



CYRUS IIIA. CYRUS II AS PORTRAYED BY XENOPHON AND HERODOTUS

CYRUS

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[Xenophon](#), in his work *The Education of Cyrus* (*Cyropaedia*), makes Cyrus's imperial founding the theme of a biography; for [Herodotus](#), that founding (553-538 BCE) dominates only Book 1 of nine parts apparently devoted to the Persian-Greek wars decades later (492-479 BCE). This differentiation explains Xenophon's far more extensive treatment, but it neglects substantive differences that literary forms alone cannot explain. The hero of the *Education of Cyrus* has impressively judicious and royal parents and an adoring royal grandfather, acts always on his own initiative and foresight, is never cruel, angry, loving, or at a loss for stratagems, and dies happy in his bed. The Cyrus of the *Histories*, while dominating Book 1 with a commanding, inventive, and rather urbane nature (Hdt., 1.114-16, 125), lacks impressive or royal parents, is ordered killed by a grandfather given to prophetic dreams and cruel vengeance, and is by no means completely self-sufficient and rational. The Mede Harpagus prods him to his imperial quest, Harpagus and the Lydian Croesus supply counsel and generalship; Cyrus mourns his wife deeply and bids his subjects mourn (Hdt., 2.1). Xenophon's Cyrus displays no deep feeling



for wife or any human being and bids his subjects appear at his own tomb (8.5.28; 8.7.27, 28). Herodotus's Cyrus is occasionally distracted by anger, cruelty, and foolish piety, and dies an object lesson for would-be conquerors: now have your "fill of blood," says Queen Tomyris as she plunges the severed head into a container of gore (Hdt., 1.214).

Actually, the *Education of Cyrus* seems more a model of coolly rational and just politics, under a legendary cover, than an accurate biography. Xenophon had doubted the possibility of durable governance, since revolutions are common and people unite against would-be rulers. But Cyrus's success in ruling so many peoples, cities, and nations made ruling seem easy—"if one does it with knowledge" (1.1.2). The *Education* investigates the knowing way to rule, chiefly by setting out what a preternaturally rational Cyrus would do, seek, and think, and partly through comparisons with other invented political types such as the Armenian prince Tigranes. Supposing one had the ambition of a Cyrus, how could one most rationally become an imperial conqueror and ruler Cyrus the Great? So, Xenophon's focus. Herodotus had recounted separate campaigns against the Medes, Croesus's Lydia, the cities, nations, and islands along the Mediterranean coast, and only then against the Assyrians. Xenophon compresses Herodotus's diverse campaigns into one seemingly justified and just campaign against first an invading coalition under the Assyrian king (with Croesus as one general), then against a returning Assyrian coalition under Croesus (with the Asian Greeks only "compelled" to fight Cyrus [6.2.9]), and finally against the new and completely vicious Assyrian king. Except for an incongruous concluding chapter, which shows a despotism soft and corrupt after Cyrus's death, the *Education* could seem a rational inquiry into a model prince, an "ideal leader" or "moral hero" (Due, p. 89). A number of scholars are now returning to Cicero's opinion that the *Education* is a model of a just ruler, not a history, and the product of a very shrewd and wise author. Scipio Africanus always had "Xenophon the Socratic in his hands" (*Tusculun Disputations* ii 62 and *Epistulae ad Quntum Fratrum* 1.2, quoted in Tatum, pp. 3-35; Anderson, pp. 1-8; Nadon, pp. 1-5). This breaks with a still influential view that had supposed Xenophon a second-rate thinker and his *Education* but a mish-mash of Greek prejudices (Anderson, p. 2; Sinclair, p. 169; Georges, pp. 228-29, 241, 244; Tatum, pp. 18-33), or at best the first romantic novel or personal biography (Momigliano, *Development* 1971, pp. 55-56, 57; Grant, pp. 124, 192). Still, differences remain among those who take the *Education* as a serious political inquiry. Is this Cyrus an "ideal prince," a Socratic political type focused on the "profitable truth" and even on an empire of justice, or is



