

VIRTUOUS TOIL, VICIOUS WORK: XENOPHON ON ARISTOCRATIC STYLE

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THE MAN WHO WOULD RULE must be trained to resist hunger and thirst, to forestall sleep, to put off sex, to endure heat and cold, to undertake toil. “If we classify those who have control over all these things as those who are fit to govern, won’t we place those who can’t do them with those who have no claim to rule?”¹ Although scholars have construed these sentiments, which Xenophon attributes to Socrates in a conversation with the philosopher Aristippus (*Mem.* 2.1.1–7), as part of a moral doctrine or as part of a regimen of self-formation, it is also useful to view them as pertaining not to individuals in general but to a particular class. They represent Xenophon’s interests in constructing a style of living that would justify and enhance the power of elites.

The lifestyle of elites was a central and abiding concern of Xenophon. As this passage in the *Memorabilia* indicates, he thought that especially elites, those in positions of power, needed to cultivate self-control. The problem of how to live was not (or not only) a moral or personal problem, it was essentially political; and it recurs throughout Xenophon’s writings. In two of his treatises, the *Cynegeticus*, a pamphlet on hunting, and the *Oeconomicus*, a dialogue concerning household management, Xenophon attempted to construct and defend an elite lifestyle. By positing πόνος, “toil”—a stylized labor both practical and virtuous—as the hallmark of this reformed lifestyle, he hoped to secure and legitimate the position of elites within the polis.

The works of several modern thinkers have been especially useful in formulating the problem this essay explores. Rather than draw attention away from the Athenian evidence—which is the sole basis on which to judge my argument—and encumber the text with more notes, I want to acknowledge in a general way those works I found suggestive: P. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1984) and *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977); M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. F. Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984); M. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, vol. 2: *The History of Sexuality*, trans. R. Hurley (New York, 1985); and A. Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979).

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1. Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.7 οὐκοῦν εἰ τοὺς ἐγκρατεῖς τούτων πάντων εἰς τοὺς ἀρχικοὺς τάττομεν, τοὺς ἀδυνάτους ταῦτα ποιεῖν εἰς τοὺς μὴδ’ ἀντιποησόμενους τοῦ ἀρχεῖν τάξομεν.

THE MEANING OF ΠΟΝΟΣ

Xenophon's use of πόνος to define the activities of an aristocrat depended on both the general senses of the word and on a specifically philosophical debate surrounding it. Generally, Nicole Loraux has explored the contrasting meanings of πόνος as both suffering and valorized effort.² It is this second sense, which Loraux suggests did not exist until the classical period, which is most germane to Xenophon's use of the term. πόνος in this sense—a sense that was strongly moral—served to mark a series of social hierarchies: noble over common, warrior over artisan, man over woman, Greek over barbarian, and master over slave.³ In each case the superior party undertook πόνος, and their toil (marked as morally valuable) demonstrated their superiority.

Although Loraux's account ranges broadly, she terminates it with Socrates, who, she claims, appropriated the hierarchical notion of πόνος to endorse a specific philosophic doctrine.⁴ His successors, while agreeing that the individual must exercise self-control in pleasure, disagreed as to whether toil was necessary to achieve this. Aristippus thought that self-mastery in pleasures should be achieved through their prudent use.⁵ He saw no need for abstinence and toil: "He enjoyed the pleasures that were present and did not hunt with πόνος the enjoyment of those which were absent."⁶ Antisthenes disagreed: "For him what mattered about Socrates was that he was indifferent to worldly possessions and pleasures. . . ."⁷ But this indifference could only be achieved through training in denial, through πόνος: "Antisthenes said that πόνος are like dogs: they bite those who are unfamiliar."⁸ Although these philosophers disputed whether

2. "Ponos: Sur quelques difficultés de la peine comme nom du travail," *Annali del Seminario di Studi del Mondo Classico. Archeologia e Storia Antica* 4 (1982): 171–92.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 172–76.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 178. For Socrates, consult H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, 1966), pp. 117–18.

5. When reproached for his relationship with the courtesan Laïs, Aristippus is reported to have said: "I have her, she does not have me. It is best to master pleasures and not to be subdued by them, not to refuse to experience them at all" (Aristippus frag. 57a [Mannebach]). W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 490–99, summarizes the small amount we know of Aristippus' beliefs. E. Mannebach, *Aristippi et Cyrenaicorum Fragmenta* (Leiden, 1961), has collected the few fragments of his writings. Xenophon gives a vivid picture of Aristippus in recounting two conversations with Socrates (*Mem.* 2.1.1–34, 3.8.1–7). It is clear from the first of these conversations, which concerns the proper relationship to pleasures, that Xenophon (and hence Xenophon's Socrates) disagreed with Aristippus. It ends with Socrates' lecture on πόνος and his invocation of Prodicus.

6. ἀπέλαυε μὲν γὰρ ἡδονῆς τῶν παρόντων, οὐκ ἐθήρα δὲ πόνῳ τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν τῶν οὐ παρόντων: frag. 54b (Mannebach). Given the importance of the hunt, to Xenophon at least, as one of the πόνος that should be submitted to before pleasure, it is possible that the pun is intended.

7. Guthrie, *Greek Philosophy*, 3:304–11, discusses Antisthenes. F. D. D. Caizzi, *Antisthenis Fragmenta* (Milan, 1966), has gathered the fragments. These are a bit fuller than for Aristippus and include two complete specimens of display oratory. (Antisthenes was also said to be a student of Gorgias.) The difficulty in assessing Antisthenes' beliefs arises because the later Cynic tradition attempted to make him into the direct teacher of Diogenes the Cynic and imputed back to him Cynic doctrines that were not his own. Though Antisthenes may have influenced the Cynics somewhat, he was not one of them (F. Sayre, *The Greek Cynics* [Baltimore, 1948], pp. 84–96). Xenophon has left a portrait of Antisthenes as well in his *Symposium* (esp. 3.8, 4.34–44, 62–64).

8. Ἀντισθένης τοὺς πόνους ἔφησεν ὁμοίους εἶναι κυσὶ· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι τοὺς ἀσυνήθεις δάκνουσιν: frag. 96 (Caizzi).

training ought to be in the use or in the denial of pleasures, they agreed that this training (ἄσκησις) should aim at temperance, σωφροσύνη, and self-mastery, ἐγκράτεια.⁹ The argument, moreover, was frequently carried out through discussions of ideal figures, notably Heracles and Cyrus, the founding king of the Persian empire.¹⁰

Much of Xenophon's work engaged with this philosophical discussion, especially his *Memorabilia*, a vindication of and reminiscence about Socrates, and his *Cyropaideia*, a political utopia in the form of a romanticized, mythologized biography of Cyrus.¹¹ In the *Memorabilia*, ἐγκράτεια is the most significant virtue;¹² indeed, it is the basis of Xenophon's defense of Socrates (1.2.1–2):

It also seems amazing to me that some people believed that Socrates corrupted the youth. Besides what I said before, of all men he was most in control [ἐγκρατέστατος] of his sexual desires and his appetites. He was the most able to endure the cold and heat and all other toils [πόνους]. Additionally, he was so schooled toward moderate needs that, even though he had very little, he easily had enough to satisfy him. How could a man who was like this make others impious, unlawful, greedy, lascivious, or lazy?

This self-control, with Socrates as with others, was the result of continual training (ἄσκησις, *Mem.* 1.2.19–24).

Throughout Xenophon's works virtue is closely associated with an ascetic life, with the need for control of the appetites, and with training, especially training in deprivation and in πόνοι.¹³ Xenophon elaborates the pattern in considerable detail in the *Cyropaideia*, where ἐγκράτεια “means self-control and the ability to endure trials of the body,” according to Bodil Due. “The theme shows the high value placed by Cyrus on physical strength and it is often connected with themes of hunting, drill, sweating and so forth, disciplines which are pursued in order to make and keep the body fit.”¹⁴ Although at the beginning of the *Cyropaideia* Xenophon represents the twin themes of ἐγκράτεια and πόνος as military ideas, part of the necessary training for war, after Cyrus and the Persians have gained an empire he transforms them: they then become moral principles that justify the rulers' power.¹⁵ At that point they confer ἀρετή—and legitimacy.¹⁶ As this example suggests, it would be wrong to interpret Xenophon's concerns

9. North, *Sophrosyne*, pp. 123–32, shows how closely related these two terms were.

10. Diogenes Laertius reports that Antisthenes showed that πόνος was good through the examples of Heracles and Cyrus (*Vit.* 6.2). R. Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King* (Uppsala, 1948), pp. 33–37, discusses what little we know about Antisthenes' treatment of Heracles. See pp. 73–94 for Cyrus. Höistad's book also discusses the use of Heracles, Cyrus, and πόνοι in later Cynic tradition.

