

DIALOGUE IN XENOPHON'S *HELLENICA*

The use of dialogue in Xenophon's *Hellenica* is a phenomenon that needs explanation. Among previous historians, Herodotus had used it frequently but Thucydides hardly at all. In Xenophon's own time, Ctesias had used it but not the author of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* nor Ephorus to any great extent, as far as we can tell. Theopompus had plagiarized one of the *Hellenica* dialogues as well as adding others of his own. Generally, dialogue occurred less frequently in history writing than the set speech.¹

Yet there have been no serious studies of dialogue in the *Hellenica*, and where opinions are expressed they often vary. Sordi considered that the purpose of dialogue was decorative and agreed with the estimates of ancient critics about the liveliness of the conversations.² Breitenbach also thought they had literary merit but suggested that their purpose was moral and didactic.³ Henry agreed that their purpose was didactic but thought them flat and lifeless and lacking in literary merit.⁴ Bruce thought their purpose was to illustrate personality.⁵

These differences of opinion should be settled. Moreover, Sordi's view that the content, style and purpose of dialogue is quite different from that of the set speech, and that this reflects a difference of genre within the *Hellenica*, dialogue being typical of memoir and the set speech of 'serious' history, cannot go unchallenged.⁶ Herodotus used dialogue in what was clearly not memoir. Further, there has been no serious attempt to place dialogue in the *Hellenica* in the tradition of dialogue writing in history or to examine its relationship to dramatic dialogue or the philosophical dialogue. This needs to be attempted. Such are the aims of this paper.

One of the longer conversations in the *Hellenica* is that between Agesilaus, King of Sparta, and Otys, King of Paphlagonia (4. 1. 5–15). It concerns the betrothal of the

¹ Herodotus used conversation *passim*; Thucydides' conversations are often extensions of the antithetical debate: 2. 71–4, 5. 87–111, but cp. 3. 113; for Ctesias, see Demetrius, *On Style* 216; there are no extant passages of conversation from the *H.O.* or Ephorus: see I. A. F. Bruce, *An Historical Commentary on the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 6 on direct speech in the *H.O.*; for Theopompus see Jacoby, *FGrHist* 115F 21, 75. Conversation is found in the *Hellenica* of Xenophon himself at 3. 1. 22–8, 3. 3. 1–3, 3. 3. 4–7, 3. 4. 5, 3. 4. 9, 3. 4. 25–6, 4. 1. 6–14, 4. 1. 29–38, 4. 3. 1–2, 5. 4. 25–33. Briefer exchanges also occur, like those at 1. 5. 6, 1. 6. 2, 1. 6. 32, 2. 1. 25–6, 2. 3. 15–16, 2. 3. 56, 3. 2. 6–7, 5. 3. 15. All the historians mentioned above, with the possible exception of the *H.O.*, made use of speeches.

² M. Sordi, 'I Caratteri dell'Opera Storiografica di Senofonte nell'Elleniche', *Athenaeum* 28 (1950), 15–16. Cp. Jacoby *FGrHist* 115F 21.

³ H. R. Breitenbach, *Die Historiographische Anschauungsformen Xenophons* (Basel, 1951), pp. 101–4.

⁴ W. P. Henry, *Greek Historical Writing* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 156–60.

⁵ Bruce, *op. cit.*, n. 1, p. 134.

⁶ See Henry, *op. cit.*, n. 4, pp. 155–61 for a criticism of the theory, which Sordi develops on pp. 10–16, 24–5 and 35 n. 1. See also *infra* pp. 330–1. Briefly, Sordi's theory is that Xenophon composed the middle section of the *Hellenica*, which she defines as 3. 1. 1–2. 20 and 3. 4. 1–29 and 4. 1. 1–2. 2 and 4. 3. 1–4. 7, as a memoir of his adventures with Agesilaus in Asia and Greece, and that conversation is characteristic of this genre. Later he turned it into a history of Greece, adding sections to this middle section, and this is marked by avoidance of conversation and preference for the set speech. My principal objection to this is that conversation occurs outside the alleged memoir section at 2. 3. 56 for instance and particularly at 5. 4. 25–33. Sordi notices this discrepancy but does not even try to explain it. Henry's criticisms are equally telling.

daughter of Spithridates, a Persian nobleman, to Otys. Spithridates had fled to Agesilaus for refuge from the court of Pharnabazus and later, on his own initiative, had organized an alliance between Agesilaus and Otys. Agesilaus set about arranging the match out of gratitude to him. In a preliminary conversation Spithridates showed that he approved of it but did not think it likely that Otys would (4. 1. 4). The match proposed was an uneven one since Spithridates was a poor exile and Otys a powerful king. Agesilaus would have to persuade Otys that Spithridates' lack of power and wealth was no reason for refusing his daughter in marriage.⁷

Agesilaus is shown to be highly persuasive. He begins by building up an attractive picture of the family with a series of leading questions about what Otys thought of the family's lineage, the son's good looks, the daughter's beauty. He carefully avoids the question of power and wealth. Otys' approval is evident, especially in his affirmation of the girl's beauty. Having secured his approval here Agesilaus goes on to advise the match, developing the advantages in it that Otys has already agreed to and giving the impression that Spithridates was, after all, a man of power, and one who brought to the marriage even closer connection with the Greeks.

Xenophon changes the style at this point from the stichomythic questioning that opened the conversation, which is marked by its informality, to a longer speech of persuasion in which there are all the marks of courtroom rhetoric, including balancing of phrases: *ὥσπερ ἐκείνον ἐχθρόν ὄντα δύναται τιμωρεῖσθαι, οὕτω καὶ φίλον ἄνδρα εὐεργετῆν ἂν δύναιτο*; use of climax: *μὴ ἐκείνον ἂν σοι μόνον κηδεστήν εἶναι ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Λακεδαιμονίους, ἡμῶν δ' ἡγουμένων τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ τὴν ἄλλην Ἑλλάδα*; and use of the rhetorical question: *τίς ἂν ποτε γήμειε; ποίαν... νύμφην πρόποτε... προπέμψειαν ἄν;*

Agesilaus' persuasion works. Otys is interested enough to ask him whether Spithridates is in favour of the match as well. Agesilaus has in fact determined that this will be the question he asks by deliberately removing Spithridates from the discussion although he was the father of the bride and clearly had a say in the affair (4. 1. 5). We know from the earlier conversation that Spithridates was keen on the marriage and so does Agesilaus, but Otys was in ignorance.