he a Machiavellian-style prince able to get the better of others but incompatible with a Socratic philosophic outlook (Strauss, 1948, p. 509; Higgins, pp. 3, 44,46-47, 53, 55-56, 157, n. 65; see Higgins' critique of Strauss at p. 153, n. 77; 147, n. 65; 149, n. 100; Tatum pp. 2, 8, 244; Due, pp. 12-13; Tuplin, pp. 35, 163; Too, passim; Ambler in Xenophon, 2001, pp. 1-18, Nadon, pp. 13-25, 176-77, 180; Faulkner, passim).

Herodotus's *Histories* is certainly no single-minded mirror of princes or of prince Cyrus in particular. It could seem a charming and diffuse history: an engaging panoply of customs and stories as well as a recounting of events and characters. Yet this work too is again being appreciated as a serious inquiry and indeed for using precisely digressions and stories as ways of shedding light on politics and its limits (Immerwahr, pp. 1-16; Fornara, pp. 66-74; Rosen, pp. 194-218; Benardete, pp. 1-31). The title means "*Inquiries*," rather than the usual *Histories*, and the purpose, the author begins, is not only to give fame to the great and marvelous deeds of barbarians as well as Greeks but also to get at "the cause" of the war (Hdt., 1.1). This Cyrus is the preeminent cause of the aggressive side, the Persian empire, although not of the wars themselves, and as to Cyrus Herodotus moves beyond Persian "stories" to Persian authorities who sought the "truth" (Hdt., 1.95; Benardete, p. 24). He distinguishes, then, the deeds truly great and admirable from those legendary. The founder of the Persian empire proves to be a mixed case. Herodotus's Cyrus (like Xenophon's) is indeed naturally superior from childhood (Hdt., 1.114-16, 123; Xen., 1.4.25, 1.5.1). He is forceful, decisive, and inventive in action, occasionally urbanely bemused, and open to the counsel and peculiarities of the ingenious Croesus (Hdt., 1.88-90, 155, 207). Yet he, unlike Xenophon's Cyrus, can also be spectacularly cruel in a detached way. He put Croesus and fourteen boys on the pyre in Sardis (Hdt., 1.86), although when aroused to scruple he would take them off. This is memorable (and said to be invented), one of many memorable horrors (often said to be invented) in the *Histories*. It seems a lesson or an object lesson as to hubris and twisted despotism or custom. The *Histories* virtually concludes with a spectacular horror: the revenge of Xerxes' vengeful wife after discovering Xerxes' love for his brother's wife and then for their daughter (Hdt., 9.108-13). Cyrus is a sober ruler, and yet even as to him we get the stories of the pyre, of crazy and costly vengeance on a river, and of a bloody end (Hdt., 1.189, 214). Herodotus too weighs the Cyrus-type, and he like Xenophon affords comparisons with more moderate counselors, including legendary sages such as Solon. Indeed, at *Histories'* end Cyrus himself becomes a Herodotean sage, espousing a lesson in republican moderation. To



the later and softer Persians Cyrus's likely advice would be: stay poor and fierce (Hdt., 9.122). This, from the conqueror of a vast despotic rule who from the start promised his followers feasts, freedom from labor, and "ten thousand" other good things (Hdt., 1.71, 125-26, 207; Benardete, p. 24).