11. B. Due, *The “Cyropaedia”* (Aarhus, 1989), pp. 147–84, gives an account of his other ideal (and idealized) leaders.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200; see generally, pp. 198–203. Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, pp. 63–77, discusses ἐγκράτεια generally.

13. Xenophon's idealized description of Sparta, for example, resonates with this same link: there (so he says) just at the age when boys develop the most acute desire for pleasures, they are compelled to submit to the most πόνοι (*Lak. Pol.* 3.2).

14. Due, “*Cyropaedia*,” p. 179; see generally pp. 170–81.

15. Cyrus's speech to the Persians after they have conquered and settled in Babylon dwells on this theme: *Cyr.* 7.5.72–85.

16. Due, “*Cyropaedia*,” pp. 226–27, 179.

as purely philosophical; rather, he has adapted a philosophical discussion for political ends.

Modern scholars have recognized the political implications of Xenophon's ideas. Jean-Pierre Vernant takes Xenophon's recommendation of toil as a valorization of agriculture over mechanical and artistic trades.¹⁷ Admitting this, Loraux believes that for Xenophon *πόνος* fundamentally distinguishes the citizen.¹⁸ Although both of these scholars correctly recognize that Xenophon makes *πόνος* a social as much as a philosophical concept (and one that is also highly overdetermined), I would argue that Xenophon's interests lie less in distinguishing farmers, citizens, or free men than in defining and legitimating a particular class within the polis—elites.

THE DYNAMICS OF CLASS IN FOURTH-CENTURY ATHENS

Xenophon's program must be understood in the context of the social tensions in fourth-century Athens, both between elites and others and among elites themselves. The distinction between elites and the populace was the most potent division within the citizen body.¹⁹ Athenian elites (who numbered two thousand or less in Xenophon's day, out of an estimated population of adult male citizens of perhaps 30,000) had been distinguished traditionally by birth, wealth, and leisure.²⁰ Certainly wealth in its most direct form conferred power and some position,²¹ but leisure (*σχολή*), the freedom from the necessity of work, allowed for the development of a distinctive style of life.²² As a result, the power of wealth was mediated through specific socialized practices; class was figured as culture.

Even in the archaic period, elites had pursued strategies of cultural distinction. The aristocracy in archaic Greece took part in several exclusive

17. *Myth and Thought Among the Greeks* (London, 1983), p. 252.

18. Loraux, "Ponos," p. 177.

19. Of the considerable modern scholarship defending the analysis of class in Athens, consult J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Lloyd (Sussex, 1980), pp. 11–27; M. M. Austin and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977), pp. 23–25; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca, 1981), pp. 71–74; M. I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1–12; M. M. Markle, "Jury Pay and Assembly Pay at Athens," in *Crux*, ed. P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (London, 1985), pp. 267–71; R. K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 121–23; J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 194–96; idem, "Aristotle's Political Sociology: Class, Status, and Order in the *Politics*," in *Essays on the Foundations of Aristotelian Political Science*, ed. C. Lord and D. K. O'Connor (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), pp. 112–35. I use the terms "elites" and "aristocrats" interchangeably to refer to those wealthy enough to be freed from the necessity of labor. I do not mean to imply by "aristocracy" either a meritocracy or a closed hereditary nobility with inheritable titles, offices, and privileges (as in Europe). No such nobility existed in Athens.

20. Scholars usually identify those the Athenians would have called "the rich" with those in the liturgical class, some 1,000 to 1,200 individuals. Those who paid the *εἰσφορά* probably numbered 2,000. Men in this property class probably had enough wealth to be freed from the necessity of labor, and so enjoyed leisure. Consult generally Sinclair, *Democracy*, pp. 119–23. P. J. Rhodes, "Problems in Athenian *Eisphora* and Liturgies," *American Journal of Ancient History* 7 (1982): 1–19, argues for the number of liturgists. M. H. Hansen, *Demography and Democracy* (Herning, Denmark, 1985), estimates the population.

21. J. K. Davies, *Wealth and the Power of Wealth* (New York, 1981), discusses the ways in which wealth could be deployed; T. Gallant, *Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece* (Stanford, 1991), shows how wealthy farmers could choose among more risk-buffering strategies and how in times of shortage and crisis the rich grew richer while ordinary farmers lost ground.

22. On leisure, see M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), p. 41; Markle, "Jury Pay," p. 271; and Sinclair, *Democracy*, pp. 120–22.

pursuits: symposiums, horse breeding, pederasty, and hunting.²³ Leslie Kurke has recently shown how, in response to the rise of newly wealthy men, some traditional aristocrats further elaborated their style of life with ἀβροσύνη, ostentatious luxury: long, expensive garments, long, elaborate hair, gold ornaments, wine, song, and sensuality.²⁴ Such strategies, however, were not uncontested, and by the end of the fifth century a strong backlash had stigmatized ἀβροσύνη, in Athens at least.²⁵

In Athens, in fact, the desire for distinction was constantly running up against the leveling impulses of the democracy; Xenophon's project must be understood as an attempt to navigate through these countervailing forces. In the first place, sometime in the sixth century the city had intervened to undercut private benefactions that might have formed patronage relationships by institutionalizing many gifts in the form of liturgies. Specific tasks assigned to the rich, liturgies ranged from feasting a group of citizens, to sponsoring a chorus in a festival, to equipping and manning a trireme.²⁶ Such contributions were mandatory and were made not to individuals but to the city collectively, thereby diffusing the sense of obligatory reciprocity that might otherwise accompany gifts. Moreover, beginning in the middle of the fifth century, the city began to pay for public service (as on the juries or in the fleet). As Paul Millett has argued, this was a form of income redistribution that mitigated the economic necessity that might otherwise have fostered patronage relationships.²⁷ Simultaneously, civic ideology came to value such public expenditures over private luxury, so that excessive expenditure on showy consumption might be a matter of reproach.²⁸ Claims of inherited excellence were also viewed with rising suspicion; ancestry alone ceased to offer sufficient justification of social and political leadership.²⁹ During Xenophon's life the pressures to conform to this democratic ideology—which simultaneously stressed the political equality of all citizens and the claims of the city as a whole on the resources of the wealthiest—became even more acute due to the expulsion of the Thirty and their avowedly oligarchic government in 403 B.C.E.³⁰

In response to these pressures, elites tried to justify their virtues as practical. "By the later part of the [fifth] century," Walter Donlan has noted, "the claims of mental and moral superiority were central elements in the

23. Symposiums: O. Murray, ed., *Symptica* (Oxford, 1990); W. J. Slater, ed., *Dining in a Classical Context* (Ann Arbor, 1991). Hunting: P. Schmitt and A. Schnapp, "Image et société en Grèce ancienne: les représentations de la chasse et du banquet," *Revue Arch.* (1982): 57–74; J. L. Durand and A. Schnapp, "Sacrificial Slaughter and Initiatory Hunt," in *A City of Images* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 53–70; and A. Schnapp, "Eros the Hunter," in *City of Images*, pp. 71–87. ξενία: G. Hermann, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge, 1987).

24. "The Politics of ἀβροσύνη in Archaic Greece," *Classical Antiquity* 11 (1992): 96.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 104–6.

26. Sinclair, *Democracy*, pp. 188–90; J. Roberts, "Aristocratic Democracy: The Perseverance of Timocratic Principles in Athenian Government," *Athenaeum* 3–4 (1986): 355–69.

27. "Patronage and Its Avoidance in Classical Athens," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. A. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 15–47.

28. Kurke, "Politics," 104–6.

29. W. Donlan, *The Aristocratic Ideal in Ancient Greece* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1980), pp. 131–36; P. W. Rose, *Sons of the Gods, Children of the Earth: Ideology and Literary Form in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 273–78, 340–41, 352–53.

