thirty need to take any less care to protect their rule than a single tyrant (2.3.15–16). In response to Theramenes's later objection, that it is unjust to kill the innocent, Critias charges Theramenes with treason, and announces in his speech against him, "it seems to us to be extremely *just* that, if someone of our own harms this institution, he pay the penalty" (2.3.21, 26, emphasis added). Critias thinks of himself as a tyrant (cf. 2.4.1), and openly embraces aggressive acquisitiveness (*pleonexia*), but maintains a notion of justice: the mutual good faith that is as necessary to the success of a band of criminals as it is to a city.²³ According to this strictly utilitarian view of justice, the end of just collaboration is the acquisition of power and freedom to do what one pleases (2.3.13, 21, 23), and the danger (to oneself) of injustice extends no further than the threat of retribution from the human beings one betrays. Thus, the ruler must be willing to punish quickly and severely. Critias may appear monstrous, but he is a sophisticated monster.²⁴

Of course, Critias may be appealing to justice in his speech purely for rhetorical effect (cf. 2.3.33 with 16). Be that as it may, it is clear that he does not believe he has any obligation on account of justice either to piety or to law. The original purpose of the Thirty, as recognized by the demos (cf. 2.3.11), was for them to write down "the laws of the fatherland" for the postwar regime (2.3.2)—a task which they intentionally shirked, refusing to produce a published law code so as to reserve the greatest and most arbitrary power for themselves (2.3.11). On the one occasion when the "new laws" restrict him, namely, by making illegal the arbitrary execution of Theramenes, Critias, supported by multiple contingents of armed guards, publicly and unilaterally revokes Theramenes's citizenship and has him summarily killed (2.3.50–51, 55). We may say that Critias does not distinguish between law and the rule of force or that he sees the former as just a clumsy version of the latter (cf. *Memorabilia* 1.2.45).²⁵ But most shocking in the trial and execution of Theramenes

²³ Plato, *Republic* 351c–d; cf. Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 83.

²⁴ Pownall, "Critias in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," argues that the negative portrayal of Critias is such as to make him less "ideological" than we know him to have been. My alternative suggestion is that something of what may be called his "ideology" is evident if one regards his speeches as perverted Socratic philosophy. See also Danzig, "Use and Abuse of Critias," 513–15; S. Usher, "Xenophon, Critias and Theramenes," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, no. 88 (1968): 132.

²⁵ Danzig, "Use and Abuse of Critias," 516, claims that the murder of Theramenes illustrates Critias's "hypocrisy," since he is breaking his own law, but this overlooks the consistency of Critias's view of law as such.

is Critias's total disregard of the defendant's plea for piety, having him torn from the hearth as he invokes the gods as witnesses (2.3.52–55). Critias is flagrantly impious.²⁶

In general, one can appreciate the subtlety of Alcibiades's understanding more by recognizing the failings of Critias's. Alcibiades prudently uses, caters to, and shows respect for Athenian piety. Critias preys on it: in an Odeion half-filled with armed troops, he forces what remains of the city of Athens to vote unanimously for the slaughter of the Eleusinians, so that the Athenians "share in the dangers" of the Thirty's tyrannical rule (2.4.9–10). Alcibiades has success in winning the loyalty of his troops (1.2.15); Critias, as Theramenes points out, only multiplies his enemies (2.3.41–44). And consider the contradiction between Critias's outrageous impiety in his dealing with Theramenes and the law in general, and his publicly avowed Spartophilia (2.3.34). It is hard to believe that Critias gives full due to the relative importance of piety in the constitution of the Lacedaemonians.²⁷ His reign of terror must surely be judged a failure. Ironically, Critias ends up almost as much without a city as Alcibiades, and though Xenophon only reveals it in the case of Critias, neither one was able to find safety on his own.

Critias is too power hungry, too retributive, too much a slave to his passions to be called Socratic, and we know that he and Socrates did not see eye to eye (*Memorabilia* 1.2.29–38). We may feel, given Xenophon's portrayal, that his allowing Socrates to live at all may have been a sign of a kind of friendship, but the fact remains that Socrates was harshly critical of Critias's lack of restraint, and Critias did not forget it.²⁸ Yet Critias is by no means unintelligent, and his violence is not haphazard. His behavior indicates a posture of extreme and nakedly cynical political realism, but it should surprise no one that cynicism is to be found among the many possible results of exposure to Socratic philosophy.