Instead of giving a straight answer on where Spithridates stands, Agesilaus elaborates on his personal motivation for arranging the match, swearing that Spithridates did not put him up to it but that he simply loves helping friends. Otys asks again why, if he loves helping friends, he does not find out what Spithridates wants. Whereupon Agesilaus sends Herippidas and the Thirty out with orders to make Spithridates 'conform to his wishes'. This implies coercion and is deliberately contrasted with Otys' request that he find out what Spithridates wants: *εἰ καὶ ἐκείνῳ βουλομένῳ ταῦτ' ἐστί.*

There is now a short delay. Otys must think that coercion is being applied and that the friend Agesilaus is helping is himself. Finally Agesilaus asks him whether they should call in Spithridates, and Otys replies that the man would sooner be persuaded by Agesilaus in person than anyone else. Herippidas now returns with Spithridates. His words confirm Otys' impression that force has been applied: *τὰ μὲν ἄλλα... τὰ ῥηθέντα τί ἂν τις μακρολογοίη; τέλος δὲ λέγει Σπιθριδάτης πᾶν ποιεῖν ἂν ἡδέως ὃ τι σοι δοκοίη.*

⁷ Xenophon, *Ages.* 3. 3 indicates that Spithridates had been insulted by Pharnabazus in the matter of his daughter's marriage and Agesilaus would bear this in mind in proposing this better match for her. However, Xenophon does not mention the insult here. In view of the wealth of detail in the passage we would expect him to do so if he had thought it important for the reader to know. I conclude that it can have little direct bearing on our interpretation of the passage.

Yet the reader knows as well as Agesilaus that coercion was not necessary and that Spithridates, far from disapproving, was in favour of the match. Agesilaus' task had been to persuade Otys to the marriage, not Spithridates, since it was for him that it had certain disadvantages. He had employed irony to this end, by leading Otys to believe that he was coercing Spithridates to accept the match against his wishes, as a favour to Otys. The irony is successful because Otys is ignorant of Spithridates' true feelings and Agesilaus' true intentions and this ignorance continues right to the end, even after Spithridates has been brought in and the marriage contract finally performed. This dramatic irony is at its most intense when Agesilaus, asked about Spithridates' willingness, replies that he simply loves helping friends, and Otys, in all his ignorance, takes the remark to apply to himself. As the reader knows full well, the friend that Agesilaus was really helping was Spithridates, not Otys, although both were technically his friends by treaties of alliance. It was not Otys that needed helping, but Spithridates, who was really a poor man, in spite of what Agesilaus had told Otys, and could not expect a good sort of marriage for his daughter. The irony is again intense when, in his reply to Agesilaus' question as to whether they should call Spithridates in, Otys refers to Agesilaus' ability to persuade Spithridates. As the reader knows once more, the person being persuaded was none other than Otys himself.

There is a final twist. Agesilaus had promised Otys a splendid escort for his bride as part of the advantages the marriage would bring him, giving the impression that this was the measure of Spithridates' wealth and power. Such wealth and power did not exist. Now he said that the girl could not be sent before spring. Otys, persuaded by Agesilaus' arguments, perhaps even keener on the match than he might otherwise have been, since he thought Spithridates was against it, and flattered by Agesilaus' apparent concern for him, cried out: *Ἀλλὰ ναὶ μὰ Δῖ' κατὰ θάλατταν, . . . πέμπουτο, εἰ σὺ βούλοιο*. In insisting that the girl be sent by sea he was forsaking all that splendid escort he had been promised. She is sent in a single trireme with a lone Spartiate for company. The question of his wealth and power no longer matters as it did at the beginning of the conversation. Otys is ready to accept her without a dowry. The effect of his final words *εἰ σὺ βούλοιο* is to continue the irony and emphasize how completely he has been persuaded, or rather fooled. He no longer asks what Spithridates wants, thinking that he now knows that Agesilaus is alone in favour of the match and alone has the power to settle the fate of the daughter. It also emphasizes how completely Otys is in Agesilaus' hands.

The conversation has no narrowly historical purpose. It had no effect on the course of events. It has been thought important because it sealed the treaty between Otys and Agesilaus, but the treaty had already been sealed. If Xenophon writes it up for this reason he has no sense of proportion, since the treaty broke down shortly after it was made and no good came of it.⁸ In any case that does not explain why the dialogue form is used. It has been suggested that the purpose is characterization of Agesilaus.⁹ Indeed, the fact that he arranged the marriage out of gratitude to Spithridates shows he was a good friend. Yet this trait could just as well be treated in narrative form, and was.¹⁰ Xenophon would surely not have gone to the trouble of writing this long dialogue just in order to elaborate his sense of gratitude. During the course of the conversation, it is true, Agesilaus vehemently affirms his love of helping friends, but this is done in order to mislead Otys rather than to illustrate his gratitude. Moreover, one aspect of his morality that does emerge is that he was quite ready to sacrifice

⁸ See Bruce, *op. cit.*, no. 1, p. 144. For the end of the alliance *Hell.* 4. 1. 27–8.

⁹ Bruce, *op. cit.*, n. 1, p. 134.

¹⁰ Indeed it is treated in narrative form in Xenophon's *Agesilaus* 4, under the heading of justice.

the interests of one friend to another, since although he was helping his friend Spithridates by arranging the marriage, he was not helping his other friend Otys at all. The match was clearly to his disadvantage.

