

THE SUBTERFUGE OF FRIENDSHIP:
AN EXAMINATION OF FRIENDLY
RELATIONS IN XENOPHON'S
CYROPAEDIA

by

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Cyrus as the Solution

The *Education of Cyrus* is a narrative work written by the philosopher and student of Socrates, Xenophon, about the life and empire of Cyrus of Persia. This book begins with Cyrus's childhood and follows him through to his end; however, the bulk of the book is dedicated to chronicling his conquests as he travels through Asia with an ever-growing army and always expanding empire. Having founded his empire and his seat as king in Babylon, Cyrus's life progresses off the page. The narrative picks up again when Cyrus is very old and is preparing for death. The last book chronicles his last words and the last chapter describes the breathtaking collapse of his empire.

Here a question may arise. How is the study of the life and times of an emperor – however impressive – relevant to the study of political science? Surely this mirror-for-princes narrative has knowledge relevant to the student of history, but how does it answer the political questions that have troubled human beings from the beginning of social life? Xenophon, himself, justifies the study of such a man as relevant to political science before he even introduces the main character.

The *Education of Cyrus* begins with this reflection: it seems to be a very difficult task to establish stable rule over a race of creatures that are as notoriously disobedient as human beings. "How many monarchies and how many oligarchies have been overthrown by the people;" and how many democracies and tyrannies have been toppled by those from within (Xenophon 1)? Stability is even difficult to find on the smaller scale of household management, where men are unwilling to be obedient to their

masters within the intimate community of the home. Instability and disobedience is so common amongst men that it appears to be a nearly impossible task to rule them.

Perhaps this is because it is not in man's nature to rule. But this does not seem to be the logical answer, because as Xenophon explains, human beings are masterful rulers over every other kind of animal. Wherever human beings are rulers over cattle or horses, for example, there is relative peace, stability, and obedience. These creatures allow themselves to be ruled to the extent that they are perfectly submissive to the policies of their masters. So far are they from rebelling or uniting against their ruler that they permit him to use whatever profits he can gain from them in whatever way he deems most advantageous. It therefore appears that "it is easier, given his nature, for a human being to rule all the other kinds of animals than to rule human beings" (22).

It would seem that any effort to establish an obedient people and a stable political system for human beings will always be characterized by strife, difficulty, and failure. However, Xenophon does not here recommend such a conclusion. He asks us instead to reflect upon the example of "Cyrus, a Persian, who acquired very many people, very many cities, and very many nations, all obedient to himself" (22). Because of Cyrus's compelling story, we might feel inclined to change our minds "to the view that ruling human beings does not belong among those tasks that are impossible, or even among those that are difficult, if one does it with knowledge" (22). Cyrus's story enables us to look more closely at knowledge on the rule of human beings – or political science – from the vantage point of one who seems to have had so much success. "Cyrus attracts Xenophon's attention first of all as one who appears to have solved the difficult problem of ruling human beings, who perhaps possesses the art or science of rule" (Nadon 7).

Cyrus is therefore set forward as a potential solution to the timeless problems of political stability and obedience. Having made this suggestion, Xenophon goes on to list Cyrus's accomplishments in the narrative form of a curriculum vita. With his little army, Cyrus "subdued the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, both the Phrygians, the Lydians, Carians, Phoenicians, and Babylonians; he came to rule the Bactrians, Indians, and Cicians, and similarly also the Scacians, Pahplagonians, and Magadidians," and so many others that memory has lost them (22). Xenophon means for us to be impressed by this list, especially when we consider that the Scythian, Thracian, and Illyrian kings were not even capable of ruling their own people. "So far did he excel other kings" that Cyrus compelled obedience over not just his own people, but people many days of travel away who did not even speak the same language and would likely never see him in their lifetimes (22). Despite the expanse and diversity of his empire, "he was able to implant in all so great a desire of gratifying him that they always thought it proper to be governed by his judgment" (23). Truly, such a man should amaze us!

How did this one man conquer so much land and so many people while at the same time maintaining stability and commanding obedience from a race of animals who are so disinclined to being ruled? We are so unlike the rest of the beasts that while animals are submissive to their masters, "human beings unite against none more than against those whom they perceive attempting to rule them" (22). How then did Cyrus accomplish so much when human nature seems to be opposed to rule?

This is the fundamental question; how did Cyrus subdue human rebellion, compel obedience, and thus bring peace and stability to the East? To do so, he must have had the ability to alter human behavior. He must have had some masterful skill, which allowed

him to transform human resistance to rule into obedience and compliance. This is in fact what I will argue in my thesis. Cyrus learned much from his observations of man's relations with domestic beasts and found that certain methods of encouraging obedience could be applied to human and beast alike. Sheep follow their shepherd because they know he works tirelessly to care for them. Similarly, Cyrus labors continually to be evident in benefiting his men, for he is aware that these actions make him beloved and gain him obedience.

But this is not a simple science. As we will see, Cyrus must be creative in establishing policies that appear to be advantageous for his people and maintain his image as a benevolent leader. Further, these policies and laws must work on the self-interested character of men and turn them into tamer human beings. Obedience does not come easily to human nature, but we are malleable creatures and with enough knowledge and pressure we too can be transformed into docile creatures devoted to a perceived benefactor.

CHAPTER 2

The Incomplete Education of Cyrus

Many scholars believe it was Cyrus's characteristic benevolence that allowed him to turn so many cities and nations into friends and allies. For Deborah Levine Gera, in her work *Xenophon's Cyropedia*, "the answer appears to be that Cyrus, after the conquest of his empire, had become a benevolent despot" (Gera 296). She asserts that it is Xenophon's aim to set Cyrus forward as a model for emulation. "Cyrus is wise, virtuous, and ever successful in achieving his ambitions" (280).