²⁶ For a similar observation, see Frances Pownall, "Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*: The Arginusae Episode," *Athenaeum* 88 (2000): 511. Cf. also Usher, "Xenophon, Critias and Theramenes," 131: "It is perhaps indicative of Critias' atheism that he never swears by the gods."

²⁷ Ostwald, *Popular Sovereignty*, 463–64, and Peter Krentz, *The Thirty at Athens* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 64–68, emphasize the Spartan influence on Critias's regime, but do not discuss his brazen impiety in this connection (see also Robin Seager, "Xenophon and Athenian Democratic Ideology," *Classical Quarterly* 51, no. 2 [2001]: 389). Danzig, "Use and Abuse of Critias," 522n56, is right to follow Dorion, *Xenophon Mémoires*, in seeing a kinship between Critias's regime and that of Plato's *Republic*, but both seem to confuse Plato's thought for his Socratic speeches. Cf. Pownall, "Critias in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 14–17.

²⁸ *Memorabilia* 1.2.31; Plato, *Letters* 324e.

The *Hellenica* certainly presents Alcibiades more favorably than it does Critias, but the similarities between them are suggestive of their parallel Socratic educations. Neither Alcibiades nor Critias places devotion to Athens or to Athenian law above what he sees as his own good, and, partially as a result, neither one of them is checked by pious fear. But where Critias is outrageous in his disregard for the gods, Alcibiades sees that it is best to cater to the Athenians' piety, on account either of a deeper understanding of political psychology, or lessons learned from previous mistakes, or both. Accordingly, Alcibiades is more concerned than Critias to persuade those he rules or to rule through persuasion. Especially given Xenophon's presentation in the *Memorabilia*, it is safe to say that Alcibiades is as aware as Critias of the ruler's need to use law as a tool, but Alcibiades appears to understand more deeply that law is most effective when it is embraced by those it governs. This recognition gives to Alcibiades's deeds in the *Hellenica* a crucial measure of circumspection and makes him, at least according to Xenophon's presentation, more able to find safety in the end. But the ultimate *failure* of both Alcibiades and Critias in the *Hellenica* is an important shared feature of their undertakings. Neither one gets what he wants, and it must finally be said that it is precisely what each wants, the *ends* of his striving, that represents his definitive flaw from the point of view of Socratic philosophy.

THE APOLOGY OF EURYPTOLEMUS FOR THE GENERALS

The Athenians' naval victory in the massive Battle of Arginusae (406 BC) was marred by the deaths of thousands of Athenians left stranded in a storm on some twenty-five disabled ships (1.6.35).²⁹ The Athenian assembly infamously condemned to death the eight generals responsible for the fleet by a single vote, and Socrates's opposition to this allegedly illegal procedure is recorded by Plato and Xenophon as evidence of his noble lawfulness and piety.³⁰ In the *Hellenica*, however, Xenophon confines Socrates's involvement to a single sentence: "The Prytanes, being fearful, all agreed to put it to a vote, except for Socrates son of Sophroniscus; he said that he would do everything in no other way than according to law" (1.7.15). Xenophon thus appears to signal that Socrates's deed on this occasion bears little if any emphasis from the point of view of the *Hellenica*.³¹

²⁹ For the estimate of the number of dead, see Debra Hamel, *The Battle of Arginusae* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 54; Peter Krentz, "The Arginusai Affair," in Strassler, *The Landmark Hellenica*, 319.

³⁰ *Apology of Socrates* 32b1–5; *Memorabilia* 1.1.18, 4.4.2.

³¹ Cf. David H. Thomas, "Chronological Problems in the Continuation of Xenophon's *Hellenika*," in

But Socrates's enigmatic appearance is more important than its brevity would suggest. In the preceding pages, Callixenus and Theramenes (the trierarch who had been ordered to save the shipwrecked sailors) whip up public opinion against the generals and push through a motion to have them tried by a single vote of the assembly (1.7.4, 12–13).³² Callixenus incites the Athenians to intimidate any potential dissenters into silence, and Xenophon's portrayal of the multitude shouting "that it is terrible if someone will not allow the demos to do whatever it wishes" (1.7.13–14) provokes Krentz to suggest that, on this occasion, "Athenian democracy reached perhaps its most extreme moment."³³ It is here that Xenophon inserts his mention of Socrates, and immediately thereafter follows Euryptolemus's long, uninterrupted appeal to the assembly, as if Socrates had parted the cacophonous sea of the angry demos with a single phrase. Euryptolemus is thereby linked to Socrates more explicitly than any other character in the book, and an examination of his speech—and thus of a version of the argument Socrates made on this occasion—is indispensable to the present study.³⁴

Strassler, *The Landmark Hellenica*, 4.7; Rood, "Xenophon and Diodorus," 379; Strauss, "Greek Historians," 663.