Agesilaus certainly does emerge as a highly persuasive and ironic man, skilled in the use of bluff and deception, and these are qualities that are no doubt desirable in a politician. Significantly, it is this sort of talent, rather than moral qualities, that the dialogue form is particularly capable of rendering. It is true that the ironic method could be put into indirect speech, that Agesilaus said so and so and that Otys took him to mean so and so but that he was actually misled, but it was far more economical and far more satisfying to the reader to present the ambiguity directly, so that he could detect it for himself. In tragedy persuasive and ironic speech were the natural concomitants of dramatic action, so that it is not meaningful to say that every character who makes a persuasive speech or uses irony is a persuasive and ironic character.¹¹ In history writing, however, this was not the case. Dialogue was not the natural vehicle of history as it was of drama, and its use must be explained. The same applies to the use of irony. The best explanation of the dialogue scene between Agesilaus and Otys is that there was no better way in which the persuasive talent of Agesilaus could be revealed. It is pointless to say that dialogue was used because it was vivid, of course. So were many speeches; so was much narrative.

The peace talks between Agesilaus and Pharnabazus, satrap of Phrygia, exhibit similar interests (4. 1. 29–39). Pharnabazus had been a good friend of the Spartans but they were now plundering his lands. He complained to Agesilaus of this in his first speech.

Pharnabazus speaks more as a wounded friend than an enemy, accusing the Spartans of ingratitude for all the past service he had done them. He dwelt on his record of enthusiastic help for them during the Peloponnesian War, comparing it with that of Tissaphernes. What he chiefly objected to was their attacks on his possessions, in which he clearly took great delight. He compares his present state to that of a wild beast scavenging among the wreckage of their attacks for a meal. He gives a lovingly detailed description of the domains that his father left him, which the Spartans have devastated: *ἃ δέ μοι ὁ πατήρ καὶ οἰκήματα καλὰ καὶ παραδείσους καὶ δένδρων καὶ θηρίων μεστοὺς κατέλιπεν, ἐφ' οἷς ἡὺφραινόμην, τὰῦτα πάντα ὁρῶ τὰ μὲν κατακεκομμένα, τὰ δὲ κατακεκαυμένα*. His seriousness is reflected in the slightly exalted language he uses.¹²

In his reply to Pharnabazus' speech of complaint, Agesilaus cites an analogy for his present behaviour, that in the states of Greece too, private friends fight when their states are at war. He stresses that in Greece they sometimes go even further and kill their friends. He says that the Spartans are forced *ἡναγκάσμεθα* to treat his land as enemy land because it belongs to the king of Persia, and he insists that they value his friendship very highly despite that. Thus he tactfully justifies his behaviour and reassures Pharnabazus. Having done this, he proceeds to make a very well calculated appeal. He has observed the great value Pharnabazus put on his possessions and caters for this in his plea that Pharnabazus should desert the king and join the Greeks by carefully linking the concept of freedom from the king with the secure possession of property. He implies throughout his speech that the possessions Pharnabazus thought were his and referred to as such – *τῇ ἐμῆς χώρᾳ . . . ἃ δέ μοι ὁ πατήρ . . . κατέλιπεν* – are illusory. They in fact belong to the king. That is why the Spartans attack them.

¹¹ See J. Gould, 'Dramatic Character and Human Intelligibility in Greek Tragedy', *PCPS* n.s. 24 (1978), 43–67 and particularly p. 55.

¹² The sentences are long and balanced and note the indignant alliteration as well in *τὰ μὲν κατακεκομμένα, τὰ δὲ κατακεκαυμένα*.

He says that the result of his desertion will be secure enjoyment and extension of his property and possessions: *καὶ εἰ μὲν ἀλλάξασθαί σε ἔδει ἀντὶ δεσπότητος βασιλέως ἡμᾶς δεσπότης, οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγέ σοι συνεβούλευον· νῦν δὲ ἔξεστί σοι μεθ' ἡμῶν γενομένῳ μηδὲνα προσκυνούντα μηδὲ δεσπότην ἔχοντα ζῆν καρπούμενον τὰ σαυτοῦ... οὐδὲ μέντοι τοῦτό σε κελεύομεν, πένητα μέν, ἐλεύθερον δ' εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν συμμάχοις χρώμενον αὔξειν μὴ τὴν βασιλείῳς ἀλλὰ τὴν σαυτοῦ ἀρχήν, τοὺς νῦν ὁμοδούλους σοι καταστρεφόμενον ὥστε σοὺς ὑπηκόους εἶναι.* He deliberately connects freedom and wealth, ending with the highly persuasive, rhetorical question: *καίτοι εἰ ἅμα ἐλεύθερός τ' εἴης καὶ πλούσιος γένοιτο, τίνοις ἂν δέοις μὴ οὐχὶ πάμπαν εὐδαίμων εἶναι;* Everything in this speech is a calculated appeal based on reaction to Pharnabazus' speech, even the reference to the conquering of 'fellow slaves', which was meant to satisfy such hatred of his fellow satraps as that he had felt for Tissaphernes (4. 1. 32).

In reply to this Pharnabazus asked for leave to speak plainly and then said that he would be their friend and desert the king (thus far persuasion had worked) but only if the king dishonoured him by trying to appoint him to a subordinate command; otherwise he would fight the Spartans to the best of his ability. Agesilaus cried out *ὦ λῶσσε σύ*, grasped his hand and fervently prayed that such a man should be his friend. He then promised to leave Pharnabazus' land alone in future, obviously still mindful of his love of it, but significantly dropping his pretence of calling it the king's and calling it Pharnabazus' own: *ἐκ τῆς σῆς χώρας... σοῦ τε καὶ τῶν σῶν ἀφεξόμεθα...* It seems that Agesilaus' previous terminology had been a lie, adopted in order to persuade Pharnabazus to join the Greeks.

What is the interpretation of this last section? Pharnabazus' reply seems to show that he had a great deal of loyalty to the king, although he was swayed by Agesilaus' arguments to some extent. It could be argued with some conviction that throughout the course of the conversation Agesilaus had been testing the man for a demonstration of just this quality of loyalty. After all, it is no good making a friend until you know for sure whether he is the sort of friend who is likely to be true to you. A good test of this is to consider how the man has treated his previous friends, and if it is found that he easily deserts them it can be thought likely that he will just as easily desert you. Agesilaus set a test for Pharnabazus by offering him attractive reasons for deserting his king and seeing what his reply would be. When it turned out that he was not the sort of man who easily deserted his king Agesilaus was naturally delighted, since that meant he was indeed a man worth having as a friend. Pharnabazus had passed the test with flying colours and Agesilaus now felt ready to make sacrifices like quitting his territory in order to win his favour and predispose him to the friendship of the Spartans.