However, Gera insists that Xenophon is sporadically inconsistent in the presentation of his hero. Sometimes Xenophon will depict Cyrus enacting a policy that seems contrary to the good of his people when this is in conflict with Cyrus's consistent desire to be loved by his friends and allies. But Gera explains this inconsistency by accusing Xenophon of possessing too much zeal for representing the other historical perspectives of Cyrus discovered in his readings of Herodotus or Ctesias-Nicolaus. It is because of his desire to present their alternative representations of Cyrus that we are "allowed a glimpse at the darker side of this historical conquests of Cyrus the Great, for Xenophon has the Persian leader override the king of the Medes, Cyaxares, and usurp his power" (285). Additionally, Gera claims that Xenophon has a penchant for presenting moral teachings and at times becomes so consumed by a desire to elaborate on an ethical argument that "the author makes use of his model hero to press home a point at the cost of having him behave in an uncharacteristic manner" (284). All in all, Gera asserts that the source of many of Cyrus's inconsistencies can be traced to faults in the author rather

than discrepancies in the character of the hero. “In sum, Xenophon occasionally introduces a jarring note or has his hero do the unexpected, either for pedagogical purposes or because he wishes to counteract, explain away or simply refer to other versions of the life of Cyrus the Great” (285).

Gera struggles to account for the dark and despotic characteristics Cyrus begins to reveal toward the end of the narrative. “After the conquest of Babylon, when Cyrus goes about establishing his empire and its administration, it is difficult to view the Persian ruler as consistently heroic and admirable” (286). It seems there is a definitive shift in his character after he has come into the role of emperor. For although he is evident in being concerned with the good of his friends and allies, he also enacts disturbing policies that seem primarily focused on securing his own advantage above all else. “In this part of the *Cyropaedia* all of the Persian ruler’s seemingly kind and thoughtful policies are consistently show to be motivated by utilitarian, if not selfish, considerations” (294). Some of his actions even seem to be geared toward actively deceiving his friends. After the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus is desirous of taking up residence in the usurped king’s palace and so he undertakes to convince his friends that this ought to be his reward. “But the way he goes about doing so is slightly disturbing. The Persian leader devises a stratagem which he uses against his friends, and he manipulates them into offering him what he considers his due... Here, for the first time, we find Cyrus tricking his friends for reason other than military security” (287).

Gera finds it difficult to account for this transformation in character. She acknowledges that Cyrus was not previously selfless or neglectful of his own good, but Gera asserts that he was previously adept at aligning his own good with the interests of

others. “From the very start Cyrus has been both kindly and selfish, but in the past the Persian’s own best interest and the interest of others have always conveniently coincided: there was no conflict between the good of Cyrus and the good of others” (295). Gera accounts for this shift in character by pointing to a change in environment. In the small polity of his homeland, Cyrus’s more virtuous characteristics were free to flourish, but “in order to become an efficient ruler of an empire, Cyrus has had to change and changing means departing from some of his old, exemplary ways” (299). According to Gera, Cyrus is still the hero of our story, but now he is in charge of a vast empire, “and Xenophon wishes to show us that both – benevolence and despotism – are needed to run a large empire successfully” (297).

Gera’s account of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* is insightful but it does altogether provide a satisfactory reconciliation between the Cyrus the benefactor and Cyrus the despot. In fact, because she has trouble accounting for this discrepancy of character, Gera is representative of the majority of scholars who have written on the *Cyropaedia*. I have chosen her book as a reference point specifically because she struggles to account for the apparent inconsistencies in Cyrus’s character as many scholars do. Cyrus is generally presented as a model leader and few scholars know how to explain the last book of the *Cyropaedia*, where the hero’s virtues ostensibly degrade into vices. Many scholars simply rebuff Book VIII as a poorly written epilogue or a forgery.¹ Unlike her colleagues, Gera endeavors to understand Xenophon’s intentions and she takes Book VIII

¹ Anderson, J.K. *Xenophon*.

Due, Bodil. *The Cyropaedia: Xenophon’s Aims and Methods*.

Higgins, W.E. *Xenophon the Athenian: The Problem of the Individual and the Society of the Polis*.

Tatum, James. *Xenophon’s Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus*.

of the *Cyropaedia* seriously. I've found that of the scholars who maintain that Cyrus is a model of virtue and leadership, Gera provides the most insightful and serious account of Xenophon's writing and it's for this reason I've chosen her as a representative of similar scholarship in her field.

In Christopher Nadon's *Xenophon's Prince*, the character of Cyrus is understood to be less of presentation of historical research and more a character on a fictional stage. He claims to follow in the tradition of Machiavelli in interpreting Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* not as a history or biography, but as a drama. "Reading the *Cyropaedia* therefore requires the kind of care one takes in interpreting a dialogue or play. Events must be evaluated in light of the contingencies faced by their actors... and the course or movement of the book as a whole must be taken into account. Above all, no single character, not even a prince, however perfect, can simply be assumed to express the author's views" (Nadon 24). For this reason, Nadon does not see the darker sides of Cyrus's character as lapses in the author's judgment. He does not account for Cyrus's inconsistencies of character or discrepancies in policy by accusing the author of ineptitude.

Nadon takes a more complex view of Cyrus and evaluates him as a complicated character full of both virtues and flaws; he is not simply some didactic hero presented by the author to encourage a kind of moral teaching. Similarly, in Nadon's evaluation of Xenophon's work, questions of political philosophy are not simplistic. He acknowledges that the study of human nature is sometimes disturbing and the search for justice is never completely satisfying. "Were there only one peaceful, universal nation, lawful conduct would perhaps admit of no exceptions. Justice would again be something simple.

However, in the present imperfect world, the constant threat of war demands two different standards of justice, one for friends, another for enemies” (173). This means that some policies are enacted on enemies, which would be held as cruel if they were applied to friends. Some might think this is a particularly black and white view of meting out justice until they consider how difficult it can sometimes be to clearly define “friend” and “enemy.” One man might be held to be a citizen, or a friend of the state, while he is at the same time an enemy to another private citizen. Or, another man might be an enemy to the state, while still maintaining friendly relations with people within that hostile state. In fact, this is an important topic in the *Cyropaedia*; Cyrus is frequently at odds with men that ought to be his friends and is friendly with people that ought to be his enemies. Where Gera sees this as inconsistency in the author’s views, Nadon explores these confusing relations as examples of the difficulty in defining justice. There is no perfect solution and so there can be no perfect leader – and therefore no perfect state. Nadon argues that Xenophon’s goal is to limit our hope for the scope of political solutions. “By showing the necessities that limit the attainment of justice in all regimes, Xenophon prevents us from giving ourselves wholeheartedly to any one, or to political life altogether” (179).