³² On Theramenes's motivation, see Diodorus Siculus 13.101–3, and see Mable L. Lang, "Theramenes and Arginousai," *Hermes* 120, no. 3 (2009): 267–77; A. Andrewes, "The Arginousai Trial," *Phoenix* 28, no. 1 (1974): 112–13.

³³ Krentz, "The Arginousai Affair," 317. Dustin Gish contends that the ubiquitous view of Xenophon's presentation as critical of the demos is the result of a long misunderstanding ("Defending *Dēmokratia*: Athenian Justice and the Trial of the Arginusae Generals in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," in Hobden and Tuplin, *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry*, 161–63). Though he argues persuasively that the trial and execution of the generals was neither uncharacteristic of direct democracy nor clearly unconstitutional, I believe Gish risks equating what is characteristic and legal with what is sound or assuming that the demos must have been acting to protect its sovereign authority (see, e.g., 175–76, 182–83). Even if Xenophon has been misunderstood since antiquity by those who fail to question whether the action of the demos was truly illegal—and this is certainly possible—it would strain credulity to deny that Xenophon meant to portray the Athenians here as crossing the nebulous line separating lawfulness and democracy from compulsion and tyranny (cf. *Memorabilia* 1.2.39–46). See also the related but more limited arguments of Luca A. Asmonti, "The Arginusae Trial, the Changing Role of *Strategoí* and the Relationship between Demos and Military Leadership in Late-Fifth Century Athens," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 49 (2006): 1–21, Peter Hunt, "The Slaves and the Generals of Arginusae," *American Journal of Philology* 122, no. 3 (2001): 359–80, and Seager, "Xenophon and Athenian Democratic Ideology," 396. For a related critique of Gish, see Pownall, "Condemnation of the Impious in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 263. Rood suggests that Xenophon agrees with Thucydides here by indicating that extreme democracy is tyrannical ("Xenophon and Diodorus," 377–79).

³⁴ Henry was the first to note Socrates's apparent impact on the assembly (*Greek Historical Writing*, 198; cf. Strauss, "Greek Historians," 658). See also Gish, "Defending *Dēmokratia*," 186, Pownall, "Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 507, Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 184–88, and Bodil Due, "The Trial of the Generals in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 34 (1983): 41ff. Dobski identifies the defense of law-abidingness as the key connection between Socrates's action and Euryptolemus's subsequent speech ("Athenian Democracy Refounded," 331–34).

Having ascended to the speaker's platform, Euryptolemus begins his speech, "I have ascended here in some respects to accuse, O men of Athens, Pericles, though he is my relative and companion, and Diomedon, though he is my friend, and in other respects to make a defense on their behalf, and in still other respects to give counsel as to what things seem to me to be best for the whole city" (1.7.16). We are thus led to expect that the speech will consist of three parts: accusation, defense, counsel. In the speech itself, the order of the last two portions is reversed.³⁵

1. ACCUSATION

Euryptolemus's proposed procedure of preceding his defense with accusations against the very people he is defending suggests that, as he will emphasize later (1.7.21), his speech is not motivated by self-interest (i.e., by the desire to help his friends and relatives), but rather by his desire to furnish the city with the best possible counsel.³⁶ Hence his professed belief that he must accuse even his relatives when the truth demands it. The accusation against Pericles and Diomedon itself, however, turns out to be quite innocuous, if not quite exonerating. Euryptolemus blames these two for having persuaded the other generals *not* to send a letter after the battle clarifying to the Athenians that Theramenes and Thrasybulus had been ordered to lead the rescue mission and had failed (1.7.17). Euryptolemus apparently disapproves of the imprudence of these two generals in particular, who failed to defend their own innocence and that of their fellow generals by laying the blame, in writing, upon the more truly culpable.