As peace talks these failed, but as a way of establishing that it was worthwhile trying to win the alliance of Pharnabazus they were a complete success. The man showed that he had a strong sense of honour that kept him loyal to the king in spite of great temptation.

The importance of the dialogue for the course of events is slight. Pharnabazus never was replaced and never did ally with the Spartans. What it does establish is Agesilaus' political wisdom and the talent he had for establishing what he wanted to know. The dialogue form reveals his persuasive and ironic skill and how he cunningly leads his interlocutor to give him the information he seeks. Agesilaus also got Pharnabazus to admit there were circumstances in which he would come over to him, which might be considered a valuable admission.

Xenophon is as much interested in Agesilaus' methods as in his moral qualities. The analogy that begins his speech is an effective tool of persuasion as well as evidence

offered by Xenophon about his views on *proxenia*. The love of freedom he expresses, the idea that the Spartans as friends will help Pharnabazus extend his domains – these are not just cherished ideals but an essential part of his argument that Pharnabazus must desert the king. His idea that the land of Pharnabazus is not really his own is shown to be one that he expressed for the immediate purpose of trying to persuade Pharnabazus, not because he necessarily believed it. In fact all his persuasion is based on a desire to convince as much as any moral view. His reaction to Pharnabazus' reply shows that he admires the quality that has been revealed, but the basis for this admiration is calculated and political, as well as moral.

It is interesting to observe that in Plutarch's version of Agesilaus' first speech his powers of persuasion are not at all evident.¹³ No analogy is used, there is no insistence that the Spartans are compelled to plunder, nor is there any connection made between freedom and wealth that was so vital to the argument in Xenophon's version. Plutarch seems more interested in the moral side of Agesilaus' character.

The character of Pharnabazus is quite well developed in the course of the dialogue because it was of prime importance to Agesilaus and because his persuasive skill cannot be properly appreciated otherwise. For instance, it is vital that the reader understands his attachment to his possessions, or Agesilaus' argument seems wasted, and his sense of loyalty as well as his plain speaking are what made him desirable as a friend. The character of Otys, on the other hand, was relatively undeveloped, beyond the indication that he was rich and wealthy, since for the purposes of understanding the persuasive and ironic skills of Agesilaus in that dialogue only that was necessary. It is chiefly the character of Agesilaus that interests Xenophon and particularly the method he used to manipulate other men.

Finally, what is to be made of the narrative prelude to the conversation, when Pharnabazus, luxuriously dressed and accompanied by a retinue of slaves, was brought to meet Agesilaus and his Thirty and found them seated on the ground? It has been supposed that Xenophon's intent is purely decorative.¹⁴ It is my opinion that it is symbolic. Just as in the course of the conversation we find out that Pharnabazus loves possessions but loves honour more, here we see, visually, that he is much attached to luxury – namely his fine clothes, his slaves, the tapestries they lay out for him – but that he will sacrifice these where honour is concerned. For when he sees the humbleness of Agesilaus' appearance he is ashamed of appearing to outdo his friend and joins him on the ground, forsaking his soft tapestries and ruining his fine clothing. It prefigures the action of the conversation.

In both the conversations so far studied the narrative setting has proved to be important for the understanding of the dialogue itself. The removal of Spithridates mentioned in the narrative setting of the Otys dialogue was also significant for the course of the conversation and was symbolic of Spithridates' disapproval, at least as far as Otys was concerned. In this respect the dialogues of Xenophon bear a marked resemblance to those of Plato.¹⁵

¹³ Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*, 12. 3–5.

¹⁴ Breitenbach, op. cit., n. 3.

¹⁵ In its symbolism this scene resembles many from the dialogues of Plato, on which P. Friedländer (*Plato*, vol. 1, New York, 1958, pp. 158–61) says 'Plato could not tolerate any accidental element in his work. He was compelled to select the participants...to attune the surroundings to the inner content, to strip the natural setting of accidental factors so that it could become an effective agent in the total work.' He concludes 'Thus, for an understanding of the dialogues it may be necessary to inquire more deeply...into the symbolic meaning of the spatial setting and the physical happenings...For the frame action is not constructed accidentally...' The same could apply to Xenophon's dramatic setting here.

There are other passages involving a smaller proportion of dialogue to narrative that also reveal in the dialogue sections that talent Agesilaus had for manipulating other men by his use of conversation. One instance of this is the passage that Xenophon uses to explain the acquittal of the Spartan Sphodrias on the capital charge of accepting a bribe against the interests of the Spartan state. He had been bribed by the Thebans to invade Attica and involve Sparta in war with Athens. Xenophon says of the acquittal that it seemed to many to be the most unjust verdict ever delivered in the state of Sparta. By way of explanation he tells the story of the love of the son of Sphodrias, Cleonymus, for the son of Agesilaus, Archidamus, and how Sphodrias asked his son to intercede and use his influence with the family of Agesilaus in order to save his father (5. 4. 25–33). Agesilaus had influence over a large group of friends who could be expected to follow his vote, whether that was for acquittal or condemnation; these would determine the outcome.

Archidamus was naturally sympathetic to Cleonymus when the youth asked him to try to influence his father, but he pointed out that it would be difficult for him to do so. Nevertheless, he eventually put the question to Agesilaus, asking him to ‘save’ the father of Cleonymus. Agesilaus replied that he was sympathetic but did not see how the city could forgive him if he did not formally ‘condemn’ the man who had so harmed Spartan interests. Archidamus persisted, asking a second time that Agesilaus ‘be sympathetic’ to Sphodrias for his sake. This time Agesilaus said he would, if it was honourable for him to do so. If Agesilaus is taken at his word here, he is faced with a dilemma, wanting to oblige his son but feeling that he must condemn Sphodrias if he is to retain the respect and confidence of the city.