Still, whatever their differences and their reservations, both Herodotus and Xenophon portray a Cyrus of a commanding nature: he would rule his fellows. In the *Histories* the apparent son of a cowherd is chosen by his playmates as king and insists on obedience from the son of a courtier; he defends manfully his prerogative before [King Astyages](#) and shows himself of royal qualities (Hdt., 1.114-16). Xenophon's Cyrus stands out in love of learning and benevolence, but especially in ambition: he would endure every labor for the sake of praise (1.1.2). Each Cyrus conquered his way to immense imperial lordship, and neither would rest from conquering until the end. Still, Xenophon goes much farther in clarifying Cyrus's psychology, and he is distinctive in dwelling on the wish for praise, that is, honor. We are given an unforgettable diagnosis of the young Cyrus's nature: "mad with daring" while striking down wild animal and enemy soldier alike, full of "battle joy" and then gloating over the foes struck down (1.4.8, 19-24). But he displays too a sharp and ruling mind as well as generosity toward his fellows. In the youth's first battle, never having fought or been in armor before, Cyrus alone discerns the tactics and leads the foray that turns the tables (1.4.19). In his hunts he wants fair competition with his young companions—and not the privileged place as grandson of the Median king (1.4.4). Xenophon clarifies the manly candor that Herodotus mentions. But his account is distinctive in describing Cyrus's hunger for acknowledgment from others, indeed his desire that "all human beings" be talking about him. Cyrus would conceal this dependence on others' speeches, but Xenophon shows it and tells of it (1.4.10, 3.2.31).

While Xenophon shows Cyrus's hunger to win approval from others, he experiments most distinctively with a Cyrus of apparently self-sufficient rationality, tactical, strategic, even moral. The two Cyruses both win over Persian followers by promising gains and dramatizing the costs of subservience, whether to a stable republic (Xenophon) or Median overlords (Herodotus). The two accounts nevertheless differ strikingly. Xenophon's Cyrus plots on his own. For Herodotus's Cyrus, the vengeful Mede Harpagus provokes and plans the overthrow of Astyages (the "cause" was Astyages' cruelty: Hdt., 1.119, 123-30). Harpagus suggests the crucial use of camels in the victory over Croesus before Sardis, and he conquers the Ionians, Aeolians, and



others on the Mediterranean coast while Cyrus attacks the Assyrians to the east (Hdt., 1.168-77). Also, Herodotus's Cyrus commits serious errors. He had refused an offer of submission from the Ionians and Aeolians, which might have made Harpagus's campaign unnecessary (1.141). He pillaged Sardis until Croesus suggests the shortsightedness (these are Cyrus's possessions now), and he relies on Croesus (now a counselor) for a crucial tactical deception against the Massagetae (Hdt., 1.84, 86-88). He did not foresee that Sardis under a Lydian treasurer would rebel against Cyrus's new lordship; Croesus shows him how to punish, soften, and control Sardis without destroying it.

Xenophon's Cyrus is by contrast completely prescient. In the *Education* there is no Harpagus and no corresponding comrade in conspiracy and generalship. Xenophon's Cyrus restrains even his allies from pillaging Sardis, discusses urbanely with the captured Croesus how to obtain its riches without pillaging, leaves an allied garrison and takes the riches himself, and later corrects Croesus's suggestions as to military tactics and even as to acquiring wealth (7.2.9-29, 5.2.30-34, 8.2.15-28). This Cyrus is a master of tactical and strategic deceptions, in peace as well as war and in speech as well as deed (7.2.5-8, 11-14; 8.2.15-23). He avoids direct battle where possible, obtains in every battle the advantage in strategy and maneuver (the camels were his idea), and prefers to win followers by persuasion and benevolence. He is a master at bringing in fearful and hopeful suitors of some strength, such as the Hyrcanians, [Gobryas](#), and Gadatas, as well as intimidated former enemies (the Armenians, Chaldaeans, and an Egyptian contingent of infantry). All turn into allies within his multicultural army and eventually into his subjects.