The cause of Pericles's and Diomedon's imprudence, according to Euryptolemus, was their "philanthropy" (1.7.18).³⁷ They preferred to allow Theramenes and Thrasybulus to avoid coming to harm if possible. On the surface, then, Euryptolemus's "accusation" appears little more than a cheap rhetorical trick, a sort of praise by faint damning. But he also conveys what may be a

My own analysis culminates in conclusions rather complementary to Dobski's; I indicate some differences of detail and emphasis in the notes below.

³⁵ Dobski proposes an alternative, four-part division of Euryptolemus's oration ("Athenian Democracy Refounded," 331).

³⁶ Seager, "Xenophon and Athenian Democratic Ideology," 389, suggests that this avowal was demanded by democratic principle.

³⁷ Gray, *Character of Xenophon's "Hellenica,"* makes *philanthrōpia* the key to Euryptolemus's speech (86–91); cf. Due, "Return of Alcibiades," 44–45, 51–53, who suggests that Gray exaggerates philanthropy's importance in the *Hellenica*. See also Pownall, "Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 508.

legitimate critique of these two generals. They allowed their hope that no one would have to be punished for the misfortune at Arginusae to deprive them of an opportunity to protect themselves. By refusing to exculpate themselves in writing (by incriminating Theramenes and Thrasybulus), Pericles and Diomedon were left vulnerable to Theramenes's slanderous demagoguery. Euryptolemus's "accusation" thus directs the following censure at those he is in fact defending: one must not underestimate, out of philanthropic hopefulness, the Athenian demos's need to mete out punishment for the losses it suffers—a lesson that Alcibiades appeared to have learned quite well.³⁸ Those who are unwilling to defend themselves at the expense of others will soon find themselves under attack.

2. COUNSEL

Euryptolemus's counsel to the Athenians, which follows his brief and mostly innocuous "accusation," is the longest part of his speech and contains the clearest echo of the Socratic statement that inaugurated it. Socrates, with his only utterance in the *Hellenica*, insisted that everything he does must be in accordance with law. Euryptolemus's advice to the Athenians, in brief, is that the fate of the generals must not be decided without due process of law. When Xenophon elsewhere cites this occasion as evidence of Socrates's justice (*Memorabilia* 4.4.2), he goes on to recount a conversation between Socrates and Hippias in which Socrates defends the thesis that the just is the lawful and is ordained by the gods. Euryptolemus is in no position to present a dialectical demonstration of this sort as a justification for his appeal to lawfulness. He must rather, as he has promised, persuade the Athenians that what he proposes is "best for the whole city," i.e., that it is better for them to rule by law than to rule tyrannically.³⁹

Yet his pitch for the supremacy of lawfulness *does* rely upon the very intuitions or presumptions concerning law that Socrates purports to demonstrate to Hippias in the *Memorabilia*. Euryptolemus says he wishes to persuade the Athenians to do "the just and holy things" so as to avoid "committing the greatest errors against both the gods and [themselves]" (1.7.19). The Athenians would be committing such an error, he claims, if they were to punish someone guiltless, and it is for this reason that they should give each general

³⁸ Cf. Rood, "Xenophon and Diodorus," 369 and 379.

³⁹ See Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," 332–33, for the argument that this artful identification of law-abidingness with advantage for the Athenians as key to understanding Euryptolemus's speech (332–33).

his own full, public trial (1.7.19, 23). Euryptolemus is able to assert that the lawful procedure is *holy* without difficulty by appealing to the pious obedience owed by the citizens to the laws of their fatherland (1.7.25).⁴⁰ His attempt to show that the lawful procedure he proposes is necessarily *just* is more problematic. The purpose of allowing each general the right to make a full defense in court, Euryptolemus implies, is to ensure that the Athenians “can be deceived neither by [Euryptolemus] nor by anyone else,” so that they can “with knowledge punish those who did injustice” (1.7.19). The Athenians will be able to sort out all the facts in the course of the generals’ individual trials and thus be guaranteed to punish only the wrongdoers, while “the blameless will be set free by you, O Athenians, and not be unjustly destroyed” (1.7.24). By contrast, if the generals are tried as a group by the assembly, demagogues could persuade the people to lump the innocent in with the guilty in ignorant haste. But are the Athenians not at least as likely to be deceived by a tricky speaker in court as they are by an orator in the assembly? Whatever it means to say that the rule of law ensures just *procedures*, there can be no guarantee that such procedures will produce just *outcomes* (cf. *Memorabilia* 4.8.5). Euryptolemus blurs that distinction in order to argue that adherence to legal procedure will prevent any miscarriage of justice. Attention to the weaknesses of his argument leads to a critique of law as such.⁴¹