Where other scholars struggle to redeem their model leader, Nadon openly acknowledges the Persian ruler’s imperfections, and for this reason he allows many of the deeper philosophical questions in the *Cyropaedia* to surface. We are forced to question the scope and capacity for political virtue to solve social problems. We are invited to explore the problems of friendship within the polity. We are forced to look at the questionable motivations of a charismatic and ambitious young prince. And we must

face the difficulties inherent in teaching young citizens the difference between friend and enemy, especially in a world where “enemies are infinitely numerous, and one’s only true and constant ‘friend’ is oneself” (176). In short, Nadon’s analysis of the *Cyropaedia* raises more questions than it answers. While this is perhaps one of the goals of the *Cyropaedia*, one would hope for a clearer analysis in a work of scholarship on the subject. At the end of *Xenophon’s Prince*, we are left bewildered with the ground absent from under our feet. While Nadon helps us more clearly account for internal conflicts within Cyrus’s character, leaves us with too many questions on the subjects of justice, the common good, and friendship. Nadon states that “the education that Xenophon intends for his reader differs significantly from the one that Cyrus receives, and that the latter is essentially defective,” but he does not explore or point to the contents of the reader’s more complete education (179). This is where the next piece of literature I’ve selected comes to the rescue.

In Christopher Bruell’s dissertation, *Xenophon’s Education of Cyrus*, we find a similar interpretive approach, where the author’s presentation is tackled on the whole as a well-crafted and intentional narrative. He takes Xenophon philosophical questions seriously and endeavors to understand his intentions. “The elaboration of that career in the *Education of Cyrus* is meant to provide above all the critical analysis of that solution and therewith of the problem it purports to solve. If that solution should prove to be unsatisfactory, we would be left with the conclusion that ruling human beings is among the difficult of impossible things” (Bruell 4). He acknowledges the high stakes of the philosophical question at hand and explores it patiently and probingly. In his examination of Cyrus’s character he finds a man, who not unlike many of us, is

motivated by “the desire for praise and honor” and in whose name he sometimes acts less than scrupulously (16). “Cyrus’s desire for honor leads on the one hand, together with his love of affection or his philanthropy, to his efforts to please and benefit, while on the other hand it leads to his desire for an unchallenged superiority or dominance over his follow men” (23). Like Nadon, Bruell permits Cyrus his inconsistencies and encourages us to explore the limitations of political virtue, justice, and friendship. However, after raising plenty of questions, Bruell provides us with a bit of relief from skepticism and points us in the direction of further education.

Bruell suggests that the larger purpose of the *Cyropaedia* was not simply to raise questions about our most dearly held beliefs of justice and virtue, but also to alert us to the limitations of political leadership’s ability to solve man’s most urgent problems. By limiting our ability to admire Cyrus, by preventing him from fully achieving success, Xenophon tempers our ambitions. According to Bruell, Xenophon is able to achieve this first by over promising and then by under delivering. In the beginning of his narrative, Xenophon elevates our faith in Cyrus as the solution to the political problem. “He claims to have found in the career of Cyrus the solution to the political problem” (2). But by the end, he gently, though quickly squashes those hopes completely. Xenophon is a bit like his hero in that he sets deceptive traps for his reader, but unlike Cyrus, he does it for the good of all. By luring us in with the promise of political stability under a benevolent leader, we willingly follow Xenophon into a book that will teach us difficult lessons to which we may not have voluntarily submitted ourselves.

Bruell indicates that Xenophon may have been particularly intent upon attracting young, ambitious, and charismatic gentlemen like Alcibiades to such a study of political

limitations. “Cyrus seems to have been held in very high esteem by men of a certain type” (1). If he could draw young men in by representing their favorite historical character “as favorably as possible,” he might be able to dampen their ambitions by demonstrating Cyrus’s limited successes in the end (6). Think of what suffering Athens might have been spared if Alcibiades had not led the Sicilian Expedition and had not been strategic advisor to the Spartan enemy. But Bruell does not simply leave us cold, wet, and deflated in the end. He provides us with direction for seeking out a more complete education than the one Cyrus received and thus provides us with some hope for finding a more fulfilling life than that leader could have expected.

At the end of his dissertation, Bruell indicates that the questions raised in the *Cyropaedia* point us to the *Memorabilia*, another work by Xenophon. The *Memorabilia* is a narrative on hero-worship of another kind. It puts forth Socrates and his philosophies as a much more limited solution to some political problems. In the *Memorabilia*, Socrates is shown mediating between brothers, forming alliances between the rich and the poor, demonstrating the very real benefits of moderation, and showing us how to be prudent. The *Memorabilia* does not glamorize its hero, and it does not elevate our hope for political virtue, but it does point us to some practical solutions for some very common political problems.

As indicated by Bruell, Cyrus’s weaknesses beg comparison with Socrates’ strengths. Where Cyrus “fears to behold the beautiful,” Socrates is bold and undaunted (129). Cyrus prevents himself from being around the beautiful woman, Panthea, because he fears that “being around beautiful ones he would not be able to neglect them” and this would cause him in turn to abandon his ambition for domination and power (129). In

other words, Cyrus's ambition sets him at odds with certain goods. He is not able to achieve his goals if he allows himself to enjoy other pleasures. This indicates that the quest for power is not the highest good or the only good and that Cyrus's appetite for power must rob him of the pursuit of other worthy paths such as the appreciation of beauty. "There seems to be a significant lack of unity to Cyrus's soul" (130).

On the other hand, Xenophon's Socrates experiences no such conflict between goods. "The story of Cyrus and the beautiful Panthea must be compared... with that of Socrates and the beautiful Theodote" (130). Thus Cyrus's fear of Panthea in the *Cyropaedia* points us to a study of the *Memorabilia* where, as soon as he hears of the beautiful woman, Socrates demands to be taken to Theodote. "So unmoved was the erotic Socrates by her charms that, though he had plenty of leisure, he refused on the pretext of numerous private and public affairs her warmly urged invitation to frequent her" (130). In other words, Socrates' present pursuits are not undermined by Theodote's beauty. Where Cyrus admits that his ambitions will be neglected if he keeps company with beauty, Socrates is not even slightly tempted to abandon his goals when presented with a formidable beauty. "The charm of Socrates' proper activity or its goal was apparently superior to all other charms. As a result, there was not conflict between his pleasures or his passions and what he thought to be his good; on the contrary those pleasure or passions led or conduced to the good" (130). Xenophon shows that Cyrus's goals lead him to a life of conflict between goods and sets Socrates up as a point of comparison. Where there was a fundamental split in Cyrus's life, "there was a fundamental unity to [Socrates'] life" (130).