What is as striking as the foresight is the justice—a comprehensive provision for others such that his imperial movement seems justified and even visibly beneficial. Herodotus's Cyrus began with injustice: he threw off the Median empire of his own grandfather (Hdt., 1.46). Xenophon's Cyrus begins with an army authorized by a free Persia, invited by his grandfather's heir, and defending Media (1.4.1-24, 1.5.4). He defends against an unprovoked Assyrian invasion of Media. When he does attack the Assyrian king in Babylon, it is the evil Assyrian, of no redeeming quality, who had out of mere envy castrated Gadatas and murdered Gobryas's son (4.6.2-6; 5.2.28). Cyrus's invasion has an air of just punishment. Herodotus mentions no such justification for Cyrus's attack on Assyria and no such Assyrian paradigm of evil. More important, Xenophon's Cyrus prides himself on his virtuous treatment of others: he would show that "I would not be willingly impious where hospitality is concerned,



unjust for the sake of valuables, or voluntarily false in agreements” (5.2.10, also 5.3.31). He is capable of an extended Socratic dialogue on justice with Tigranes, son of the Armenian king, who would remove a dispute over his father’s faults from the dangerous realm of punishment to that of mutual advantage (3.1.14-31). Cyrus wins the admiration of followers for the nobility of his soul (4.2.14; 5.4.11; cf. 1.4.23-25; 6.4.7), which expressed itself most spectacularly in a protective generosity to “the most beautiful woman in Asia,” Panthea (5.1.5-7). While all this virtue at some level serves Cyrus’s quest for followers and allies, it is not simply instrumental. Insofar as it serves Cyrus’s quest (as it does), it reveals his deep and not unsympathetic awareness of others’ needs and wishes (5.2.24, 7.2.23-24).

Nothing corresponding to this Socratic seriousness about justice, nobility, and true advantage appears in Herodotus’s Cyrus. Only the conquest of Lydia, a response to Croesus’s pre-emptive war, began as a defense, and if the conquest of Media overthrew a foreign despot, that despot was his wife’s father. True, this Cyrus generously keeps the captured Astyages and Croesus around his court (Hdt., 1.130, 153), accepts counsel, is occasionally meditative, and appreciates Croesus and provides for his safety at the end. Compared to the viciously vengeful Astyages, or the later Persian emperors Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes, he is stalwart and even-tempered. But Cyrus is not a model. He could be roused to irrational cruelty and vengeance, especially out of anger or pride. It was from anger that he refused to accept the submission of the Ionian and Aeolian cities (Hdt., 1.141). Furious at the drowning of a sacred white horse, he wasted precious months punishing a guilty river (Hdt., 1.189, cf. 190). It was partly from shame at the prospect of retreat before a woman that he accepted the fatal strategy against the Massagetae (Hdt., 1.207).

Also, Herodotus’s Cyrus is at times misled by his piety or at least by confused opinions about the gods. Was the mindless punishing of a river occasioned by the sacredness of the horse or the special Persian reverence for rivers (Hdt., 1.139)? Cyrus would burn Croesus and the Lydian boys, says Herodotus tentatively, as a sacrifice after his victory, or to fulfill a vow, or to test the gods of the god-fearing Croesus (Hdt., 1.186). In deciding to conquer beyond Assyria, he presumed that his royal birth and his victories showed him “more than mortal man” (Hdt., 1.204). Then, facing the queen of the Massagetae, he is disturbed by a dream and misinterprets it (Hdt., 1.209-10).

Xenophon’s Cyrus is by contrast both more publicly and consistently pious (he never tests the gods) and more uninterruptedly prudent. He takes care to



perform the sacrifices; he takes care eventually to “bewitch” his followers with signs of imperial divinity (3.3.34, 4.1.2, 8.1.1, 8.1.40, 8.3.11-14). But he never has to do or desist because of auguries alone. Perhaps this is because he himself interprets prophecy and divine signs, is never seen to consult a priest or augurer (cf. 1.6.2-6), and relies especially on his own preparations. Nor does his good fortune ever give rise to “thoughts higher than a human being should” have (8.7.3).