But Euryptolemus’s proposal will not be complete unless he can persuade the crowd that it should *want* to proceed justly, i.e., that it is good or advantageous for them to do so. It is telling that his first move in this direction is to assure them that they will be free to inflict harsh punishments on whomever should lawfully be found guilty, invoking the arcane Decree of Cannonus, according to which “if someone does injustice to the Athenian demos, he is to defend himself before the demos in chains, and if he is judged guilty of doing injustice, he is to be killed by being thrown into the pit,” and so forth (1.7.20).⁴² Though he also mentions a less obscure and less gruesome option, which surprisingly omits the death penalty (1.7.22), Euryptolemus ultimately proposes that the generals be tried separately according to the Decree of

⁴⁰ That is, to the “ephebic oath” sworn by all Athenian citizens; see Pownall, “Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon’s *Hellenica*,” 505–6.

⁴¹ Dobski also finds that close consideration of Euryptolemus’s speech reveals a critique of law, but it is a somewhat different critique: as noted above, Dobski’s approach stresses the relationship of lawfulness to advantage where I emphasize its relationship to justice (“Athenian Democracy Refounded,” 331–33).

⁴² Cf. Aristophanes, *Ekklesiazousae* 1090.

Cannonus (1.7.34). He recognizes the need to indulge the Athenians' punitive streak.

Euryptolemus's hope, then, rests on the prospect of tempering the Athenians' need for retributive justice, not of eliminating it.⁴³ He begins by urging the assembly to reflect on its retributive inclination: "What is it that you fear in acting so very hastily? Or is it that you will not be able to kill and set free whomever you wish if you should judge according to the law, but not so if [you judge] against the law?" (1.7.26). Confined to merely rhetorical questions, Euryptolemus diagnoses the Athenians' behavior as motivated by a sort of fear. It is the tyrant's fear, expressed in characteristically punitive anger, of encountering a limit to tyrannical power.⁴⁴ Euryptolemus's strategy is to fight fear with fear. He continues, "But perhaps if you kill someone who is not to blame, you will regret it later. Remember how painful and harmful this is, especially when you have erred in the death of human beings" (1.7.29). Against the assembly's fear that its sovereignty is being challenged (1.7.26; cf. 1.7.13), Euryptolemus opposes the assembly's fear of its own *hubris* (cf. 2.2.10). As much as the goodness of justice is seen by the Athenians to reside in their ability to make the guilty suffer, Euryptolemus knows that the fear of committing injustice and of the resulting pollution is an even greater inducement.⁴⁵ Hence, he has made the need to respect the impunity of the guiltless the keynote of his plea for lawfulness (1.7.19, 23–24, 29). The Athenians have deep misgivings regarding their not infrequent transgressions of the law; Euryptolemus's attempt to employ their fear as an antidote to the tyrannical anger of the demos is a testament to his understanding of what has made for some of the most dramatic vacillations of Athenian opinion and action throughout the course of the war.⁴⁶ His call for caution on these grounds marks the climax of the central portion of his oration and prepares his defense of the generals' innocence.

⁴³ As Dobski puts it, Euryptolemus assures the Athenians that they "can vent their spleen in a manner consistent with the law and with justice" ("Athenian Democracy Refounded," 332).

⁴⁴ On Xenophon's presentation of the demos as tyrannical, see Rood, "Xenophon and Diodorus," 377–79.

⁴⁵ Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," following pointers in Euryptolemus's speech, helpfully explores the psychology and rationality of this fear in its relationship to guilt and shame (332–33).

⁴⁶ E.g., in the case of the Mytilenian revolt (Thuc. 3.49). Rood discusses both Thucydides's and Xenophon's portrayals of this "volatility" in the Athenian demos throughout the war ("Xenophon and Diodorus," 378–79).