Bruell shows that the collapsed hope we feel at the end of the *Cyropaedia* need not leave us deflated. Instead it turns our attention to worthier pursuits. “The *Education of Cyrus*, by uncovering the failure of Cyrus, thus appears to point to Socrates” (131). In the *Cyropaedia*, it appears that knowledge of human behavior would force us to abandon our hopes for virtue. But in the *Memorabilia*, Socrates “did not separate wisdom and moderation; he appeared to hold that there was no opposition in principle between wisdom and the passions, or that the desires or passions are fundamentally rational” (131). Bruell shows us that, where the *Cyropaedia* presents the unsatisfied ambitions of Cyrus, the *Memorabilia* gives us hope for a more fulfilling education through Socrates. “Whereas Xenophon never calls Cyrus happy, he calls Socrates ‘a most good and most happy man’” (131).

I am indebted to each of these authors for their discerning arguments and critical eye for detail. Although, I do not agree with all of them all of the time, these authors have provided me with thoughtful points of view in my investigation of the *Cyropaedia*. Even when I do agree with an author, I have found that my research leads me in a distinct direction and I am inspired to present something that none of the above authors have truly elaborated on. I will be arguing that, although the appearance of benevolence is important in Cyrus’s rule, his key tactic for ruling so many human beings is hidden within his use of friendship. In the beginning Cyrus seems to rely heavily on friends to distinguish himself. When Cyrus is appointed as general of the Persian army, he selects his friends to accompany him. And throughout all of the battles against his archenemy, Cyrus depends on his closest associates. Finally, in the founding and preservation of his empire, Cyrus entrusts his friends with important responsibilities that will assist in the

maintenance and expansion of his kingdom. However, the nature of Cyrus's relationship with his friends is complicated and it is my project to discover Cyrus's true understanding of friendship and to see how this contributes to the rule of so large an empire.

CHAPTER 3

Prince of Persia: The Narrative

If we are to truly understand anything about Cyrus, it is important to appreciate Xenophon's work as a whole. The project of the *Education of Cyrus* is to study this Cyrus, his character, his education, and his methods in order to find out if human beings can be ruled peaceably (23). Here I have provided an overview of Xenophon's narrative so that the succeeding chapters and references within my thesis will be easy to follow. I am not able to cover everything contained in the *Education of Cyrus*, so I have focused on points within the narrative that focus on friendship and the characteristics evident in Cyrus which make friendship possible.

From the beginning, we are encouraged to admire Cyrus. We already know that he is the hero of this book, and potentially, he is put forward as the hero of political science. But we are given to further hero-worship when we discover that he was born prince of the Persians and related to the gods as well (23). Further, Cyrus is described "by the barbarians as having been most beautiful in form and most benevolent in soul, most eager to learn, and most ambitious, with the result that he endured every labor and faced every risk for the sake of being praised" (23).

At early age, Cyrus seems destined for greatness. He is educated in Persia amongst boys from the honored class² by the wise elders of the city. Here, there is an emphasis on teaching virtue, moderation, continence, justice, and gratitude. In these things, "he clearly surpassed all his agemates both in quickly learning what was necessary and in doing everything in a noble and manly way" (28). At the age of twelve

² *homotimos* – or literally translated *alike honored*

Cyrus and his mother travel to visit his maternal grandfather who is king of the neighboring country Media. The boy makes fast work of charming his grandfather, Astyages, and the rest of the Medes by benefiting them in whatever way he can. “If he perceived either his grandfather or his mother’s brother in need of anything, it was difficult for anyone else to take care of it before he did, for Cyrus was extremely delighted to gratify them in any way within his power” (31). When their visit was about the end, Astyages asks Cyrus to stay and his mother leaves Cyrus in Media for an extended stay.

Paying special attention to the king, his grandfather, he would benefit, serve, and comfort him on every occasion possible. Consequently, he won his grandfather over “to the highest degree” so that when he asked for anything “Astyages was not able to refuse to gratify Cyrus in whatever he asked of him” (33). He quickly rises in popularity amongst his agemates in Media and their fathers (33). He even ingratiates his grandfather’s servants by giving them the food from his grandfather’s sumptuous nightly banquet (29). In this way he conquered the hearts of the Medes.

Growing from a boy into a youth, Cyrus becomes interested in horsemanship and hunting. In these things, too, he “quickly surpassed” his agemates (29). He discovers a particular interest in hunting and approaches the sport with the boldness and zeal of “a well bred puppy” (29). This experience prepares him for his first battle at the age of sixteen when the Assyrian king is discovered plundering Media’s lands. Cyrus is given armor and is permitted to participate. The boy contributes to strategic deliberation and is on the front line of the attack against the enemy. “Just as a well-bred but inexperienced dog rushes without forethought against a boar, so also rushed Cyrus, seeing only that he

struck whomever he caught” (40). In the end, the Medes are victorious thanks in large part to Cyrus’s daring and bravery. “And not only did everyone else have Cyrus on his lips, both in speech and in song, but Astyages, who had honored him even before was then quite astonished by him” (41).

However, in Persia participation in military affairs belongs to men who have graduated from an education amongst the Persian youths. Therefore, when his father “heard that Cyrus was already performing a man’s deeds, he recalled him in order that he might fulfill what was customary among the Persians” (41). His grandfather saw the necessity in sending him back to Persia, and so Cyrus was escorted out of Media by a great parade of his friends both young and old. “And they said that there was no one who turned back without tears” (41). In addition to finding himself most beloved in Media, Cyrus also has his first taste of battle and victory. He turns out to be skilled at both.

Upon returning to his homeland, Cyrus continued to excel at his education and “seemed also among [his agemates] to be superior in caring for what he ought, in being steadfast, in respecting his elders, and in obeying the rulers” (43). At this point, Cyrus disappears into obscurity for more than ten years. He would have passed his time quietly exceeding the Persian expectations for public virtue and soaking up the honor and praise of all his friends had the threat of war not reached the Persian boarder.