30. Donlan, *Aristocratic Ideal*, p. 175.

nobility's defense of its primacy, and aristocratic self-justification increasingly and explicitly asserted that those who were not members of their class were incapable of high ethical behavior or refinement of thought and feeling."³¹ Xenophon's program followed such a strategy, borrowing the language of newly developing fields of technical knowledge. Thomas Cole has shown that the word τέχνη at first referred to how-to manuals and in the fourth century was extended by philosophers to encompass theoretical reflections on practice.³² The *Cynegeticus* is much more like the former while the *Oeconomicus* (insofar as it articulates not just practice but a language about practice) is more like the latter. Both, however, make a practical manual's claims of usefulness while also aiming at inculcating virtue, which was a theme of philosophic reflections. In marrying virtue to practice and adopting the language of both, Xenophon was able to elide the subject of class. By insisting on acquired capacities as the basis of the elite position, Xenophon reintroduced birth and wealth in a mediated form: although the socialized morality and learned abilities that constituted the elite lifestyle could be represented as ideally open to all, in actual practice it was almost entirely elites who had access to education.³³

Xenophon was responding not only to the tensions between aristocrats and the populace, but among aristocrats themselves. He sought to develop a lifestyle of distinction while simultaneously mitigating the competition that the rivalry for distinction might engender. Ancient Greece was a highly competitive culture; this agonistic impulse, however, could be quite divisive.³⁴ As Alvin Gouldner has noted, competition could create a structural disjunction between an individual's interests and those of the larger group. Moreover, since the total amount of rewards was thought to be fixed, one primary way to regulate the intensity of competition was to moderate the competitive urge itself, by making people want less.³⁵ Indeed, the attempt to restrain the effects of competition is a recurring theme in Greek history.³⁶

However much such competition threatened the harmony of citizens, it presented a clear danger to the unity of an elite class. The problem for elites was that for any particular aristocrat it was to his own personal advantage to throw over his class and appeal to the populace. At Athens this dislocation of interests was particularly powerful; the democracy harnessed the competitive urges of aristocrats in the service of the interests of the

31. Ibid., p. 143.

32. T. Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 81–82.

33. Plato pursues a similar strategy in his *Republic*: see Rose, *Sons of the Gods*, chap. 6.

34. As some Greeks themselves saw: e.g., Thuc. 2.65.

35. *Enter Plato* (New York, 1965), pp. 41–60 (see esp. pp. 52–55). Gouldner applies this analysis to competition among citizens, but the same tensions result from competition among elites.

36. L. Kurke's work on Pindar (*The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* [Ithaca, 1991]), for example, reveals that one of the poet's tasks was to smooth over the envy and resentment stirred up by the athlete's victory, jealousies which threatened the social order. The victor had to be reintegrated into his city and his class; and the resentment of other aristocrats diffused. J. Redfield, "The Women of Sparta" *CJ* 73 (1977–78): 146–61, suggests that the Spartan social system attempted to suppress economic and cultural competition among citizens.

populace.³⁷ David Whitehead has shown how the ambition (φιλοτιμία) that drove so many elites was in fact encouraged so that they would compete in serving the city.³⁸ It is therefore less surprising that the Athenian democracy was led by elites: it was not so much a question of who the leaders were as of whose interests they served.³⁹ As Josiah Ober has remarked:

The ideological hegemony of the masses effectively channeled the fierce competitiveness of elites, a legacy of the aristocratic code, into patterns of behavior that were in the public interest. . . . [T]he abilities, wealth, and birthright of the elite politician (and to a lesser degree of all elites) were only valorized when he received public recognition by the demos. Thus, the continuing strength of the aristocratic code of competition and *philotimia* served the interests of the democracy.⁴⁰

Elite competitiveness was, in some ways, the dynamo that drove the democracy.

Xenophon was critically concerned to redirect and repress intra-elite competition.⁴¹ One passage in the *Memorabilia* highlights this concern (2.6.19–26). Critobulus remarks to Socrates about the difficulty in forming friendships, adding that even those who practice virtue engage in political battles (στασιάζουσι) for preeminence in their cities. Socrates replies that though some forces pull men apart, especially the competition for noble and pleasant things, friendship unites (that is to say, it ought to unite) aristocrats (καλούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς). They should be able to share, resist greed, put aside strife and jealousy, and make up. “Isn’t it likely, then,” Socrates asks, “that aristocrats will be partners even in public honors, not only without harming each other but in fact to their mutual benefit?” So, he concludes, “isn’t it profitable for someone who has acquired the noblest friends to take part in government, treating them as partners and collaborators in affairs rather than as rivals?” Xenophon sought to mitigate elite competitiveness both by restricting the desire that drove competition (by insisting on self-control) and by shifting competition to a purely cultural field. Neither the *Cynegeticus* nor the *Oeconomicus* were so much manuals of practical activity (as they have sometimes been construed) as of aristocratic style.⁴²

37. Ober, *Mass and Elite*, pp. 84–85, 242–43, 250. M. T. W. Arnheim, *Aristocracy in Greek Society* (London, 1977).

38. “Competitive Outlay and Community Profit: Φιλοτιμία in Democratic Athens,” *C&M* 34 (1983): 55–74. Note, too, Demosthenes’ remarks about Meidias, who had struck him during Demosthenes’ tenure as liturgist: he says that Meidias ought to have lawfully indulged his ambition by sponsoring a rival chorus and defeating Demosthenes, thereby both causing Demosthenes trouble and honoring the populace (Dem. 21.67–69).

39. The analysis of Athenian democratic leadership, that is to say, should be structural not personal.

40. *Mass and Elite*, p. 333.

41. There had often been tensions within the elite class between those of inherited and achieved status (particularly those who owed their position to the acquisition of wealth, to a lesser extent those who rose through education). Xenophon seems much less concerned with friction between these specific factions of the elite class than with the structural disjunctions caused by competition. He seems to have seen these distinct sources of power generating conflicting interests largely because of the agonistic ethos.

42. Although the date of neither treatise can be fixed securely, they both seem directed to Athenian audiences and their concerns. The *Oeconomicus*, with its Athenian setting and characters and its concern with particularly Athenian problems (e.g., the management of slaves or the abuse of the legal system

XENOPHON'S *CYNEGETICUS*

Although somewhat unusual in its form, Xenophon's *Cynegeticus* exhibits a unity in construction and purpose. It begins with a lengthy preface invoking mythical students of the hunt and the benefits they gained from it (chap. 1). The body of the work (chaps. 2–11) has been described as a technical manual of hunting: the bulk of this section concerns hunting hares on foot with dogs (chaps. 2–8), although the remainder covers hunting deer, boars, and more exotic animals (chaps. 9–11). The advice offered the hunter of hares includes descriptions of equipment (chap. 2), of dogs (chaps. 3 and 4), and of the behavior of hares (chap. 5), and instruction in exercise and training as well as the actual hunt (chaps. 6–8).⁴³ The lengthy epilogue both extols the benefits of hunting (chap. 12) and blames the sophists as providing an inferior education to that offered by the hunt (chap. 13).

Some have questioned the authenticity of part or all of the treatise because of the seeming incompatibility of the preface, body, and epilogue, but V. J. Gray has recently offered a reasoned defense of its unity.⁴⁴ She notes that if it is seen as merely a technical manual, then the beginning and end do seem incongruous. But Xenophon, she argues, was writing a *παραινέσις*, a work of exhortation and advice including a program of "what activities to pursue, what to avoid, what company to keep, how to live."⁴⁵ She compares it both to Hesiod's *Works and Days* and to two of Isocrates' tracts, all of which must be seen as a common genre.⁴⁶ There are important implications for the way we read the pamphlet in these conclusions, for they suggest that the *Cynegeticus* is not (or not primarily) a

[sycophancy] and the need to practice speaking to combat this [11.21–25], neither of which would have been significant concerns at Sparta) has usually been construed by scholars with little comment to refer to Athens. The *Cynegeticus* does not provide the same obvious clues, but its pointed references to sophists and philosophers (13.1, 13.9) suggest Athens much more than Sparta, as do its recommendations for the education of young men after they've learned to hunt (2.1), advice that clearly conflicts with the model of the Spartan system (*Lak. Pol.* 2.1ff.). Xenophon, born around 430 B.C.E., spent much of his adult life living away from Athens. There is nothing concrete by which to establish the date of the *Cynegeticus*. (E. C. Marchant, in the introduction to the Loeb edition [Cambridge, Mass., 1925], p. xl, suggests 401 and J. Luccioni, *Les Idées politiques et sociales de Xénophon* [Paris, 1948], p. 23, avers a similar date, but É. Delebecque, *Xénophon: L'Art de la Chasse* [Paris, 1970], pp. 33–35, puts it somewhere around 390.) The *Oeconomicus* is usually thought to be later. (É. Delebecque, "Sur la date et l'objet de l'Économique," *REG* 64 (1951): 21–58, places it between 365 and 355.) Despite his absence from his native city and his pervasive admiration of Sparta, Xenophon retained an intimacy with and concern for Athens. The *Hippiarchikos*, a work probably written relatively late in his life, offers suggestions for improving the Athenian cavalry. The *Poroi*, probably his final work and securely dated to 355, is a detailed argument for improving the public finances of Athens. Other scholars have generally taken Xenophon to be understood in a persistently Athenian context: e.g., W. E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (Albany, 1977), or Luccioni, *Idées politiques*.

43. J. K. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), chaps. 2–3, and D. B. Hull, *Hounds and Hunting in Ancient Greece* (Chicago, 1964), both give modern accounts of the techniques of Greek hunting, as described by Xenophon.

44. V. J. Gray, "Xenophon's 'Cynegeticus,'" *Hermes* 113 (1985): 156–72. Gray includes citations of those who doubt the work's authenticity, to whom she is responding. She also argues that there is no need to discard the traditional ascription of the work to Xenophon (pp. 162–72).

45. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–61.

practical manual of hunting, but that it aims, rather, to inculcate a moral sense. As Alain Schnapp has noted, Xenophon's treatise is less a practical manual and more an ideological apology, or, even, a manual of etiquette.⁴⁷

The hunt, for Xenophon, was still a form of elite display. Xenophon's insistence that the hunt be καλός firmly situates it in this aristocratic tradition: the hunt was meant to be both beautiful, that is, an elite spectacle to be seen, and ennobling, that is, morally good in a class specific way.⁴⁸ So, in describing the physical defects that make dogs incapable of hunting well, Xenophon disqualifies the unsightly dogs (ἄμορφοι) as αἰσχροί to the eye, a word that as the opposite of καλός could mean either ugly or morally bad.⁴⁹ In enumerating the advantages that accrue to a hunter, Xenophon notes that unlike the ugly (αἰσχροάν) language of those who engage in politics for their own gain, the hunter's diction is eloquent (εὐεπῆ, *Cyn.* 13.16). In his advice to the man knocked to the ground and trampled by a boar, Xenophon recommends that one of his companions distract the boar so that he can jump up quickly, remembering, of course, to grab hold of his spear: "For safety is not καλή except to one who conquers" (*Cyn.* 10.15). The effect of the whole hunt should be one of exquisite and overwhelming beauty: "So charming is the spectacle that if anyone saw a hare tracked, found, chased, and caught he would forget whatever else he loved."⁵⁰

Although the hunt had long been reckoned as one of the distinguishing practices of the upper classes and was especially associated with the socialization of the young,⁵¹ Xenophon nevertheless attempted to reinvigorate it and reinvest it with new legitimacy by situating it in a discourse of utility. In Xenophon's reflection on the art, status derives from the display not of wealth but of virtue, virtue that is not only a socially specific aesthetic sensibility, but also, as he claims, practical as well. In the first place, although the *Cynegeticus* concerns the proper style of life, it takes the form of a practical manual: it describes in detail the nets and stakes employed, the behaviors of hares when being chased, and the training of dogs (2.5–9, 5.15–21, 7.6–12). The hunt, however, as Xenophon constructs it, was not primarily a productive activity. Nowhere does he mention meat. In fact, attention to the production of food could distract from the real purpose of hunting. He warns: "Do not be excessive in tracking the hare. Using every means to make the capture quickly is diligent (φιλόπονον), but it is not hunting."⁵² It was not essential that animals were killed. Hunting might even interfere with the efficient production of

47. "Représentation du territoire de guerre et du territoire de chasse dans l'oeuvre de Xénophon," in *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne*, ed. M. I. Finley (Paris, 1973), p. 317.

48. This corresponds to Xenophon's attitude toward horses which, as Vilatte has shown, were meant to show the master's excellence by presenting a beautiful spectacle: S. Vilatte, "La femme, l'esclave, le cheval, et le chien: les emblèmes du kalos kagathos Ischomaque," *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 12 (1986): 274.

49. *Cyn.* 3.3. Notice too that the color of the dogs must be right: 4.7–8.

50. *Cyn.* 5.33. Xenophon elsewhere describes the hunter's relationship to hunting as "loving," ἐπαῖν: *Cyn.* 12.10, 14, 13.18.

51. See above, n. 23.

52. *Cyn.* 6.8. Even in hunting, Xenophon worried about the competitive urge.

food: Xenophon praises the customs of previous times, which both had prohibited hunting by night near the city “so that those who practice that art might not deprive the young men [who hunt by day] of their game” and had also allowed hunting over cultivated fields “despite the scarcity of grain.”⁵³

Xenophon claims that the hunt is useful in two ways: it trains a man for war and it inculcates virtue.⁵⁴ Men will be better soldiers, he maintains, if they have gotten used to carrying weapons over rough country, sleeping on the ground, following orders while fighting, and moving through difficult terrain (*Cyn.* 12.2–5). The emphasis on utility, however, is as much ideological as real: hunting as he describes it, although as useful as any other kind of general physical training, taught none of the specific skills needed for hoplites or other soldiers.⁵⁵ More importantly, from Xenophon’s perspective, the young hunters became better soldiers and generals because the hunt trained them in virtue (*Cyn.* 12.8–9). Hunting “makes [young men] self-controlled and just, because they are schooled in the truth” (*Cyn.* 12.7). Xenophon insists that the young men will discover the meaning and content of virtue (ἀρετή) through the toil associated with the hunt (*Cyn.* 12.18, 22).

Xenophon contrasts hunting as a form of education and the instruction of the sophists, who and whose students seek only their own advantage (*Cyn.* 13.10). He wants to legitimate the traditional aristocratic practice of hunting in the practical terms of sophistry itself: it makes citizens who are better able to serve the state. But he also wants to show that it is superior to sophistry in this regard:

Because they are busy making off with the property both of ordinary people and of the city, [selfish politicians under the influence of the sophists] are less useful for the security of the state than private people are; and because they are incapable of toil [πονεῖν], their bodies are the worst and most shameful [κάκιστα καὶ αἰσχίστα] for war. Hunters, on the contrary, supply both their bodies and their fortunes in good condition (καλῶς) to the state for the citizens.⁵⁶

Xenophon would like to argue that it is not so much a skill (excepting, of course, skill in war) as a moral sense that is the product of each kind of education, and the sophists, despite their claims, lead the young only to the opposite of virtue (*Cyn.* 13.1).

Hunting, as a form of elite education, held one other significant advantage for Xenophon. In hunting, the agonistic impulse that drove elite competition and weakened elite solidarity was directed away from rivalry

53. *Cyn.* 12.6–7. Night seems to have been the time when those who earned their livelihood at hunting did so (Anderson, *Hunting*, p. 159, n. 3).

54. Largely in chap. 12.

55. P. Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak (Baltimore, 1986), p. 120, makes this point. Hunting was apparently not a part of the training of Athenian ephebes (H. W. Pleket, “*Collegium Iuvenum Nemestorum*: A Note on Ancient Youth-Organizations,” *Mnemosyne* 22 [1969]: 292–94).

56. *Cyn.* 13.11. The subject of the first sentence is carried over from the previous one: “those who rashly seek their own advantage.” I have expanded this somewhat because it is clear from the context that these men’s conduct has been formed by their association with the sophists.

with other aristocrats and against the animals that were the object of the hunt. In the concluding paragraphs of the treatise (13.10–18), Xenophon starkly contrasts “those who rashly seek their own advantage” (13.10) by attacking their “friends” (13.12 [twice], 13.15) with hunters who attack animals that threaten everyone. “So those who want to gain an advantage at the expense of the city practice to gain victory over their friends, but hunters do this over common enemies” (*Cyn.* 13.15). The pupils of the sophists advance their own interests against their friends’, whereas those socialized in the hunt do not undermine the interests of their class in cut-throat competition.

Xenophon’s instructions did not make for a more efficient hunt as much as for a nobler man. Although it may have supplied meat for the table, hunting was in the first place an exclusively aristocratic education that developed a sense of beauty and of virtue. Certainly, as Xenophon describes it, the practice was reserved for elites—as were its benefits. It was (as Xenophon notes) a pursuit not all could afford to follow (*Cyn.* 2.1):⁵⁷ good dogs were rare, and must have been expensive (*Cyn.* 3.2). The hunt took most of the day and the dogs were meant to be taken out every other day (*Cyn.* 6.25, 6.3–4). Even Xenophon was aware that to do it right would take a great deal of time (*Cyn.* 12.10ff.). Xenophon sought to transform the leisure time afforded by wealth into a distinctive style of life, so that the pursuit of ordinary activities (here, hunting) would be carried on in such a way as to both mark their practitioners as elite and reserve their advantages (civic virtue) for the few.

XENOPHON’S *OECONOMICUS*

Xenophon’s treatise on household management, the *Oeconomicus*, like his *Cynegeticus*, constitutes not so much a practical manual of conduct as a guide to the style of an aristocratic life.⁵⁸ It addresses less the conduct of farmers in general than that of the richest among them.⁵⁹ In substance the work concerns the proper management of an estate, an οἶκος. Formally, the treatise takes the form of a narrator recounting a dialogue he once heard between Socrates and Critobulus. In the course of this dialogue Socrates relates a conversation he once had with the wealthy Athenian landowner Ischomachus. During their conversation, Ischomachus tells of talks he had had with his wife.

57. Compare this to Xenophon’s idealized system of Persian education which, while in theory open to all children, is in fact (as he notes) restricted to those whose fathers can afford to keep them free from work (*Cyr.* 1.2.15).