The prominence given to reason shows itself in the prominence of education. Education is crucial in shaping this Cyrus’s army. Herodotus’s Cyrus appeals to the Persians’ love of ease and plenty. Xenophon’s Cyrus accompanies such an appeal with a reminder of their advantage in virtue: they are trained for labor and war, continent as to food and drink, and lovers of praise (1.5.11-12). We never see Herodotus’s Cyrus training and arranging his troops, or fostering a certain justice and pride. A fair part of the Xenophon’s *Education* shows Cyrus training, drilling, and above all organizing. He supervises constant practice in drilling, in the variety of possible maneuvers and exigencies, and in repeated meetings of general, officers and men at consultations and meals (2.1-3; 3.1; 3.3.9-12, 57-59). One sees the shaping of rather self-sufficient and knowing soldiers who are nevertheless parts of a taut, fit, harmonious, and hierarchically arranged fighting community. Cyrus would continue this into the empire. As emperor he attacked “easygoingness” and “pleasure-seeking” among his associates, took them on hunts, and prescribed military exercises, endurance, frequent hunting, and, in general, the hardy virtue begun way back in the Persian republic (7.5.74-86).

Education is important in shaping the Xenophontic Cyrus himself. Xenophon disdains completely Herodotus’s story of Cyrus’s upbringing by a simple herdsman, but he elaborates the arrangements that shaped the boy and youth—the ruling arrangements, actually, of the Persian republic. Herodotus had said little about Cyrus’s education, except for the simple foster-parents (so to speak), noting later only that Persian boys learn to ride, handle the bow, and tell the truth (I.136). Xenophon says much about civic education, or rather invents much, since he invents for Persia a Spartan training. He invents, that is, a less unjust, less war-like and brutal, and less superstitious version of Spartan republican upbringing (Nadon, 2001, pp. 29-42). The young learn the qualities of self-governing citizens, especially warrior citizens. The Persians would instill justice and gratitude, moderation and continence in food and drink, and the skills of the hunt and of weaponry. They foster, that



is, the judgement, hardiness, and warrior skills needed to obey, govern, guard, hunt, and war. Cyrus himself is austere as to wealth, ease, and comfort, and he makes his army austere (Due, 1993, pp. 170-80): this enables him to concentrate on fighting and to bestow attractive spoils upon the army and his allies (3.3.6; 4.2.21, 38-47). A character in the *Histories* mentions the Persians' poverty, continence, and hardiness (Hdt., 1.71). The *Education* investigates how the continence and hardiness might be instilled and, strikingly, how to enforce them. What is required is practice, habituation—and supervision, with trials, courts, and punishments all through life. Justice is taught the young through constant trials for offenses against justice and gratitude, supervised by the old and inspired by their example. Continence is taught by short and plain rations—and by the elders' example. War-like virtue is taught young and youths alike through very frequent hunting expeditions. Still, what is chiefly required is constant supervision, indeed of the young and especially of youths, but also of the mature men (Xenophon spoofs a bit the Persians' claim to moderation [1.2.16].) An account of education turns into an account of governance. Elders govern young, mature men govern youth and everyone, and the mature warriors and governors are checked and to some extent governed by the example and powers of the old. The old choose all the magistrates, try capital cases, and judge cases of disobedience to the laws. There is finally a property-educational standard: only families who can afford to relieve their sons from labor can provide this education, political status, and rule (1.2.15).

Herodotus's Persia is nothing like this rationally arranged republican education and governance. It is not at first free or a republic, but subject to Media and its monarchy. It is not very rational. Herodotus talks of customs, not rule, and the customs range from rather rational to paradoxical. He begins and ends with Persian worship, a topic barely mentioned in Xenophon's Persia (he says briefly that ingratitude leads to carelessness about the gods [1.2.7]). While Herodotus's Persians are more rational than Greeks in their Zeus (without human form) and their modest sacrifices (Hdt., 1.131, 132), they chiefly reverence rivers (Hdt., 1.38). They deliberate while drunk, but approve such initiatives when sober—and vice-versa (Hdt., 1.133). They think lying the foulest vice, but are not even to say the things they ought not do (Hdt., 1.137-38). They pride themselves on being the center and peak of peoples, but welcome foreign customs, including luxury and the "unnatural vices" of the Greeks (Hdt., 1.134, 135). One sees the limits of their chief aim: manly valor in war and in production of children. There is a void in their



training that Xenophon's Persian education fills with its habituation to moderation and continence, its constant practice and activity, and its extensive supervision.