Xenophon then writes another conversation that occurred between one of the friends of Agesilaus, Etymocles, and one of the friends of Sphodrias. It emerges that Agesilaus has been telling all his friends that Sphodrias is clearly guilty but that it is difficult to put to death a man who has served Sparta so well in the past, since Sparta has need of such soldiers. It also emerges that this has inclined the friends of Agesilaus to vote for an acquittal at the trial, following what seems to them to be Agesilaus’ own example. Cleonymus takes this to mean that Archidamus has succeeded in persuading his father to save Sphodrias and goes immediately to Archidamus to promise him that he need never feel ashamed of their friendship, a promise he fulfils at the battle of Leuctra, as Xenophon tells us, when he dies fighting hard in the front ranks of the Spartan army.

Plutarch, in his version of this story, thought that Agesilaus had been swayed by love for his son to acquit Sphodrias.¹⁶ However, in Xenophon’s version Agesilaus mentions two other things that motivate him: his strict sense of justice, in his conversation with his son, and his concern for the interests of the Spartan state, in his conversations with his friends. It is possible to reconcile these various motives. Agesilaus may have felt that Sphodrias was guilty but was overcome by his sympathy for his son and so decided on an acquittal, alleging in public that the real reason for his decision was the interests of Sparta. He may even have been genuinely concerned for the quality of the Spartan army. It certainly seems that he had been advising his friends and alleging this as his motive at the same time as he had been telling his son that it was impossible for him not to condemn Sphodrias. This is indicated by the perfect tense that Etymocles uses: *ἐκεῖνός γε πρὸς πάντας ὅσοις διείλεκται ταῦτα λέγει...* which refers back to the conversations at 5. 4. 28.

It is possible to explain the apparent contradiction in another way. In his

¹⁶ *Ages.* 25. 5.

conversation with his son, Agesilaus said that he did not see how he could personally avoid delivering a formal vote of condemnation at the trial of Sphodrias, but he later said that he would be sympathetic if that could be done honourably. In his conversations with his friends he remained true to what he had said to his son. He did not tell them that he would be delivering a formal vote of acquittal; indeed he said that Sphodrias was guilty. He added that he found it difficult to put him to death. He did not say, however, that he found it impossible to put him to death. He left it up to his friends to infer from what he said what his actual vote would be at the trial. It seems very likely that he wanted them to think that he would vote for an acquittal so that by following what seemed to them to be his own example they would secure an acquittal, adding their votes to those of Sphodrias' friends. He himself was then able to condemn Sphodrias as he felt he must without the result of a formal conviction. Thus he satisfied his son and his own sense of honour. Xenophon never does say which way Agesilaus voted, though he makes it clear that the votes of his friends did secure the acquittal.

This explains why Agesilaus' advice to his friends is put in the mouth of one of these friends rather than in Agesilaus' own. Xenophon had to indicate to the reader that the idea that Agesilaus would vote for acquittal was an inference only. The precise terms used by Agesilaus in referring to the trial are of the greatest importance in understanding the meaning of the passage and the dialogue form conveyed them more directly than narrative. The dialogue is not simply decorative but essential to the understanding of the piece. The reason why Agesilaus did not tell his son that he intended to manipulate the votes of his friends was probably that their meetings took place in public, as the narrative indicates (5. 4. 28), and that he feared that his plans would leak out.

Xenophon has said that the acquittal seemed to many to be the most unjust verdict ever delivered in Sparta, and his narrative shows that Agesilaus would probably have shared this opinion. However, Agesilaus was not such a paragon of virtue as to demand that his friends follow his strict views of justice, if that did not suit him. He allowed them to bear the responsibility for the verdict. It could even be said that he fooled them into bearing the responsibility, so that although he emerges as a strictly just man he does not emerge as a very good friend.

So far Agesilaus has been the central figure in the dialogue passages. In one instance another Spartan commander is portrayed in conversation with Meidias and the citizens of Scepsis and Gergis, two cities in Aeolis that Meidias controlled until this Spartan took them over from him. The commander is Dercylidas, who had replaced Thibron in Asia not only because that commander had achieved little but also because he had been unable to control the army, which was accused of looting the friendly Greek cities in the area (3. 1. 8–10). He was a man who had a reputation for ingenuity and was given the nickname of Sisyphus, and from the very beginning he managed to control the army (3. 1. 10). Later on he was praised by one of his own soldiers, who has in fact been identified with Xenophon himself, for his ability to control the army so that it did not plunder but acted justly toward the allies (3. 2. 6–7). His first campaign was against Aeolis, an area once ruled for Pharnabazus by Mania, the mother-in-law of Meidias; Meidias had murdered her and taken control of the two chief cities of Scepsis and Gergis, where she had kept her treasury, so that Aeolis was now partly controlled by him and partly by other governors more or less loyal to Pharnabazus.

Meidias came to terms with Dercylidas when he saw how successful his campaign

was. Dercylidas had come as liberator to the Greek cities and posed as champion of the Greeks, so that many came over to him willingly. He took Scepsis and as they marched toward Gergis Meidias asked to be given control of the city. In reply Dercylidas told him that he would get his full measure of justice (3. 1. 22). In a subsequent conversation after entering Gergis they pursued this theme of justice (3. 1. 24-5). It took place while they were waiting for the meal that Dercylidas was preparing, after refusing Meidias' own offer of hospitality. The fact that he does not allow Meidias to provide the meal may suggest that he does not wish him to bear the expense: strict justice indeed.

Dercylidas first established the extent of Meidias' paternal property and made a written list of what he said he owned, dismissing the protests of the citizens of Scepsis that Meidias was lying with the rebuke that they should not be so mean minded. He then turned to the citizens themselves and established the ownership of the treasure in Mania's house, which Meidias had seized as his own, after murdering Mania. They agreed with him that it belonged to Mania and Pharnabazus, whereupon he said that it could be his since he was in control of Aeolis and Pharnabazus was his enemy: *Ἡμέτερόν ἂν εἴη ἐπεὶ κρατοῦμεν*. However, whenever he subsequently referred to the treasure he called it 'Mania's and Pharnabazus' or 'Mania's' as if he was refraining from asserting his claim to it. He did inspect the treasure, threatening dire penalties if anyone was caught pilfering, and sealed it up and set guards over it. As he went out he exchanged words with certain taxiarchs and *lochagoi* in his army who were standing about the doorway, telling them there was a year's pay there for 8,000 men. He did this, says Xenophon, in order to make them more obedient. Finally, when Meidias asked where he was to live Dercylidas replied: *Ἐνθαπερ καὶ δικαιοτάτον, ὧς Μειδία, ἐν τῇ πατρίδι τῇ σουτοῦ Σκήψει καὶ ἐν τῇ πατρώᾳ οἰκίᾳ*.