58. The work is not by any means a straightforward description of an Athenian household. It is, as S. Murnaghan, “How a Woman Can be More Like a Man,” *Helios* 15 (1988): 9–10, notes, philosophical, and therefore highly stylized and idealized.

59. Note, for example, that Socrates praises farming as giving the most leisure for attending to (συνεπιμελεῖσθαι) one’s friends and city (*Oec.* 6.9, cf. 4.3). In comparing this to Aristotle’s belief (*Pol.* 1318b10–17, 1329a1–3) that most farmers haven’t the leisure to get involved in civic life (or to cultivate ἀρετή), it is clear that Xenophon was concerned with only the richest farmers who, like Ischomachus, did not themselves have to labor.

Even more than the *Cynegeticus*, the *Oeconomicus* shows how elites stylized mundane, productive activities by making them the object of self-conscious reflection. Xenophon begins by defining the art of household management as similar to other arts, such as carpentry or medicine, which aim at utilitarian ends (*Oec.* 1.1–4). Like his *Cynegeticus*, though, agricultural production is not its central concern;⁶⁰ the bulk of the treatise rather describes the style with which an aristocratic household should be run. Sylvie Vilatte has shown how the parts of a man's household—the animals, the slaves, the wife, the property, too—were thought of as emblems of his virtue.⁶¹ More than displaying these static signs, however, the aristocrat transformed his or her practices, doing what many did in a way that few could. The essence of creating a τέχνη of household management was thus more stylistic than practical. It was not so much Xenophon's specific recommendations that were important (most of which must have been obvious), as the self-conscious principles from which they were derived. In the *Oeconomicus* Xenophon sought to convey four such principles as the basis of an elite lifestyle: the dangers of false appearances, the nature of command, the meaning of being a free person, and the importance of orderliness.

Although the position of elites depended upon wealth, by a curious inversion Xenophon considered the blunt display of wealth as the mere mirage of status, whereas its manifestation through virtuous—that is to say, stylized—activity denoted true superiority. Thus Ischomachus deplors wealth displayed directly rather than mediated through a style of living. When his wife appears before him one day covered in cosmetics, he reproves her (*Oec.* 10.2–13; cf. *Mem.* 2.1.22). She must not, he tells her, merely seem to be beautiful, but must be really so: to do that she must take command of the household, imposing order by the art of ruling. True beauty, in short, is to be found in the style of the life of an aristocrat. “Beautiful and noble things (τὰ καλὰ τε κάγαθά) are increased for humans not by youthful appearances but by virtues in their way of living” (*Oec.* 7.43).

The aristocrat asserted his status through the art of commanding. Ischomachus suggests that the need for command was common to all forms of business.⁶² Xenophon's treatise concludes with Ischomachus' claim that to win willing obedience was a power somewhat divine (*Oec.* 21.12). The aristocrat must know how to command his wife, his bailiff, his slaves (*Oec.* 10.1, 13.6–12). So fundamental was the idea of command that when Ischomachus seeks parallels to ordering a household, he conjures up the

60. As R. Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures* (London, 1987), p. 18, notes: “The practical value of this discussion [between Socrates and Ischomachus] is almost nil.”

61. Vilatte, “Femme,” pp. 271–94. Attitudes toward rape and seduction show that a husband's honor was reflected not only in a wife's body, but her behavior. Penalties for rape were more lenient than for seduction because the latter crime implied the corruption of the wife's character (*Lys.* 1.33).

62. *Oec.* 21.2. Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, pp. 152–65, sees the art of command as central to Xenophon's text. Foucault's concern, however, is how command of the household intersects with command of the self. Here I am concerned not with how this practice is directed inward, but outward: how the proper governance of a household created a style, a virtue, that asserted superiority over other citizens.

typical positions of command a member of his class might have undertaken for the polis as liturgies: a chorus, an army, a trireme.⁶³ Admittedly in at least the first and last of these the man who had undertaken the liturgy commanded through another man, a technical expert, the trainer of the chorus in the first case, the steersman in the second. But command was not so much a mastery of technical details (as of how to sing, or row, or plant) as of how to conduct oneself while having others—whether slaves or other citizens—execute these for you (cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1255b31–37). There can be no doubt that in each case it was the sponsor who thought himself in command: the prize for the chorus was won by the sponsor, and the liturgist was always the captain of his ship.⁶⁴ So, too, the man (or, in one case, woman) who won the prize for chariot racing in the games was not the driver but the backer. These other practices correspond closely to Ischomachus' model of agriculture. For here too he commands through a bailiff.⁶⁵ Moreover, it is not that commanding a household is like commanding an army or chorus: it is the same thing. The τέχνη is generalizable, universal, and transferable. The art of household management for Ischomachus depends upon a generalizable skill of commanding, an art that is equally valid for the farm, the army, or the ship. Thus proper farming trains a man to be a commander of soldiers.⁶⁶

A parallel passage in another of Xenophon's Socratic works, the *Memorabilia*, confirms the picture of the art of commanding as a universalized art.⁶⁷ Here Nicomachides complains to Socrates that despite his military experience he has not been chosen general, but that Antisthenes, who has none, was elected. Socrates points out that Antisthenes is eager for victory and that when he undertook to sponsor a chorus, his choir always won. Although Nicomachides sees no similarity between handling a chorus and an army, Socrates notes that just as he found the best experts to train his chorus, so he will find others capable of managing for him. "Whatever someone is in charge of," says Socrates, "if he knows what's necessary and can get it, he will be a good ruler, whether he's in charge of

63. *Oec.* 8.1–9, 8.19–20. Murnaghan, "How a Woman," p. 16, believes that these comparisons are meant to assimilate the household to "the impersonal, egalitarian, and collective character of Athenian civic life." Ischomachus, however, is attempting to show that these institutions will not function until order has been imposed. That order creates equality among the members of the common enterprise, but it is imposed from above by an aristocrat like himself.

64. Note that men who had hired another to actually carry out their trierarchy still claimed the prize for preparedness themselves (*Dem.* 51.7).

65. To gauge the importance of such overseers, consider the report that Nicias paid the huge sum of one talent for a slave to manage his mining contracts (*Mem.* 2.5.2).

66. *Oec.* 5.14–17; cf. *Mem.* 3.6.14 where Socrates advises Glaucon to practice managing an estate before trying to manage the city.

67. *Mem.* 3.4.1–12; this chapter should not be read in isolation from those around it (chaps. 1–5). In each Xenophon explores a particular quality required of a military commander by having Socrates confront someone who lacks this specific quality. In chapter 4, Xenophon does not argue that the technical details of the command of an army should be left to hired help, but that the universalized art of command is separable from these details. The surrounding chapters develop ideas of specific kinds of military knowledge; this one, however, confirms that for Xenophon an important element of being a general is the generalizable art of ruling.

a chorus, a household, a city, or an army" (*Mem.* 3.4.6). Socrates then points out that the arts of ruling are the same in both cases, concluding:

For the oversight [ἐπιμέλεια] of private affairs differs from that of public ones only in magnitude. In other respects they are about the same, especially in that neither can happen without people and that both private and public business is conducted through the same people. For those who manage public business use the same men as when they oversee the affairs of their households. Those who are capable of using them for both private and public affairs are successful, but those who are incapable of it bungle both. [*Mem.* 3.4.12]

Household management, like other forms of commanding, is doubly implicated as the aristocrat's exclusive and distinctive possession. Insofar as it consists of commanding inferiors to manage the practical details, it merely asserts, in certain stylized and recognized forms, social superiority. So Socrates points out to Nicomachides that a ruler in any field will make his subjects willing and obedient, punish the bad and reward the good, win the goodwill of his underlings, etc. (*Mem.* 3.4.7–10). But Xenophon has also created (through Socrates) a self-conscious art based on certain principles. It is not that the masses cannot run a farm—indeed, it is they who will have the technical knowledge the aristocrat relies upon—but that they cannot understand and talk about household management in a properly scientific way. The knowledge of this art marks the aristocrat's status.