There is also a higher and somewhat Socratic political education for the Xenophonic Cyrus. His father Cambyses is a constitutional monarch and calm counselor, who urges caution upon his restless son, just as he later tries to preserve Persia's moderate republic from his son's imperial sway (1.6.2-46; 8.5.22-27; Faulkner, 2007, pp. 139-43). Nothing in Herodotus's account corresponds to this comprehensive political conversation. His Cambyses was not the king, but a Persian nobody of good family who was chosen for the Median king's daughter. After recovering his son from the herdsman and Astyages, this Cambyses would magnify the young man with a marvelous tale of being suckled by a bitch (Hdt., 1.122). Xenophon's law-abiding father-king deflates, not inflates. He initiates a cautionary conversation with a Cyrus eager to set his new army against any ruler in his way, lawful or no, and his mode is dialectical exposure of difficulties, not a glorifying fable. Cambyses warns of fundamental problems in ruling others and especially in dominating them, in "taking advantage" of them. The ambitious Cyrus evades or ignores these deep cautions, as to rule and dominating rule both (1.6.8, 26-27). But others of Cambyses' cool-headed warnings show up later in Cyrus's prudence. Don't expect help from the gods if you're not the soldier you should be, Cambyses begins; don't expect help from the gods, Cyrus might infer by the end, since we do not know whether they care (1.6.5-6, 46). Don't expect your uncle the Median king to provide for you (this contrary to Cyrus's inclinations); he has his own needs. Rely on your own impressive power (1.6.9,10-11). Keep in your military mind more than tactics and doctoring, since provisions and fitness are vital (here too Cyrus needs instruction [1.6.12-17]). And as to your troops' morale (or enthusiasm), don't rely too much on hope, which may be disappointed, or compulsion, which rankles (Cyrus leans toward compulsion). The key Socratic advice: show that you are more prudent in providing for others' advantage than they are themselves (1.6.19-25). And then, when Cyrus insists on taking advantage of others, Cyaxares turns harder: you must then be nasty: evil, rapacious, fraudulent—a trickster, especially, in order to get the advantage in every encounter (1.6.27-29). Cambyses foreshadows the dark side of Cyrus's passion for superiority that shows itself in his conquering. In his ambition he would not merely defeat but annihilate the Assyrian army (4.2.22-27; cf. 1.4.21-22, 24), and all he subsequently does (however beneficial to others) serves his conquests and his passion to dominate. He would share



secondary things, such as wealth and secondary honors, but he never considers sharing the chief place. His justice, to put it mildly, is “not untarnished” (Tuplin, 1993, p. 35). Justice means at least providing for the common good and obeying the law and magistrates. So the Persian republic educated. But Cyrus is out for his own special advantage, as Cambyses later observes (8.5.21, 24), and he breaks laws from the start. He transforms the republic’s peers into officer-followers out for their own gain, the republic’s army into a multinational instrument of his own domination, and the defensive necessity into an acquisitive and imperial opportunity (1. 5.8-10; Too, 1998, pp. 297-301; Nadon, 2001, pp. 109-46). Still, the rational mix sketched here, benefiting friends and tricking enemies, is a key to Cyrus’s imperial success. Which does not mean that Cambyses approved. He virtually ends his warnings by cautioning against over-confidence in taking risks, especially when launching war, elevating new men and cities, turning possible friends into slaves, desiring to be “lords over all,” and acquiring gold (1.6.45). One cannot know how such projects will turn out.