The king of Assyria began to enlarge his kingdom and eventually developed designs on the Medes and Persians. By this time, Astyages had passed and his throne went to Cyrus’s uncle, Cyaxares. When Cyaxares perceived the threat that was being mounted against him, “he both immediately made such counterpreparations as he could himself, and he sent messages to the Persians... asking that [Cyrus] try to come as the

ruler of the men, if the council of the Persians should send some soldiers” (43). The elders of the council choose Cyrus to lead the expedition to Media. With enthusiasm and determination, Cyrus leads 1,000 men from the honored class and 30,000 men from the Persian class of commoners to Median territory to prepare for war.

But war does not come so immediately. In the mean time, Cyrus discovers that the neighboring country of Armenia, who has long been under the rule of Media, has refused to send troops or pay tributes (80). Cyaxares is hesitant to “impose necessity upon” the Armenian, and so Cyrus volunteers to lead a campaign to get this king to pay tribute and send an army (81). “Moreover, I expect that he will also become more a friend to us than he is now” (81). With Cyaxares permission, Cyrus leads a “measured” cavalry to the outskirts of Armenia and sends this message to the king: “Armenian, Cyrus orders you to act in such a way that he may go away as soon as possible with the tribute and the army” (84). This message only frightens the Armenian “as he reflected that he had been unjust” and so he flees with his family, only to be captured by Cyrus’s cavalry (85).

The terrified Armenian is put to trial by Cyrus and the king openly admits that he has been unjust in neglecting to send tributes and troops, and in addition, building secret fortifications. After being asked by Cyrus, what the Armenian would do if he were in Cyaxares’ situation, the Armenian candidly responds that he would take away the unjust king’s position, money, family, and potentially, his life. Cyrus, however, does not sentence him to such a fate. Instead, Cyrus realizes that a man who was currently expecting to lose everything would owe him much gratitude, if Cyrus were to show him leniency. So Cyrus only asks how much the Armenian can contribute to the current

defense efforts. Gushing with gratefulness, the Armenia offers Cyrus his whole army and his entire treasury (92). After everything was arranged in this way, they sat down and all ate dinner together. Having gained a friend and having acquired an additional 28,000 men for his army, Cyrus returned to Media.

Upon his return, Cyrus deliberated with Cyaxares and they determined that it would be “better than all alternatives” to begin their campaign and enter enemy territory (103). Here again, Cyrus shows conviction and zeal in preparing for battle. “Since then we agree... let us prepare, and... go out as quickly as possible” (103). After several days of marching, camping, and preparation, the Assyrian’s army came to meet the Medes and Persians in battle. Cyrus and his leaders from the honored class lead the advance “often saying, ‘Come on, men, friends! Come on, good men!’” just as Cyrus had taught them (109). In this way the entire Persian army was encouraged to fight with the spirit of allies and comrades. It was in this spirit that they came to close quarters with the enemy and fought until “the enemy was no longer able to stand fast, and they turned and began fleeing into their fortification” (110). Despite the fact that the Assyrian army (along with his allies) has more than three times the amount of men than the Median, Persian, and Armenian army combined, this small force, led by Cyrus, is victorious. Cyrus again shows his talent for encouraging friendship and, in turn, achieving success.

After this triumph, Cyrus praises his army and makes a couple key promotions in order to reward the most deserving members. Cyaxares retires with his army to his tents and begins to celebrate with eating and drinking. The next day, it becomes apparent that the Assyrian and his allies “were inside a fortification, left it, and are taking flight” (115). Cyrus observes that “they could not stand fast when inexperienced of us: How could they

now stand fast after having been defeated and suffering many evils at our hands” (115)? He is very desirous of pursuing the enemy as quickly as possible, but Persia (a small mountainous country) has no cavalry, and “the best among our enemy, whom it would have been especially opportune to capture or kill, will be on horseback” (115).

Cyrus then turns to Cyaxares for assistance, but the King of Media “was busy enjoying himself and saw many of the other Medes doing the same thing” (115). He notes that “Persians take the noblest care not to be insatiably disposed toward and single pleasure” and warns them not to loose their continence “on account of their good fortune” (115). However, he wishes to please Cyrus, so he bids him take as many Medes in pursuit of the enemy as he can convince. “Thus nearly all the Medes came out, except those that happened to be at Cyaxares’ tent party... yet all the others set out radiantly and enthusiastically” (119).

While this was happening, the Hyrcanians, a small nation subjected to poor treatment under the Assyrian, defected from the Assyrian army and wished to join Cyrus in the continued attack on this empire. “Those sent [as messengers] said to Cyrus that it was just for them to hate the Assyrians and that now, if he wished to attack them, they would be his allies and guides” (118). So, after many precautions, Cyrus accepts this rebel cavalry as an ally and, with the aid of many Medes, Armenians, and Chaldaeans, they together make a quick pursuit of the enemy.

By marching and riding quickly, Cyrus’s army reached the enemy by morning and took them by surprise by having the Hyrcanians lead the advance. The enemy flees in disorder and abandons many baggage carts, tents, gold, food, and other traveling necessities. While the allies are riding around collecting these goods, Cyrus speaks with

his captains and convinces them that the allies should be in charge of the distribution of all the money that is discovered in the abandoned camp. “By appearing to be just to them” the Persians will influence their allies “to make them delight in us still more than they do now” (124). When the allies approach Cyrus regarding the distribution of goods, Cyrus bids them to do as they see fit; he asks only to be given all of the horses that are discovered in the camp because he hopes to better aid his allies in this campaign by creating a Persian cavalry. Flattered, the allies enthusiastically agree and they set out gathering the abandoned horses for the neophyte knights.

Again, word of Cyrus’s reputation for justice and benevolence spreads and brings two more allies to his service. Both Gobryas and Gadatas are wealthy landowners of Assyrian birth who have suffered serious injustices at the hands of their king. Gobryas first decides to revolt, and then Gadatas follows. Both are powerful men in their own right and they each contribute money, fortifications, and a cavalry to Cyrus’s campaign. Together, with the help of these two Assyrians, Cyrus captures one of the Assyrians’ fortresses.