The art of household management was meant to reveal its practitioner as a truly free person. Socrates is made to say that "even the most blessed men cannot shun farming. For it seems likely that the practice (ἐπιμέλεια) of agriculture is at the same time a kind of luxury as well as a way to increase your household and to train your body in those things a free man ought to be able to do" (*Oec.* 5.1; cf. 5:11). Xenophon's conception of freedom parallels closely the oligarchic notion of freedom explored by Kurt Raaffaub.⁶⁸ Raaffaub notes that oligarchs did not distinguish the legally free person from the slave, but the "truly free" person (that is, the aristocrat) from the populace. In doing so oligarchic ideology rejected the democratic idea of freedom, which was grounded in the political sphere, and substituted a social definition, which emphasized both character (the personal qualities required for leadership) and freedom from labor (i.e., leisure). Xenophon's treatise applies to the few for whom, because it was chosen and not an economic necessity, agriculture was allied with leisure (*Oec.* 6.9). For Xenophon, too, freedom was defined socially: the free person was the one who commanded, that is, who was distinguished not so much from slaves as from the mass of others who were ruled like slaves. Moreover, freedom, and therefore the ability to command, was equated with a form of aristocratic virtue, self-control. Those who are slaves to vice, Socrates says, will never make good farmers (*Oec.* 1.19–23). So seriously did Xenophon take this notion of freedom as control of the self

68. "Democracy, Oligarchy, and the Concept of the 'Free Citizen' in Late Fifth-Century Athens," *Political Theory* 11 (1983): 517–44.

that he makes Socrates say (paradoxically if not just shockingly) that it might be better to be actually enslaved to an aristocrat, who by chastisement might compel a person to be better, than to live as a “slave” of gluttony, lechery, or some other vice (*Oec.* 1.22–23). The freedom associated with agriculture was expressed not in the drudgery of work, but through the command of oneself and of others.

An aristocrat’s end in commanding was to impress orderliness, τάξις. Although this order was represented as practical, it was essentially aesthetic. Ischomachus tells his wife that “there is nothing so useful or so beautiful [καλόν] for humans as order” (*Oec.* 8.3). A fascination with order possesses Ischomachus, who speaks with reverence of the organization the Persian kings imposed on agriculture, and especially the way the prince Cyrus had laid out trees in straight rows, and of the “most lovely and precise ordering” of tackle and equipment on a Phoenician ship (*Oec.* 8.11–16, 4.12–25). When Ischomachus’ wife was unable to produce from storage an object he asked for, he instructed her to put each thing in its own place (*Oec.* 8.10). It should not be supposed that this order was primarily instrumental; it was καλόν, morally good and beautiful. Rather than manifesting his wealth in unusual objects (he tells us that his possessions are not extravagant [*Oec.* 9.2]), Ischomachus marked himself as an aristocrat by the style with which he ordered them. Once again, the end was aesthetic (“beautiful” translates the repeated καλόν):

I have said how it is good to order the stock of utensils and how easy to find a place to put each of them in the house, a place suitable for each. And how beautiful it appears when the sandals are laid out in rows, and how beautiful to see clothes of all sorts kept separate. And it is beautiful when it’s bedspreads, and beautiful when it’s pots, and beautiful when it’s tableware. Even if the unserious man who always mocks everything does not, the elegant man does find it beautiful that the pots laid out regularly appear (as I say) well proportioned.⁶⁹

Ischomachus divides the rooms of the house by function, categorizes all their possessions by use, and suggests that in default of this system a promiscuous chaos would prevail (*Oec.* 9.2–10; cf. 3.2–3). As an example of disorder he imagines a farmer who stores his barley, wheat, and pulse in the same bin, so that he must separate it out grain by grain when he needs it (*Oec.* 8.9). For even the dullest farmer, this was an unlikely blunder. Rather, Ischomachus has made into an art one of the skills of everyday existence. He has transformed a particular mundane and unself-conscious practice (that of putting things away) into the art of orderliness. This self-conscious reflection on the activity may have improved its efficiency somewhat. But the essential point is that it has created a new kind of knowledge: beyond the practical knowledge of how to put things away, Ischomachus has the ability to talk about this, invoking a system of orderliness that transcends particular spheres and applies universally—to a home, a ship, an orchard, an army, a chorus.

69. *Oec.* 8.18–19; this is Socrates speaking, relating what Ischomachus told him that he said to his wife.

The same concerns pertain to the aristocratic woman. Ischomachus must educate his young wife into the superior style of an aristocrat. One might question the veracity of his assertion that when he married his wife she knew nothing of household duties, even though she was just 15.⁷⁰ One may also wonder whether, as he claims, he himself trained her in these duties. But the point is not that she came without practical skills of any kind, which he then taught her, but that she too must come to have the self-conscious knowledge of the arts of command and orderliness (*Oec.* 9.14–15):

I told my wife that none of these [measures regarding a housekeeper] would be useful unless she herself took charge [ἐπιμελήσεται] that order remained in effect in every instance. I told her that in cities with good laws it does not seem sufficient to the citizens that they pass good [καλοῦς] laws, but they additionally choose guardians of the laws who oversee and commend those who act lawfully and punish anyone who breaks the law. Therefore I urged my wife to adopt the practice and be guardian of the laws in the household. I urged her to scrutinize our property whenever it seemed appropriate, just as a commander of a fortress inspects the guards; and to examine whether everything was in good order [καλῶς], just as the Boule makes a trial of the cavalry men and horses; and, like a queen, to praise and reward the worthy to the extent of her powers, and to blame and punish those who needed it.

Ischomachus' wife, too, must not just oversee the household, but understand that she does so by virtue of a universal, systematic art.

Xenophon's strategy of grounding the aristocrat's higher status in a discursive knowledge of practical activities derived from contemporary philosophical rationalization. One of the achievements of philosophy in the fourth century was to develop languages to talk about activities; Plato and Isocrates (Xenophon's contemporaries) were the first to develop rhetoric in the sense of an analytical language to talk about language.⁷¹ Thus the philosopher, as distinguished from common practitioners, possessed a peculiar kind of knowledge—not ability but science. That this knowledge of an art aimed less at improving technique than at conferring on its possessor a unique ability to talk about the practice is shown by Xenophon in a passage of the *Memorabilia* where Socrates talks to artisans about their occupations (3.10.1–15). He converses in turn with a painter, a sculptor, and a shield-maker, getting each of them to agree, through his step-by-step questioning, to his theory of their art. It is clear that Socrates possesses a knowledge of how to talk about these arts that their practitioners lack. When he confronts Cleiton, the sculptor, the man is initially confused by Socrates' question (3.10.6–7):

"Cleiton, I see and know that the runners, wrestlers, boxers, and pancratists you make are beautiful, but how do you produce in your statues that thing which most allures the onlooker, the illusion of life?" Since Cleiton was perplexed and didn't answer at once,

70. *Oec.* 7.5. Murnaghan, "How a Woman," pp. 12–13, notes the improbability of this, and assigns its cause to the fact that Xenophon's philosophical dialogue requires the wife to be educated into being like a man.

71. Cole, *Origins*, p. 127.

Socrates asked: "Is it by modeling your work on the form of living beings that you make the statues seem most lifelike?"

Socrates, leading him through the reasoning and allowing him to agree to each statement, finally announces the answer to his own question: "Therefore it is necessary that the sculptor make his representations of the soul correspond to its nature" (*Mem.* 3.10.8).

Socrates' questioning did not enable the artisans to do something they could not do before; rather, it converted their practical knowledge of their craft into discursive knowledge, the object of self-conscious philosophical reflection. Whether or not this benefited the artisans, they were clearly bewildered by the questions—but no less skilled artisans for that. For the philosopher it was not the knowledge of how to act that counted, however expert and skilled that knowledge might have been, but the knowledge of how to talk about acting. The ability to systematically reflect on experience marked the superiority of its possessor.

TOIL: THE VIRTUE OF STYLIZED LABOR

Xenophon repeatedly emphasizes that in the practice of his life the aristocrat must undergo *πόνος*.⁷² The gentleman's toil, however, should not be confused with the merely productive labor of a slave, artisan, or common farmer. It was, rather, a unique and stylized form of labor that distinguished the aristocrat from these people. It aimed at the production of virtue. "For Xenophon . . .," Vernant notes, "agriculture is first and foremost what makes it possible to exercise a type of *ἀρετή*."⁷³

Xenophon marks the distinction between productive work and stylized toil clearly in his vocabulary: the one is *ἔργον*, the other *πόνος*.⁷⁴ (To retain

72. K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), p. 163, claims that "what makes . . . *ponoi* ('exertions', 'labours', 'toils', 'sufferings') virtuous is that they involve neglect of one's own pleasure and comfort for the sake of others." This does not accurately characterize Xenophon's use of the word. Certainly *ponoi* involved the neglect of pleasures, although the welfare of others did not seem to enter into the calculation very often. Rather, they were virtuous because they were stylized labors, as the concept of virtue itself marked a style of life.

73. *Myth and Thought*, p. 252.

74. Vernant, in his discussion of work in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (*Myth and Thought*, p. 252), suggests that he contrasts labor on the farm with the activities of the artisan, identifying the former with other virile activities like war. (It is, in fact, a common claim [e.g., C. Mossé, *The Ancient World at Work* (London, 1969), pp. 26–27] that agricultural laboring did not incur contempt.) But I believe the contrast between the aristocrat's labor on the farm and the ordinary worker's is marked even more clearly, and that, in the course of making this contrast, Xenophon identifies the common farm worker's tasks with those of the artisan. What Vernant says is true, but only of the aristocratic farmer. A consideration of class improves his analysis.