The conversation with Meidias and the citizens ensures that strict justice is done to all, and his final remarks to Meidias underline this. The written list of Meidias' possessions meant that he could appeal to this if anyone tried to deprive him of what he owned. However, the reader may justly wonder who it was who might so deprive him. Not Dercylidas, who might have easily dispossessed him without a fuss with the backing of his army! To judge from the past behaviour of the army under Thibron, however, Meidias might have been in danger of the depredations of a largely mercenary army comprised not only of the remains of the Ten Thousand but also of more recent mercenary recruits from Meidias' own bodyguard. It seems that Dercylidas was intent on showing that the citizens of the allied cities, even a murderer and usurper like Meidias, had nothing to fear from the army but would be accorded full justice. They might have expected, for instance, that the army would seize and distribute Mania's treasure, a lawless act that would have displeased Dercylidas as well since, as he shows, he could use the treasure as a promise of pay and promote obedience among the captains in this way. In view of this, Dercylidas had the citizens agree that he had every right to the treasure, then showed his strict justice by not referring to it as his nor touching a single part of it, and his strict control of the army by refusing to let them plunder it. The allies learnt as the army did that this was a very different sort of commander from Thibron.

What were the taxiarchs and *lochagoi* doing, loitering about the doors of the treasury? The answer seems to be that they were expecting to loot it. At least one of the *lochagoi* had previously shown himself reckless and disobedient during the siege of Cebren (3. 1. 18) and that might be indicative of the general mood. If this was the case, Dercylidas' careful security arrangements for the treasure take on new significance as being directed not so much against the citizens of Gergis as against his own army.

In fact, that seems an altogether plausible explanation of Dercylidas' actions and is supported by the fact that Xenophon says it was his concern to make those taxiarchs and *lochagoi* more obedient.

The series of exchanges between Dercylidas and these various people and groups are not an idle piece of decorative writing but an integral part of the theme of Dercylidas' control of the army and his refusal to let them plunder their allies unjustly, a theme that Xenophon seems preoccupied with over the whole section 3. 1. 8–3. 2. 7. The use of dialogue highlights this theme and illuminates the subtle way in which Dercylidas demonstrated his new discipline. It is interesting that when his strict control of the army is subsequently referred to by the anonymous leader of the remains of the Ten Thousand this too is in dialogue form, in reply to the remarks of the visiting Spartan envoys about the past and present behaviour of the army in Asia (3. 2. 6–7).

Sordi noticed the odd distribution of dialogue passages throughout the *Hellenica* and concluded that they occurred only where the history was based on Xenophon's personal memories.¹⁷ She believed that these sections of the work were originally written as memoir rather than 'serious' history and so proposed that the dialogue form was typical of memoir while the speech, which does not occur within the memoir section, was typical of 'serious' history. She made a clear distinction between dialogue and speech based on content, style and purpose. There are various objections to be made to this theory, not least for my purposes that dialogue frequently occurs outside her alleged memoir section. However, it is possible that many of the dialogues have been set down at least partly because Xenophon was intimately associated with the men who played a part in them and had been near to them when the events occurred. Clearly, he cannot have personally witnessed those exchanges between Agesilaus and Otys or Pharnabazus, where most of those present are actually named, although he might have viewed them at a distance and he certainly would have had access to the reports of the participants later on. We simply do not know whether Xenophon was in Sparta when the trial of Sphodrias was being discussed, nor do we know how intimate Xenophon was with Agesilaus at this stage, when he was living in Elis, but once again he could have had access to good reports of what was actually going on.

Yet there is surely another pattern in the distribution of the dialogue passages, based more on their purpose in the *Hellenica* than on their source. This is that they all illuminate the skill of the main characters in manipulating others. They are uniformly clever and calculating, and this talent they possess is best revealed by an actual report of what they said in dealing with the various groups they were attempting to manipulate. Doubtless there were other men in Greece who were just as skilful but Xenophon did not have sufficient knowledge of their methods, or sufficient interest in them, to write dialogues as he did for these Spartans. An exception must be made for Theramenes during his struggle against Critias at Athens, which Xenophon casts in largely dialogue form, where even the set speeches delivered form a sort of dialogue between the two men. Here again, there is something to be said for the view that Xenophon is very much concerned in revealing Theramenes' manipulation of men, but this is beyond the scope of the present paper and should properly be included in a study of speeches.

This brings up the question of the validity of Sordi's strict distinction between dialogues and speeches based on content, style and purpose. It is true that many of the dialogue passages deal with apparently light themes, like betrothals and love affairs, but this does not apply to all, since the peace talks between Agesilaus and

¹⁷ *op. cit.*, n. 2.

Pharnabazus are certainly weighty enough for Sordi's concept of 'serious' history. Admittedly, set speeches in the *Hellenica* hardly ever deal with light themes of the sort found in some dialogues, but the distinction seems to be superficial rather than deep since the ultimate purpose of the Agesilaus dialogues, for instance, is quite serious: the skill that one of the foremost leaders in Greece displayed in manipulating men to his own will. Similarly, the purpose of the Dercylidas dialogue is serious.

Set speech and dialogue do not always differ in style, either, if linguistic style is what is meant by that, since many of the conversations, especially Agesilaus to Otys and Pharnabazus, exhibit all the devices of rhetoric usually associated with the set speech, particularly where Agesilaus is at his persuasive best. There is a great deal of informality in some of the conversations, but the one with Pharnabazus has a serious tone and a rather elevated style. In fact it is difficult to distinguish the difference between the dialogue speeches and normal set speeches in antithetical debate. In the latter a third party or audience is normally addressed, but that seems a rather academic distinction when the speakers are reacting to each other as if in a conversation. Even if the distinction is valid, it does not support the memoir theory, unless it is thought that in memoirs people never address audiences but only each other.