The Hyrcanian watches as all this unfolds and is overwhelmed by his Cyrus’s actions. “Cyrus, you who are so great a good to your friends, how much gratitude you make me owe to the gods because they led me to you” (155). As a result, the Hyrcanian sent to his neighbors – also mistreated subjects of the Assyrian – and “an army of Cadusians was collected that numbered up to twenty thousand targeteers and four thousand cavalry, of Sacians up to ten thousand archers and two thousand mounted archers” (156). At this point, Cyrus’s army has grown from approximately 130,000 men

to 170,000 men. It would appear that Cyrus's policy of benefiting his friends is also turning out to be a good for himself as well.

At this point, Cyrus sees the necessity of reporting to Cyaxares, who had weeks ago woken up from his celebration to discover that Cyrus had taken nearly his entire army. Cyaxares had sent a messenger to Cyrus demanding their immediate return, but Cyrus still needed the army at the time. Now, with the acquisition of new allies, territory, and a great army, Cyrus feels ready to meet Cyaxares.

Having "arrived at the boarderlands of the Syrians and Medes" Cyrus quickly conquered the Syrians (168). "After this was completed, he sent to Cyaxares and directed him to come to the camp so that they might deliberate about how to make use of the forts they had taken and also so that after seeing the army he might join in deliberating more generally about what they should do next" (168). In the mean time, another 40,000 archers and targeteers have arrived from Persia and went to meet Cyrus at this camp. "On the next day Cyaxares marched out with those of the Median knights who remained with him. When Cyrus perceived that he was approaching, he went to meet him and brought along with him the Persian cavalry, which was already numerous, and all of the allies including the Medes who had been traveling with him" (169). When both met in the middle and had dismounted their horses, Cyaxares appeared deeply ashamed and turned away when Cyrus offered his greeting. Cyrus then takes Cyaxares to a place off the road where they were able to converse in private and asks him "what harsh sight do you see that you are so harshly disposed" (169)?

Cyaxares explains that he comes from a long line of kings and is himself a king, but when he found himself riding toward Cyrus with a diminished army and saw Cyrus

meeting him “accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power” he felt humiliated and scandalized (169). Not only this, but he feels as though his troops are hostile to and scornful of him when they see Cyrus so strong and their king so weak. “And as he was saying this, he was still more overcome by tears” (170).

Cyrus responds by saying, “that you believe you have been unjustly treated by me however, I take ill – if working as much as is within my power to do as many good things for my friends as is possible, I then seem to have accomplished the opposite of this” (170). Cyrus goes on to explain that all of the things he has accomplished have been for the good of all in common (171). Cyrus asks if he did not fulfill Cyaxares request to report as leader of the Persians when the enemy made their intentions known? He also asks if he avoided labor or risks during the first battle, letting Cyaxares and his army do all the work? Cyaxares responds that Cyrus’s actions were just in both of the situations. Cyrus goes on to ask whether his other actions between then and now have been unjust, including those actions, which lead directly to “your country being enlarged and your enemies’ being diminished” (172)?

Ultimately, Cyaxares explains that he knows that Cyrus has done him many good things, but that he wishes he were the one who was benefiting Cyrus. “Be well assured, however, that [the things you have done] are good in such a way that the more numerous they appear, the more they oppress me, for I would wish to make your country greater by my power rather than to see mine so enlarged by you” (172). He asks Cyrus to put himself in Cyaxares position and see things his way. It is as though Cyaxares were raising guard dogs for himself, but a friend who is very attentive to them made these dogs more devoted to him than to Cyaxares. Or even worse, Cyaxares feels as though he is in

this position: “if someone is so attentive to your wife that he makes her love himself rather than you, would he delight you by his good deed” (173)?

Cyrus is greatly upset by these accusations and asks Cyaxares to allow Cyrus and the Medes to give him “more evidence of how we are disposed toward you, then, if what I have done comes to light as having been done for your good, greet me in turn when I greet you and believe me to be a benefactor” (174). Cyaxares agrees and they make up for the time being. When Cyaxares arrives at the camp that Cyrus has set up, he sees that from among the spoils of war, many beautiful luxuries have been reserved for him, including the tent, which had belonged to the Assyrian, and many beautiful women inside. All the rest of the day, the Medes attended to him and visited his tent. “Nearly everyone brought him at least some gift from what he himself had received” (174). Many brought servants, beautiful women, musicians, and luxurious adornments. “Cyaxares consequently changed to the opinion that Cyrus was not leading them to revolt from him and that the Medes were not paying him any less attention than before” (174).

The next morning, Cyrus and all of the leaders his army and the allies’ armies meet at Cyaxares tent to deliberate on what to do going forward. Together, they determine that instead of dissolving the army, they decide to redouble their war efforts against the Assyrians. They set out making many improvements on their weapons, chariots, and armor. And while these tools were being prepared, Cyrus also prepared the spirits and bodies of his soldiers for war. Additionally, Cyrus sent out several spies to report on the counter preparations of the enemy.

After the appropriate preparations and sacrifices to the gods have been made Cyrus and his army of allies set off for war. When they are close to meeting the enemy,

Cyrus orders his leaders and soldiers and readies his men for war. “So let us go, men, against our enemy—with armed chariots against the enemy’s unarmed, just as also with armed cavalry and horses against their unarmed – to do battle at close quarters (200). Both sides advanced slowly toward one another, and during this slow approach Cyrus rode around on his horse, putting everything and everyone in order all the while shining like a mirror (204). “When it seemed to Cyrus to be opportune, he began the paean, and all the army chanted along. After this they raised the war cry... and at the same time, Cyrus shot forward” leading the attack (207). The enemies’ army attempted to surround his with large wings on the sides of its phalanx, but Cyrus’s spies had told him in advance that this would be the enemy’s strategy and Cyrus is prepared. His cavalry in turn surrounded these wings and attacked them at close range. “Consequently, the enemy was soon in vigorous flight” (207). The strength of friends and allies fighting together was gaining them another victory. “Of the enemy it was only the Egyptians who distinguished themselves in the battle, and of Cyrus’s troops the Persian cavalry seemed best” (210). In battle, Cyrus settles a truce with the Egyptians and they become powerful allies of this promising Persian general. The rest of the enemy’s troops had already fled, so “having accomplished such things and it already being dark, Cyrus led the army back and camped” (210). Cyrus army and his allies had not only gained another victory, but they had gained another friend.