Although I am concerned with Xenophon's usage alone, this distinction was generally maintained, as a glance at *LSJ* shows. For the most part, *ἔργον* and *ἐργάζεσθαι* could be—and frequently were—predicated of specific kinds of work: manual labor and trade. *πόνος* and *πονεῖν*, however, were often used of labor in the abstract. When the type of toil was specified, although it often involved real bodily exertion, it pertained to activities like athletics or the military, which were morally valued. Xenophon's contemporary Isocrates also generally upheld the distinction: he called productive laboring *ἐργάζεσθαι* (e.g., 7.24, 11.20, 2.21, 6.79) whereas the labor of battle was *πόνος* (e.g., 12.83, 6.57, 10.52), a kind of labor that was morally virtuous (e.g., 12.128, 1.7, 10.24). This does not exhaust the description of the meanings of these words: *ἔργον* had other meanings as well—for example "function" or "deed" (as at Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.20)—but these should not be confused with "work" nor be taken to undermine the identification.

the distinction, I translate ἔργον and ἐργάζεσθαι as “work” and πόνος and πονεῖν as “toil”.) “Work,” ἔργον, aims at production and supplies a livelihood; as Xenophon remarks bluntly, one must either work or be fed by those who must (Xen. *Hipparchikos* 8.8). In the *Cyropaedia*, Pheraulas, a character who has risen to a great position from poverty, describes his boyhood: his father, who supported himself by the labor of his hands, was barely able to give him a boy’s education by working (ἐργαζόμενος), but when he got a little older, his father could no longer support his idleness (ἄργον), so he brought him back to the farm and put him to work (ἐργάζεσθαι), where the son himself supported the father by digging and sowing (Cyr. 8.3.37–38). Conversely, Eutherus, an Athenian who lost his foreign property after the end of the Peloponnesian war, was compelled to work (ἐργαζόμενος) with his body to support himself (*Mem.* 2.8.1–2). “Work” describes the labor of underlings in the fields: “In [farm] work there is a great difference in effectiveness between those who do what they’ve been ordered to and those who do not but instead devise excuses for not working (ἐργάζεσθαι).”⁷⁵ Slaves are said to “work,” often under compulsion.⁷⁶ It is also the word which Xenophon uses to describe the labor of slaves in the mines at Laurium (*Poroi* 4.3, 4.32), as well as the work of artisans (*Oec.* 4.2, *Cyr.* 8.2.5, *Mem.* 1.1.7, *Symp.* 4.40).

The labor of an aristocrat was altogether different, described with a different constellation of words: especially πονεῖν, “to toil” and ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, “to take care,” but μοχθεῖν, “to labor hard” (*Cyn.* 12.15, *Mem.* 2.1.17–18, *Symp.* 2.4, 8.40, *Age.* 5.3), and ταλαιπωρεῖν, “to suffer hard labor” (*Mem.* 2.1.18, 25) are also occasionally used in the sense of πονεῖν.⁷⁷ The aristocrat’s labor, while often demanding on his body, was not ἔργον.⁷⁸ Essentially, it was not directly productive; or, rather, what it produced was aristocratic style.

75. *Oec.* 20.19. Xenophon frequently describes working the land as ἔργον: *Oec.* 1.8, 1.16, 12.4, 20.16. Though especially appropriate to the laborers, it can also pertain to the farmer generally.

76. *Mem.* 2.7.6, *Oec.* 3.4. Elsewhere, on the model of slavery, Xenophon calls an individual’s passions masters who enslave him and keep the profits of his work until he gets too old to work, when they abandon him: *Oec.* 1.22.

77. Loraux, “Ponos,” p. 178, n. 34 and p. 185, n. 70, shows that μοχθεῖν is equivalent to πονεῖν.

78. Although generally true, the distinction is not absolute. Xenophon does sometimes say that gentlemen work on the farm, but the sense is indefinite. For example, he has Socrates say that agriculture “seems to be the easiest to learn and the most pleasant to work at [ἐργάζεσθαι], and to produce the most beautiful and strongest body and allow souls the most leisure for taking care of [συνεπιμελεῖσθαι] friends and the city” (*Oec.* 6.9). This work that makes for leisure did not consist in specific and degrading tasks. Cf. *Oec.* 7.22, 31.

On the other hand, Xenophon occasionally uses πονεῖν of the labor of those lower in status than aristocrats. Twice in the *Oeconomicus*, in speaking of training a bailiff, Ischomachus refers to rewarding slaves who gladly undertake πόνους (13.11, 14.10). Vilatte (“La femme,” p. 277) suggests that this anomalous treatment of some slaves is due to the fact that they—like the aristocrat’s dogs, horses, and wife—were visible signs of the master’s status. There was clearly some ideological tension at this point: the bailiff, who was a slave, must take charge in the master’s absence and represent his authority (Ischomachus says ἀντ’ ἐμοῦ ἐπιμελούμενος, *Oec.* 12.4), that is to say, hold the same relationship to the other workers as the master himself. (Notice, too, that Ischomachus dismisses the technical skills of agriculture in a sentence, but spends considerable time in spelling out how to teach the bailiff to rule the other slaves [*Oec.* 13.1–12; cf. 21.9].) The same problem arose with the head housekeeper, a female slave into whom, to ensure her loyalty to the οἶκος, the virtues of the free wife were instilled (*Oec.* 9.11–13). Still, this was not an issue

In so far as aristocratic labor was involved with productive activities, it involved oversight or management (ἐπιμέλεια), which, like Ischomachus' labor on his farms, asserted social superiority both by its refusal to work (ἐργάζεσθαι) and by its control over others.⁷⁹ So Xenophon notes that there are many, both Athenians and foreigners, "who cannot or choose not to work (ἐργάζεσθαι) with their bodies, but would gladly make a living by managing (ἐπιμελούμενοι) with their minds."⁸⁰ Xenophon clearly distinguishes oversight from execution in the advice he gives the cavalry commander:

the most important of all my hints, it seems to me, is taking care [ἐπιμελεῖσθαι] that whatever he knows to be best is carried out. Things that have been decided well do not bring profit—neither in agriculture, nor shipping, nor in positions of command—unless someone takes care [ἐπιμελῆται] that these things are accomplished with the help of the gods.⁸¹

At one point, in fact, Xenophon's Socrates distinguishes men who work the land themselves (τοὺς αὐτουργούς) from those who farm through oversight (τοὺς τῇ ἐπιμελείᾳ γεωργοῦντας, *Oec.* 5.4; cf. 5.14–16). Ischomachus, not surprisingly, viewed his job as one of management (*Oec.* 7.30). Throughout, Xenophon does not extol agriculture in general as opposed to crafts (as, for example, Vernant claims),⁸² but a particular relationship to agriculture that was reserved for a very few.⁸³

Because aristocratic Athenian women did not engage in exhausting training, their status was not marked in the same way as men's.⁸⁴ As Loraux has noted, the fact that men engaged in πόνοι distinguished them from women.⁸⁵ Barred from πόνοι, aristocratic women might still express

with most slaves. In four other cases where Xenophon attributes πόνοι to slaves, it is in explicit comparison to free men, meant either to suggest a minimum standard for the free (*Mem.* 3.13.6, *Cyr.* 7.5.78) or predicated of a free individual if he were to become a slave (*Mem.* 2.1.15, *Symp.* 4.14). He also specifies that the netkeeper (a slave) who accompanies the hunter should be able to overcome πόνοι (*Cyn.* 2.3). When he allows that rowers and pirates πονεῖν (*Oec.* 21.3, *Hipparchikos* 8.8) it is because their labor is being thought of as just like that of soldiers. In general, however, Xenophon's usage follows that which he attributes to Cyrus: "Those whom he was preparing to be servants (δουλεύειν) he in no way encouraged to practice the πόνοι of free men" (*Cyr.* 8.1.43).

79. "Taking care" (ἐπιμελεῖσθαι) might mean not only "managing" but "practicing." In this sense of "practice," ἐπιμέλεια very often involved considerable physical exertion—practicing horsemanship, hunting, or in the gymnasium (*Hipparchikos* 8.16, *Cyn.* 1.12, *Poroi* 4.52)—but like πόνος, this labor was stylized and not primarily productive. Whether it suggests oversight or a more direct engagement, ἐπιμέλεια seems to describe the aristocrat's relationship to certain practices, even when these took the form of common, practical activities. It is just this word, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, that Xenophon has Socrates use to describe the Persian prince Cyrus's "practice" of agriculture (*Oec.* 4.4ff.).

80. *Poroi* 4.22, here referring to managing slaves working in the mines.

81. *Hipparchikos* 9.2. The passive and middle voices of the verbs of execution show that the one taking care was not the one carrying out orders. Cf. *Xen. Mem.* 20.10, below.