It is interesting, although Sordi did not make it clear, that the dialogue often occurs within self-contained stories, which are often marked as stories by the story-teller's introduction, *Ἦν δέ τις Ἀπολλοφάνης... Ἦν υἱὸς τῷ Σφοδρίᾳ Κλεώνυμος...* Some of these passages could be lifted out of the history without loss to the intelligibility of the main course of events, as is the case of the Otys and Pharnabazus dialogues. In other cases they have the appearance of a digression, as when Xenophon tells the story of the acquittal of Sphodrias. This does not apply to all, of course, as the Dercylidas dialogue makes plain. There the passage is part of a wider treatment of justice. Perhaps it is possible, nevertheless, to speak of a style of writing involving dialogue that tends toward the self-contained story or scene and often takes as its apparent subject a rather light theme, although its real purpose is serious, as I have described. It might be referred to as a *logos* style and its main literary quality would be elegance or grace, known to the ancient critics as *χάρις*.¹⁸ This consisted in a choice of beautiful and gay subject matter like betrothal and marriage and love affairs and happy endings such as are found particularly in the Otys and Archidamus dialogues and also in the conversation between Agesilaus and the son of Pharnabazus that follows his main conversation with Pharnabazus himself. Such gay subject matter is also found in Xenophon's narrative, most markedly the description of Pharnabazus' palace and of the guest gifts exchanged by Agesilaus and the son in this very section 4. 1. Elegance also consisted of economy of expression among other things, and this is manifestly displayed by the conversations. Consider the wealth of meaning implied in Otys' final words *εἰ σὺ βούλοιο*. There is a consequent rapidity and lightness about them that dazzled even ancient critics. Consider the following comment on Theopompus' adaptation of the Pharnabazus dialogue: *τὰς διαλέξεις... ὡς Ξενοφῶν ἀνέγραψε πάντῃ χαριέντως καὶ πρεπόντως ἀμφοῖν... μετατιθεῖς ὁ Θεόπομπος ἀργά τε καὶ ἀκίνητα πεποιήκε καὶ ἄπρακτα· λόγου γὰρ δύναμιν καὶ διὰ τὴν κλοπὴν ἐξεργασίαν ἐμβάλλειν καὶ ἐπιδείκνυσθαι σπουδάζων βραδὺς καὶ μέλλων καὶ ἀναβαλλομένῳ ὅμοιω· φαίνεται καὶ τὸ ἔμψυχον καὶ ἐνεργὸν τὸ Ξενοφώντος διαφθείρων*.¹⁹ The adaptation of style to character here commended was something not restricted to dialogue, of course, but the grace and rapidity of movement in

¹⁸ See Demetrius, *On Style* 128–89 for the characteristics of this style.

¹⁹ See Jacoby, *FGrHist* 115F 21.

Xenophon's version was a particular effect of his conversations. It seems that Theopompus, with his highly artificial style, laboured the points that Xenophon made so lightly and ruined the whole effect.²⁰

This literary quality is apparent not only in the longer passages of dialogue so far studied but in the shorter exchanges as well. What strikes the reader about the exchange between the Spartan Callicratidas and Lysander at 1. 6. 2–3, for instance, is the rapidity with which Callicratidas calls Lysander's boast that he is in control of the sea and the equal speed with which Lysander parries his attack. Similarly swift is Theramenes' reply to his jailor Satyrus when he is told to stop his complaining or he will pay for it (2. 3. 56).

Xenophon shows in these passages of dialogue that he has some considerable literary skill, which was recognized by ancient critics. Only those who do not understand what is happening in the dialogues could possibly say that they are dull, or that the characters they depict are stiff and unlikable, as Henry does. Doubtless, Xenophon himself was well aware of the entertainment value of his dialogues and sought to be entertaining as well as informative and serious.

What was Xenophon's inspiration for the use of dialogue in history? Plato used the dialogue form in order to reveal Socrates' method of teaching, in which irony played a very important role, and in this he is quite similar to Xenophon, who is keenly interested in the methods of Agesilaus and others.²¹ Admittedly, the subject matter of Plato's dialogues is quite different from Xenophon's, being mainly discussions of philosophical subjects, but it could be argued that in many of his dialogues Plato is as much interested in Socrates' method as in what he is actually discussing. The same could be said of Xenophon, whose actual subject matter is sometimes of slight importance to the course of events in his history. Xenophon was himself a pupil of Socrates and a contemporary of Plato and had also written Socratic dialogues and other dialogues of a philosophical kind.²² Socrates had the same talent that Agesilaus had, the ability to manipulate men by means of words. The striking resemblance between Plato's use of the setting of his dialogues and Xenophon's has already been noted on p. 326. Moreover, Xenophon's use of quite natural language for his participants also resembles Plato's.²³

Xenophon should owe some debt to Herodotus, who was one of his great predecessors in the writing of history, unlike Plato, and used an abundance of dialogue throughout his work. Ctesias, too, should be considered as a possible influence on him, since he used dialogue as well.²⁴ However, Ctesias appears to have had a preference for the tragic that Xenophon does not share, and in any case so little of his work remains extant that it is difficult to form any valid conclusions.²⁵ Xenophon had certainly read him when he was writing the *Anabasis*.²⁶ Of Herodotus' possible influence, however, something more definite can be said.

There are, for instance, occasions in Herodotus where his use of dialogue seems designed to illuminate the methods of the participants and not just to present the

²⁰ For the nature of Theopompus' style, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ep. ad Pomp.* c. 6.

²¹ See Friedländer, *op. cit.*, n. 15.

²² Xenophon's attachment to Socrates is mentioned by Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 2. 48. His *Oeconomicus* is a Socratic dialogue and his *Memorabilia* feature Socrates the conversationalist. His *Hiero* is a proper philosophical dialogue in the Platonic style.

²³ Demetrius, *On Style* 298.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 216 for an extract from his *Persica*.

²⁵ For the remaining fragments, Jacoby, *FGrHist*. For his tragic flair see above extract.