When it was day and his army was well rested, Cyrus led an invasion on the city of Sardis and took the country of Lydia. Having conquered this rich city, the Lydians gave him many gifts of “weapons, horses, and chariots and trying in all things to do what they thought would gratify him” (219). From Sardis, Cyrus began on the road to Babylon

(219). Upon reaching this great walled city, Cyrus discovered that it was not penetrable and that its inhabitants had enough supplies to survive within this fortress for a year without needing to come out and fight. However, a great river of wide breadth runs through the city and through the walls, so Cyrus commanded his men to “dig a trench as broad and deep as possible” (221). One day, when the trenches for the river were complete, Cyrus heard about a festival where all the Babylonians celebrated with drinking and revelry deep into the night. “On this night, as soon as it was dark, he took many people and opened the mouths of the trenches toward the river. When this was done, the water traveled down through the trenches” (222). This emptied out and opened up the bed of the river and cleared it as a path under the walls and into the city.

Cyrus gathered his infantry and cavalry and reminded them of the condition of the city they were about to invade. “Men, friends, the river has yielded us the road to the city. Let us enter with confidence... bearing in mind that the troops against whom we are now marching are the very ones we conquered when they... were all wide awake, sober armed and organized” (222). Thus they entered the city, took the palace by storm, killed the Assyrian, occupied the fortresses, and sent a cavalry out through the streets to subdue the rest of Babylon. In this sweeping victory, Cyrus not only conquered the Assyrian, his greatest enemy, he also succeeded in avenging the wrongs done to his friends Gobryas and Gادات.

From what they had conquered, Cyrus then distributed houses and land to the allies and friends who had helped him in this great victory. “He allocated them just as had been decided, the best to the best. If someone thought that he got too little, he bade them come forward and explain” (224). He then distributed many of the Babylonians to

these men and commanded that they serve the men to whom they had been given. “After this Cyrus was already desirous of establishing himself in the way he held to be fitting for a king. He decided to do this with the concurring judgment of his friends” (224). His friends bade him to take up a residence and so Cyrus took the Assyrian’s palace as his home and hearth and had all the riches from Sardis conveyed here.

As there were many new responsibilities that came from being king, Cyrus began to work earnestly and manage his empire. Taking care to preserve his role as king, he put together a garrison of guards that would protect his palace from outside. “Knowing that Persian [commoners] at home had the hardest lives because of their poverty... he believed that it was especially they who would cherish the way of life they would lead with him” (229). These men watched over the palace, but they also watched over Cyrus when he needed to travel within the city.

From within his circle of friends, “Cyrus appointed different people to be responsible for different matters. He had those who collected revenues, those who paid expenses, those who were in control of works, those who guarded possessions, those who were “responsible for the provisions of daily life” (235). Of these friends, Cyrus took particular care. These were the men who would be appointed to the greatest positions under the king. They would be generals, statesmen, diplomats, ambassadors, and guardians. “He held that his own affairs would go badly if those [fellow guardians] though whom the greatest and most numerous actions were going to be performed were not as they ought” (235). So, Cyrus began to take responsibility for their moral characters and reminded them of the importance of virtue. Holding that a leader even in this was necessary, he set himself forward as an example. He showed himself as being

deeply concerned with giving to the gods what was owed. Additionally, “he himself especially worked at continence and the military arts and cares, for he took others hunting whenever there was not any necessity to stay back” (238). And during these retreats, he made sure that he never indulged in food until he had worked up a sweat.

The new king further encouraged his friends and partners to care for the things that they ought be distinguishing the best with honors and gifts. Cyrus established a rule that all of those men who he held in honor should show up at the palace gates every morning in case Cyrus needed them in his service. If one of his men did not report to his gate, he regarded this as a sign of vice, and took many of this man’s good things away and gave it to a man who reported faithfully at his gates. “And in this way he came to have a useful friend in return for a useless one” (236). Additionally, when he wished to show honor to his best men, he would invite them to dinner, or send them food and drink to their residences. “These and many such others, then, were the things he contrived with a view toward being in first place for those whom he wished to be loved” (245).

Having taken care of the seat of his kingdom and established himself in this way, Cyrus determined that it was time to visit Persia. On the way there, he stopped to visit his uncle in Media to tell Cyaxares that a house, land, and buildings had been selected for him, so that he could visit whenever he wanted. He also made him a present of many beautiful gifts. He accepted these and, in return, Cyaxares sent Cyrus his daughter adorned in many riches and offered her to him as a wife along with the possession of all of Media as a dowry.

With this, Cyrus marched on to Persia, bringing with him many gifts and sacrificial animals. His father the king, Cambyses, assembled the Persian elders,

magistrates, and Cyrus together so he could speak to them all at once. He then encouraged Cyrus and the Persians to make a compact. Cyrus ought to protect Persia if anyone “marches against Persian land or tries to tear up Persia’s laws” (263). In their turn, the Persians ought to “give aid both to yourselves and to Cyrus, in whatever way he demands” if someone should try to usurp him (263). Further, his father clarified that while Cambyses is alive, he is king of Persia, but that when he dies, Cyrus will inherit his land. On these grounds, the Persian authorities and Cyrus made a compact. “When these things were done, Cyrus went away” (264). On his way back home to Babylon, he stopped in Media to receive his bride and dowry.

Once at home, he prepared the best of his honored men to go out and govern the subdued nations as his proxies. He encourages them to treat their subjects in the way he has treated them and promises to reward those who display the most military power. After a year of having managed affairs at home and abroad, Cyrus began to assemble a great and powerful army. “When these were ready for him, he started the expedition on which it is said that he subdued all the nations that inhabit the land as one goes out of Syria as far as the Indian Ocean” (267). After this, he marched against Egypt and subdued this great country. “At this point, the Indian Ocean bounded his empire to the east; the Black Sea to the north; Cyprus and Egypt to the west; and Ethiopia to the south” (267). In essence, he conquered the part of the continent that supported human life. He did not need to expand his borders any further for “the limits of these borders are uninhabitable because of heat, in one case; by cold in another; by water in another; and by lack of water in another” (267).