Now while Herodotus presents no wisely politic Cambyses, he has his own modes of teaching moderation. He calls Cyrus’s empire “noble and great” only as he chronicles its immediate corruption, and he presents his own cautioning counselors, including, in Book 1 alone, six of the seven legendary Greek sages (Hdt., 1.20, 27, 59, 74, 75 170; Benardete, p. 17). Cyrus in particular is affected by Solon, reformer of the Athenian republic, albeit indirectly. On the flaming pyre Croesus had called out “Solon,” remembering the sage’s warning that prosperity is not sure until the end (Hdt., 1.86, 31-33). Hearing the story Cyrus repented, meditated, and would halt the sacrifice: he was burning a man once like himself in fortune, and also “he feared the retribution” (Hdt., 1.86). Still, with serious gain at issue, such political men rarely observe these cautions as to the wheel of fortune and divine punishment. Cyrus didn’t. Tomyris of the Massagetae had warned Cyrus: Let me rule my own; “you cannot know if” this further expansion of empire “will be for your advantage” (Hdt., 1.206). But the hungry Cyrus could not stop, no more than did Xenophon’s Cyrus.

Nevertheless, Xenophon’s cautions of Cyrus seem more radical than Herodotus’s, if only because Xenophon’s raise the difficulties of ruling as such, not merely of boundless ruling (1.6.7-8; but cf. Rosen, pp. 198-203, 217-18 and Benardete, pp. 12-13, 17-19, 209, 212-13). The problem is not merely that honor, power, and prosperity are subject to fortune and fate. The problem is that



these may not be truly the things most “of advantage to you.” Consider the difference between Cyrus of the *Education* and Xenophon himself in the *Ascent of Cyrus or Anabasis* (Xenophon, 2008), his other comprehensive account of governing. The ostensible topic is a later Cyrus more ordinary than the Cyrus of the *Education*, but also out for kingship. This younger Persian Cyrus dies unnecessarily in an impulsive charge (Xenophon, 2008, 1.8.26-27). Xenophon, taking over the endangered Greek troops deep in Persia, proves as tough, beneficent, and farsighted as Cyrus of the *Education*. But he is wiser (Buzzetti in Xenophon, 2008, pp. 1-35). His task is non-imperial, and he departed from command when he could, partly, at least, for a philosophic life (Xenophon wrote four dialogues about Socrates). In the *Education* the difficulties of the political life appear in Cambyses’ speech and in Cyrus’s rather defensive concluding soliloquy (8.7.6-9). They appear too in Cyrus’s loveless character and the appeal of warmer and nobler characters such as Panthea and Tigranes. Cyrus was “a cold, cold king,” said his closest friend, who was his chief instrument (8.4.11, 22). While the youth Cyrus could not drag himself away from gloating over corpses of the vanquished, he declines when mature to view Panthea (“the most beautiful woman in Asia”) or to accept as bride a marvelous young woman; he uses a would-be lover for his own advancement and marries for political advantage (1.4.24, 27-28; 5.1.8; 4.1.22-24; 8.4.4-5, 10-11, 26-27; Faulkner, 2007, pp. 153-58, 164-70). The most memorable and noble conduct in the *Cyropaedia* is not Cyrus’s but that of Panthea and her husband *Abradatas*. Indeed, their sacrifice unto death show the costs of great politics: the sacrifices of love and of admirable human beings often required. A series of other characters show the more moderate way: the loving and meditative Croesus, the gentleman-statesman Cambyses, the student-prince Tigranes. All speak in somewhat Socratic idiom and retain a considerable life of friends, family, wisdom, and political loyalty. Tigranes in particular had a Socrates-like sophist as teacher and retained an independent life of thinking and of love for his young wife. He retained this, as well as authority in his native Armenia, by following Cyrus prudently but only as necessary (3.1.36, 5.1.28, 6.1.21; Faulkner, 2007, pp. 169-70). Unlike noble *Abradatas* he risked himself as little as possible for Cyrus’s vast scheme. One sees in Tigranes something of the prudence of Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, of the statesman wise about the limits of politics as well as the arts of politics.



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