3. DEFENSE

Euryptolemus begins his defense by clarifying the details on the basis of which blame for the debacle following the battle might be apportioned more carefully: Diomedon had wanted the entire fleet to set out to rescue the stranded crews, whereas Erasinides had proposed that the stranded be left behind so that the fleet could sail to relieve the besieged Athenians at Mytilene; it was a third general, Thrasyllus, who proposed the compromise that was finally accepted, assigning Theramenes and Thrasybulus to lead a detachment of forty-seven ships in the rescue mission while the rest of the fleet headed to Mytilene under the generals' command (1.7.29–30). Euryptolemus suggests that it would be just for Theramenes and Thrasybulus to be held accountable for the failure of the rescue mission and the generals for their failure to pursue and attack the Spartan fleet, implying that the buck in question should stop with the two trierarchs and not with the generals who issued their orders (1.7.31). Accordingly, Euryptolemus hereafter speaks of two groups of commanders (the trierarchs and the generals) who failed to *carry out* their respective orders—he never again refers to the generals as having *issued* the orders (1.7.32–33). But he quickly drops the suggestion that Theramenes and Thrasybulus should stand trial. He seems more concerned to exonerate the generals than to blame (and thereby provoke) their subordinates.

But Euryptolemus knows that the demos must be allowed to vent its indignation, and his final proposal, to try the generals separately under the Decree of Cannonus, will enable this. His “defense” of the generals, then, if it is not seriously meant to persuade the Athenians to forgive them all, appears designed to protect his friend Diomedon at the expense of Thrasyllus and especially Erasinides, since the claim that the latter proposed to abandon the shipwrecked amounts to a hefty accusation. Euryptolemus effectively proposes to punish *some* of the generals, and has done his best to save the ones he has set out to defend (his denials that he is motivated by favoritism notwithstanding). It appears not to have been possible to exonerate Pericles as fully as Diomedon, but Euryptolemus's attempt to help his relative was probably contained in his suggestion that he be the first to stand trial. Consider that both attempts to defend the generals (first by the generals themselves, then by Euryptolemus) are followed initially by the approval of the demos and fail only later thanks to the political machinations of their rivals (1.7.6–7, 34). The general to be tried soonest after Euryptolemus's oration might well have the best chance of survival.

But the truest defense is the one that, as Euryptolemus himself acknowledges (1.7.34), exonerates both the generals and their subordinates. He concludes his speech thus:

Do not, men of Athens...faced with necessities from a god, show yourselves to be unfeeling by condemning of treason men who, faced with impossibility, were rendered unable to do what they had been ordered on account of the storm. But it would be much more just to venerate these victors with wreaths of honor. (1.7.33)

This is the most far-reaching reflection on justice in the oration: it is unjust to punish people for failing to do the impossible. The storm prevented the rescue of the shipwrecked crews; no one is justly to blame. That this is not a view the Athenians will easily accept is suggested by the fact that here, for the only time in the *Hellenica*, the storm that hindered the fleet is said to have been sent by a god.⁴⁷ But to blame a god for the tragedy will hardly be enough to make the demos forgive the generals. Euryptolemus's closing remark, that it would be more just to crown the generals as victors than to kill them, recalls Socrates's hopeless proposal that, as punishment, he should take his meals in the Prytaneum with the Olympic victors.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

To what extent has Xenophon portrayed each of our three subjects as "Socratic" in the *Hellenica*? We must begin by admitting that the very fact of their political activity, including Euryptolemus's public speech in the assembly, marks all three as distinctly un-Socratic.⁴⁹ Alcibiades's constant concern with money-making and Critias's tyrannical lust for unrestrained political power are obvious markers of their failure to transcend the ordinary concerns criticized by Socrates as inferior to the pursuit of wisdom and of unphilosophic hopes and ambitions that would not hold up to rigorous Socratic examination.⁵⁰ As for Euryptolemus, the total lack of historical evidence outside of the *Hellenica* makes his connection to Socrates quite unclear—for all we know, he may be a Xenophontic fiction. It is the fact that Xenophon substitutes Euryptolemus's otherwise unknown objection to

⁴⁷ Pownall therefore connects this statement with Euryptolemus's warnings against impiety ("Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 506).

⁴⁸ Plato, *Apology* 36d2–37a1. Cf. Pownall, "Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 507–8; Krentz, *Xenophon: Hellenika I–II*.3.10, 168.

⁴⁹ Cf. Plato, *Apology* 31c4–32a3. Similar observations are made by Ludwig, "Xenophon as a Socratic Reader," 523, and Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," 333.