²⁶ Xenophon refers to his work at *Anabasis* 1. 8. 26–7.

history in a more readable form than plain narrative. Consider the case of the way Bias of Priene (or Pittacus of Mytilene) persuaded Croesus to abandon his attack on the Greek islanders off the coast of Asia (1. 27). Croesus had asked for news of Greek affairs and had been told that the islanders were going to invade his land and attack his capital of Sardis. Believing what Bias said to be true, he welcomed the news enthusiastically since his Lydians were far superior in horsemanship and would easily defeat the Greeks on land in their own territory. Bias then used his reaction, which he had deliberately provoked, in order to make Croesus understand that his naval attack on the islanders was just as foolish as the idea that they might attack him by land, and would be greeted by the Greeks with just as much enthusiasm as he had greeted the idea of theirs. Croesus saw that Bias had been clever and accepted his sound advice to give up the idea of a naval assault. The protagonist, be he Bias or Pittacus, shows the same ability to manipulate men as Agesilaus does in Xenophon's dialogues. Herodotus is fully aware of the potential of the dialogue form for conveying this sort of quality. The economy with which Herodotus writes his dialogues may well have served as a model for Xenophon, even though his quaint language did not.

The same technique is revealed in the conversation between Croesus and Cyrus after Croesus had been defeated by Cyrus and the Persians were plundering his city (1. 88. 2–89. 3). Herodotus has him advise Cyrus that he is making a mistake in letting his men plunder the city, since some would become wealthy by it and would be able to revolt against him. Instead of telling him outright, Croesus led Cyrus gradually to this realization, first winning his confidence. Croesus asked Cyrus what the Persians were doing and received the obvious answer that they were plundering his city. Then, with the lightest of strokes, Croesus is made to reply that it is not his city they are plundering, but Cyrus': *Οὔτε πόλιν τὴν ἐμὴν οὔτε χρήματα τὰ ἐμὰ διαρπάζει· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐμοὶ ἔτι τούτων μέτα· ἀλλὰ φέρουσί τε καὶ ἄγουσι τὰ σά*. The economy of expression is exactly the sort that the critic Demetrius admired in his remarks about the charm of a passage out of Xenophon.²⁷ The words *τὰ σά* say it all. The demonstration of *sophia* impressed Cyrus. He dismissed his immediate advisers and asked for Croesus' advice in the matter. His reaction to Croesus' remarks is deftly and dramatically caught.

This is not the place for an exhaustive study of Herodotus' conversations. Suffice to say that in their exploration of the method of the participants and in their literary succinctness they could have had some influence on Xenophon. I think it less likely that Xenophon was influenced by tragedy since the form was so different from history, being in verse. Xenophon's subject matter, too, is far from tragic. However, I would not rule out the general influence of drama.

It is not easy to generalize about the authenticity of Xenophon's dialogues. His sources will remain a matter of speculation although it is quite probable that they were good ones, considering that many of them were witnessed by men Xenophon probably knew. We need not doubt that the scenes depicted did occur more or less as Xenophon describes them, but they have been through a process of artistic 're-creation' in Xenophon's hands, one sign of which is the dramatic cliché that Xenophon puts in the mouth of Pharnabazus before his final speech to Agesilaus, his question as to whether he should speak plainly. This occurs as a prelude to unpleasant news in Herodotus as well as in a conversation in the *Cyropaedia*, a work that, like many others

²⁷ Demetrius, *On Style* 137.

of Xenophon, contains a great deal of conversational material.²⁸ In the *Hellenica* too, though it is in the character of Pharnabazus to speak plainly, as he reveals in his first speech in reference to his past dealings with the Spartans, it also serves the artistic purpose of preparing the way for his statement where he ends by declaring that he will wage war against them to the best of his ability if his king continues to honour him.

Unfortunately, there are very few alternative reports of the dialogues Xenophon describes to confirm or refute their authenticity, and where these do exist they seem to be derived mainly from Xenophon's own accounts. That applies to Theopompus' adaptation of the Pharnabazus dialogue as well as to Plutarch's versions referred to in this paper. At least, none of the dialogues is implausible. The quarrel between Leotychidas and Agesilaus for the Spartan throne may appear so if the earthquake that Xenophon has Agesilaus say occurred at Leotychidas' conception is dated to 412 B.C., since this would have Agesilaus wrangling with a mere youth. The date of the accession is disputed but could not have occurred later than 397 B.C. and probably occurred earlier in 401 B.C. But a more likely date for the earthquake and conception is 426 B.C., and this makes Leotychidas at least 24 or 25 years old when the quarrel occurred.²⁹ The dialogue between Otys and Agesilaus is not referred to by the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, which otherwise gives a full account of the activity of Agesilaus in Asia at this time, but this silence may be due to the different sort of material that author wanted to include in his work.³⁰

More importantly, the picture of Agesilaus that emerges from the various dialogues concerning him is totally believable and consistent. His cunning manipulation of friend and foe alike must have contributed a great deal to his political eminence in Spartan affairs and to his success in Asia as well. He also reveals a very deep understanding of the men he is dealing with, which is also a vital weapon for the successful politician. His military skill and his moral qualities might be revealed in a narrative fashion but these other intellectual qualities were best revealed through the medium of dialogue.

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²⁸ See examples at Herodotus 7. 101. 3 and Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8. 4. 13.

²⁹ J. Hatzfeld, 'Notes sur la chronologie des Héliéniques', *REA* 35 (1933), 387-409, had Leotychidas born in 412 B.C. and Agesilaus succeed in 398 B.C., so that Leotychidas would be a mere boy when the quarrel took place. But R. J. Littman, 'A New Date for Leotychidas,' *Phoenix* 23 (1969), 269-77 argued most plausibly that Agis would not have waited so long (or been allowed to wait so long) to produce an heir to the Spartan throne. He identifies the earthquake that Xenophon mentions with regard to Leotychidas' conception (3. 3. 2) with that mentioned by Thucydides at 3. 89 and so has Leotychidas a man of 25 years when he contests the throne with his uncle Agesilaus.

³⁰ *H.O.* 22 (17). 1 refers to a meeting between Agesilaus and the man Xenophon calls Otys, in editions subsequent to the original one. The reading is a conjecture based on Xenophon's text. It does not refer to the betrothal, however.