82. Vernant, *Myth and Thought*, p. 252.

83. Compare this to Aristotle's remark that farmers (γεωργοί) do not have the leisure for ἀρετή (*Pol.* 1329a1–3).

84. Xenophon tells us that Spartan women, however, in contrast to women in all other Greek states, did undergo a regime of physical exercise (*Lak. Pol.* 1.3–4).

85. "Ponos," pp. 174–75. She notes that this sexual difference by πόνοι is especially true in Xenophon. πόνος was used, however, to name the labor of childbirth (as at *Mem.* 2.2.5).

their social position in their conduct of oversight (ἐπιμέλεια). This is the word which Ischomachus repeatedly uses to describe his wife's activities in the household:⁸⁶ she oversees their possessions, their children, their servants (*Oec.* 9.18, 9.19, 7.37, 41). Plans, Ischomachus tells his wife, are useless unless she takes care that they are scrupulously executed (*Oec.* 9.14). He explains her position of superiority by analogies both political (the βουλή, a queen, the guardians of the laws, a garrison commander) and natural (the queen bee) (*Oec.* 9.14–15, 7.33–34). Moreover, although not as vigorous as men's πόνος, walking around to supervise the household was thought to constitute a form of exercise.⁸⁷ When Ischomachus recommends mixing flour, kneading bread, and folding clothes as excellent exercise (γυμνάσιον), his wife's labor is not principally conceived of as productive. In fact, she undertakes these tasks precisely to differentiate herself from a slave (*Oec.* 10.11). Thus, in the household, her duties too consist of asserting her social superiority in certain stylized forms of labor.

The toil of an aristocrat differed from the work of a common person in that it was voluntary, had its own special field, and created that watermark of aristocratic style, virtue.

It was important that the elite chose to toil while the laborer was compelled to work.⁸⁸ In the *Memorabilia*, Aristippus objects to Socrates that if the happy man must endure hunger, thirst, cold, sleeplessness and other tortures, he is no better than a slave. Socrates responds that it is the voluntary nature of the suffering that makes it different: it may be ended at will (2.1.17–18). “The man who voluntarily undergoes hard labor is happy as he toils because of a favorable prospect, as hunters gladly toil with the hope of capturing the animals.”⁸⁹ Much greater than this, he says, are the rewards that come from toiling to win friends, subdue enemies, manage estates well, or benefit your city. “Taking care [ἐπιμέλεια] through patient endurance makes it possible to achieve beautiful and noble deeds, as good men say” (*Mem.* 2.1.20).

Toil was appropriate to the aristocrat in those activities through which he defined his elite status: the practices of war, hunting, athletics, and agriculture. The deprivations and physical hardships of soldiers were πόνοι (*Oec.* 6.7, 21.4–5, *Cyn.* 12.2, *Age.* 2.8, 5.3, *Hipparchikos* 8.2, *Hiero* 10.6). Hunting, which Xenophon considered the best form of education for the youth, required the endurance of πόνοι for its success and so taught love of toil.⁹⁰ There is no doubt that the training of an athlete might involve extreme exertion; consistent with its aristocratic nature, Xenophon uses the language of toil to describe this training (*Symp.* 8.37; cf. *Poroi* 4.52). Finally, a farmer toiled in agriculture (*Oec.* 15.3). Ischomachus says that

86. Her duties are described generally as ἐπιμέλεια at *Oec.* 7.7, 22; 9.14, 10.10.

87. *Oec.* 10.10 ταῦτα γὰρ ἐδόκει μοι ἅμα ἐπιμέλεια εἶναι καὶ περίπατος.

88. ἐργάζεσθαι is explicitly linked to compulsion (ἀνάγκη): Xen. *Oec.* 4.2, *Mem.* 2.7.6, 2.8.1–2; cf. *Hipparchikos* 8.8.

89. ἔπειτα ὁ μὲν ἐκούσιως ταιλαιπωρῶν ἐπ' ἀγαθῇ ἐλπίδι πονῶν εὐφραίνεται, οἷον οἱ τὰ θηρία θηρῶντες ἐλπίδι τοῦ λήψεσθαι ἡδέως μοχθοῦσι (*Mem.* 2.1.18).

90. *Cyn.* 13.12–13. Meilanion and Menestheus, two of the mythical figures in the introduction to the *Cynegeticus*, are specifically said to have learned love of toil (φιλοπονία) from hunting (*Cyn.* 1.7.12).

it was through love of toil that his father was able to improve the estates he bought (*Oec.* 20.25). It would be wrong, however, to imagine this as manual labor; the aristocrat's toils involved oversight (ἐπιμέλεια) and were not compelled but chosen. Ischomachus claims that it is not that good farmers know more than bad ones, but that they take more care, especially in their oversight of the workers (*Oec.* 20.16ff.). "Everyone says that manure is the best thing in farming and they see that it is produced naturally. But although they understand how it's produced and that it's easy to get enough of it, only some take care (ἐπιμελοῦνται) to have it collected while others are entirely negligent."⁹¹

Toil did not aim so much at production, as at controlling the appetite for pleasure (cf. *Lak. Pol.* 3.2, *Age.* 9.3). Whatever its economic benefits, its intended product was virtue, a style of life that Xenophon argued was profitable to the city. Xenophon begins his account of mythical figures who benefited from hunting by saying that they were all admired for their virtue (*Cyn.* 1.5, 12.18) and the pamphlet concludes with an attack on the sophists precisely because they do not lead young men to virtue in the way that hunting does (*Cyn.* 13.1–3). In his advertisement of the advantages of an education in hunting as opposed to sophistry, Xenophon writes that "those whose πόνοι remove whatever is shameful and arrogant from the soul and body and increase the desire for ἀρετή are the best (ἄριστοι) because they would not overlook an injustice committed against their own city nor a wrong suffered by their land" (*Cyn.* 12.9). Those who refuse to learn because it involves toil are altogether base, he claims; "for they do not discover through toil what kind of man a good man ought to be, so that they are incapable of being either pious or wise" (*Cyn.* 12.16).

Xenophon's clearest and longest exposition of the nature of toil and its relation to virtue comes in the *Memorabilia* at the end of the conversation between Socrates and Aristippus which begins on the subject of self-mastery (ἐγκράτεια) (*Mem.* 2.1.1ff.). After Aristippus questions whether a life of voluntary endurance of deprivations is worthwhile—just that life that Xenophon presents as self-mastered—Socrates defends the choice of toil over indolence at length. First he invokes the authority of Epicharmus, for whom "the gods sell us all good things for the price of toil" (*Mem.* 2.1.20), and then he recounts the story of Heracles choosing between the paths of Vice and Virtue (Κακία and Ἀρετή), a story he attributes to Prodicus the sophist.⁹² Vice offers him an easy road to great rewards with little effort: he will not have to exert himself; food, drink, sex, and soft beds will be his, all supplied at the expense of others' work (*Mem.* 2.1.24–25). Virtue, on the other hand, demands discipline: "The gods give to humans nothing that is good or beautiful [ἀγαθὸν καὶ καλὸν] without toil and care [ἄνευ πόνου καὶ ἐπιμελείας]" (2.1.28). Every reward, she tells him, will

91. *Oec.* 20.10. As the middle voice of the verb indicates, Ischomachus has the manure collected for him by others. His hands remain clean.

92. *Mem.* 2.1.21–34. The extent to which it represents Prodicus' own sentiments or words is not important for my point: It is, after all, Xenophon who has chosen to insert and endorse it. It is also consonant with the much briefer accounts of virtue in *Cyn.* 12.17–22 and *Cyr.* 2.2.24–25.

come only as the result of effort. Virtue castigates Vice for encumbering life with excessive pleasures: “You long for sleep not because you have toiled (διὰ τὸ πονεῖν), but because you have nothing to do” (2.1.30).

Xenophon sought to define the aristocrat by his toils. Far from being opposed to toil, leisure (as Loraux observed) made toil possible.⁹³ Toil was the stylized, even ostentatious, version of aristocratic leisure, aesthetically and morally superior to the compulsory work of the ordinary person. The labor of the aristocrat was καλός, noble, beautiful, and it won for him virtue. These virtuous practices were concerned not just with the formation of the self (as Foucault has suggested), but essentially with the self as a member of a superior class.⁹⁴ Through practices that denied pleasure and asserted self-control, elites would not only distinguish themselves from the populace, but (so Xenophon hoped) moderate their own desires so as to control their competitive urges. Xenophon sought to guarantee the superiority of elites by reforming their culture.

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93. “Ponos,” p. 176.

94. Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, focuses almost exclusively on the formation of the self as an ethical subject; he considers status and class only intermittently (pp. 59–62, 72–79). I believe his analysis is enriched considerably when it is recognized that these strategies of the self were also strategies of a specific class.