⁵⁰ Plato, *Symposium* 208c ff.; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.16.

the illegality of Callixenus's procedure for Socrates's famous one that has prompted our close examination of his speech.⁵¹ But Euryptolemus's decision to address the whole assembly importantly distinguishes him from Socrates, who appears to have stood up only against the *boulē*. Without knowing how Euryptolemus stood with respect to philosophy, we are inclined to suggest that, except for the brief and unusual appearance of Socrates himself, there is no fully Socratic character anywhere in the *Hellenica* (cf. 3.1.2). And yet, in practical and historical terms, this possibility makes way for a potentially paradoxical and surprising conclusion, since it means that Socrates's political legacy in Athens, the indirect effects of his teaching on political affairs, may well have been in many aspects quite un-Socratic.

But then, we do not need the *Hellenica* to tell us that Alcibiades and Critias failed to follow the path of Socratic philosophy. So much is the ostensible point of the very section of the *Memorabilia* in which Xenophon tells us of their association with Socrates. Yet it is well within Xenophon's understanding that a man who fails to transform himself by allowing the force of Socratic insight to permeate and reshape his every thought, imagination, and desire may nonetheless, by attending to Socrates, learn to see and understand much of the world—including or especially the political world—more sharply than he had before, and more sharply than his contemporaries or rivals. Leaving aside the unphilosophic motivations of our three figures, then, do we find that they share some distinctive common feature on the level of their understanding or approach to political activity?

At first blush, it is their differences that stand out more starkly. Each character appears to occupy his own position on a spectrum of approaches to political life, with pure compulsion at one pole (Critias) and pure persuasion at the other (Euryptolemus). Alcibiades stands in the middle, being willing and able to make use of both force and fraud, supplementing one with the other as the occasion demands. On one hand, Alcibiades is therefore the most flexible figure of the three. He is more effective than Euryptolemus in obtaining what he seeks, yet nimbler than Critias in navigating diplomatic and military crises. On the other hand, a comparison of the three men's varied undertakings suggests that a greater dependence on violence comes with greater material and political rewards as well as greater risks. The dangers

⁵¹ Dobski notes the strong sense given by Xenophon "that Euryptolemus articulates the reasons for Socrates' strict lawfulness" ("Athenian Democracy Refounded," 333–34). Pownall goes further, suggesting that Euryptolemus makes precisely the argument Socrates advanced on this occasion ("Condemnation of the Impious in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 263).

faced by Euryptolemus, though not insignificant, are nothing compared with those that force Alcibiades into a lifelong, regrettably rootless wandering, to say nothing of the numerous and extreme perils Critias is forced to confront. But Critias also gains a greater degree of power than Alcibiades or Euryptolemus ever does. Indeed, Euryptolemus is the only one of the three who utterly fails to accomplish anything of what he sets out to do. It seems that each character has come to a different determination of the extent to which real dangers should be risked for the sake of political power.

Our three subjects thus appear to disagree as to the proper measure of force to be employed in political affairs. Critias's open embrace of a cutthroat realpolitik effectively leads him to make violence the coin of his realm. To him, the idea that the rule of law establishes justice by providing for the common good of all is a ubiquitous and *unnecessary* falsehood, and he accordingly disposes of the law in favor of a barefaced admission of avarice and tyrannical ambition. By contrast, both Euryptolemus and Alcibiades are careful to make a public show of respecting Athenian legal convention, especially where this convention overlaps with pious observance.⁵² Alcibiades's use of force or violence over those under his command is legally provided for by the leeway accorded to him as a general. But, as he well knows, he is in turn subject to the violence of the demos if it should ever come to blame him for mismanagement of its trust. Alcibiades therefore attempts to appease the Athenians as much as he can, especially in working to mitigate the reputation for impiety he gained before the opening of the *Hellenica*. He lives in a grey area available to the Athenian *stratēgos*, employing the power of violent compulsion legally entrusted to him by the city, but engaged therefore with the city as with a sovereign and often capricious major partner. Euryptolemus, by contrast, seeks no such privileges from the city, and hence is in principle free from having to give an account of himself. Alcibiades may protest against the accusations of his impiety, but Euryptolemus gives no one any reason to suspect him of impiety in the first place.

Having recognized these differences in the lives led by our three subjects, we are now in a position to observe the crucial similarity. For it must be admitted that the postures adopted by Euryptolemus and Alcibiades toward Athenian law do not necessarily entail any disagreement with Critias as to the character of the law. To be sure, Euryptolemus and Alcibiades show much greater awareness of the importance of respecting the city's belief that Critias

⁵² Ludwig, "Xenophon as a Socratic Reader," discusses Xenophon's sensitivity, as manifest in the *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*, to the need for respecting piety (524–28).

tries to dispel altogether: that the rule of law is not at bottom compulsion of the ruled, but the means by which a city, persuaded by the wise, attains justice or the common good. And yet Alcibiades demonstrates both that he believes force must be employed when persuasion falls short, and that his interests are better pursued by disobeying the sovereign Athenian assembly when its imprudence becomes too great. Even Euryptolemus, who is much freer than Alcibiades to protect his reputation by publicly eulogizing strict adherence to the law, manipulates the psychology of the assembly when it comes to the justice and piety of legal procedure. He plays on their fear of *hubris* and defers only when necessary to their need for retribution, both of which are powerfully expressed in the Athenians' understanding of their duties and rights under the law. Indeed, if the arguments of Pownall and Gish are correct, Euryptolemus is not even telling the truth in claiming that the proposed procedure of the sovereign demos on this occasion is illegal.⁵³

It is to be recalled that Socrates too condemned the illegality of this procedure. It would seem, then, that Socrates himself was willing to distort the letter of the law in order to employ its psychological force for the sake of political persuasion. But Xenophon, who went to great lengths to defend the memory of Socrates in his *Memorabilia*, certainly does not make that conclusion so easy to draw.⁵⁴ As a result, there is much that one could feasibly deny in the thesis that the three "Socratic" characters we have been studying share a Socratic critique of law. One could deny that Critias and Alcibiades retained *any* Socratic lesson intact, that Euryptolemus believes anything other than what he says to the assembly, or even that Socrates himself held any critique of law to be sound. Xenophon has therefore written in such a way that, if one is to reach firm conclusions about the influence of Socratic philosophy upon his "non-Socratic" works, much will depend upon one's prior understanding

⁵³ Pownall, "Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*"; Gish, "Defending *Dēmokratia*." Due, "The Trial of the Generals in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," goes so far as to cast Euryptolemus's machinations as demagogic. Euryptolemus's willingness to dissemble is most evident in his passing mention of the "twelve" ships (not twenty-five; 1.6.34) the storm-hindered Athenians failed to recover (1.7.30). But cf. Lang, "Theramenes and Arginousai," 270–71, who denies that Euryptolemus is consciously lying. See also Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded," 331, who notes on a related point that Euryptolemus "must employ a rhetoric that emphasizes the importance of traditional authorities."

⁵⁴ Indeed, Socrates's only act in the *Hellenica* is to express precisely the view that the "Socratic" characters appear to have discarded. Xenophon therefore protects the memory of Socrates in the *Hellenica* as well. Pownall also suggests that Xenophon distorts the historical events out of respect for Socrates, but differs from me in supposing that Socrates genuinely misunderstood the law ("Shifting Viewpoints in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," 503). Still, the question is not *whether* Xenophon distorts the facts to protect Socrates, but *how*, and this, as I suggest below, cannot be determined on the basis of the *Hellenica* alone. Cf. also Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times*, 157n90.

of Socratic thought, about which there is bound to be no little disagreement. If the critique of law presented, for example, by Alcibiades in the *Memorabilia* is taken for a kind of Socratic signature, then Socrates's fingerprints can be seen upon the thoughts, speeches, and deeds of Euryptolemus, Alcibiades, and even Critias—though the last is the most flagrantly un-Socratic. Otherwise, the most we can say with confidence is that Xenophon wants us to consider the speech of Euryptolemus in the light of Socrates's sole mention in the *Hellenica*. It is at any rate the speech of Euryptolemus that receives Xenophon's highest honor in the *Hellenica*, that of being associated with Socrates. In this respect, Alcibiades has only the secondary honor of being said to be a kind of friend and associate of Euryptolemus (1.4.19). But if the speech of Euryptolemus is the best a Socratic could do to help his friends who had come into a grave conflict with the city, at least we can say in Alcibiades's defense that he was able to save himself. If Euryptolemus resembles Socrates, it is Alcibiades who most resembles Xenophon.