At an old age, Cyrus makes a visit to Persia with his two sons. Sleeping in the palace, he had a dream which advised him to prepare for death. After sacrificing to the gods, Cyrus laid down to rest, and summoned his sons, his friends and the Persian magistrates in order to give his last words. He tells them that his death is near and that when he passes, they “must say and do everything about me as about one who was happy” (269). He tells them that there is not much in his life that he wished that he was not able to accomplish for himself. “I beheld my friends becoming happy because of me, and my enemies enslaved by me” (269).

He gives the position of kingship to his eldest son on two grounds of argument. First, he says the eldest is most experienced. Second, Cyrus claims to have educated his sons to honor their elders, even older brothers. To his youngest son, he gives governance of the Medes, the Armenians, and the Cadusians. “In giving these things to you I believe that whereas I bequeath a greater empire and the name of king to your elder brother, to you I bequeath a happiness more free from pain” (270). He argues his youngest son will have all the good things in life without all of the troubles that accompany the responsibility of kingship.

“When Cyrus died... his sons immediately fell into dissension, cities and nations immediately revolted, and everything took a turn for the worse” (273). All that he had worked toward in his lifetime came crumbling down to the ground in which he was freshly buried. Xenophon reports that in his present day, “everyone in Asia has been turned toward impiety and injustice” (274). Bribery, extortion, incontinence, drunkenness, softness, and laziness are prevalent everywhere. The children no longer learn horsemanship or justice; instead they learn about poison and power. Xenophon ends his

book by saying that “the present Persians and their associates have been demonstrated to be more impious regarding gods, more irreverent regarding relatives, more unjust regarding other, and more unmanly in what pertains to war than were their predecessors” (277). And without discussing whether Cyrus was in fact the answer to problems of political science, he concludes by saying “now I think I have accomplished what I proposed” (277).

CHAPTER 4

Cyrus: The Benefactor of Friends

The last chapter of the last book informs us of the immediate collapse of Cyrus's empire. However, it does not attempt to explain the reasons for this failure. Nor does this chapter attempt to elaborate on Xenophon's earlier claim that Cyrus was a man worthy of wonder – a man who gave us hope for obedient and stable human civilization. Instead, Xenophon ends his book with some reflections on the corruption and viciousness of the current Persians who are his contemporaries.

Despite appearances, Xenophon has not forgotten the purpose of his narrative on the life and accomplishments of Cyrus. He does briefly remind us that this account had a broader purpose. In the very last paragraph of the book, Xenophon reminds his readers of his intentions when he says, “now I think that I have accomplished what I proposed” (277). The initial proposal was to discover what it was about Cyrus that made it possible for him to rule so many human beings so successfully. Xenophon described how difficult a challenge it was to establish stable rule over creatures inclined to disobedience and then set Cyrus forth as a man “worthy of wonder” because “he so excelled at ruling human beings” (23).

In the beginning, Xenophon promised us hope for civilized human beings, but in the end we are confronted with questions concerning Cyrus's failures. The initial promises propel us through the story, wrap us up in the characters, involve us in the plot, and ultimately have us rooting for Cyrus. These promises push us through to the end where we hope that they will be fulfilled. But when we arrive, we are a bit deflated. We are left only with questions that point us back toward the beginning. Such a construction,

begs the reader to explore this book again and again. We are meant to read this narrative for the first time with hope and for the second time with skepticism. For that reason, we return to the beginning and make a review of the narrative to reexamine hints we could not have recognized and clues we may have ignored which would have ultimately prepared us for the failure of Cyrus's empire.

Now armed with knowledge about the inevitable collapse of Cyrus's empire, we can look to Chapter 1, Book I with a more critical eye regarding Xenophon's standards for success. In *Cyrus*, he suggests there is relief from the most serious problems of rule – instability and disobedience. Xenophon introduces us to this subject by showing how all regimes have difficulty maintaining them for any length of time. Democracies are overthrown by those who are desirous of more concentrated power. Monarchies and oligarchies are taken over by the people. Beyond the difficulties pointed to by Xenophon, one can imagine other problems in maintaining these two regimes. For monarchies, there are issues over who inherits the crown if there is no male heir. There is also the constant threat of regicide for even the most beloved kings. For oligarchies, the challenges to the stability of the regime may include election fraud, cronyism, faction, and the threat of a coup. Xenophon also mentions the challenges of being a tyrant, which seems to be the most problematic regime to maintain considering how many are “at once brought down completely” (21). But should a tyrant find success in maintaining his power for “any time at all” they are “admired as wise and fortunate men” (21). Xenophon does not mean to say that successful tyrants are wise and fortunate; he's simply suggesting that due to their low success rate, they are merely *admired* as such without necessarily being admirable or fortunate.

When we look at each of these regimes and what Xenophon points out about them, it is clear he holds that unsuccessful regimes are characterized by their inability to maintain themselves for any sustained length of time. Enduring stability is not something of which Cyrus's empire can boast. And considering Cyrus's words and actions when he is near death, it is unlikely he would have been happy or considered his empire a success had he witnessed its collapse.

Days before his death, Cyrus prays to the gods and asks for them to "give happiness now to my children, my wife, my friends, and my fatherland, and to give me an end of a sort similar to the life you have given me" (268). He asks for his sons (one will be king) to be happy. Presumably, this does not imply a desire for the immediate dissolution into which they fall directly following his death (273). Further, he asks for the kind of end that would be similar to his life. In his deathbed speech, he describes his life as characterized by ever increasing power and as a result, "I beheld my friends becoming happy because of me, and my enemies enslaved by me" (269). But in the end, an empire that had apparently been set up for his friends' and family's enjoyment collapsed and did not endure with its "power ever on the increase" (269). He put the men he was closest to and trusted most in charge of governing occupied cities and nations, but in the end "cities and nations immediately revolted, and everything took a turn for the worse" (273). It is probably not the case that these revolts ended well for Cyrus's friends.

Although we are anxious in our first reading to admire Cyrus's good fortune, it is not clear by the end of the second reading that he has escaped many of the troubles and misfortunes of social life. If anything, Cyrus seems to complain that leadership amplifies these misfortunes. For all of these reasons, it is not clear how Cyrus's empire could be

considered successful and therefore, it is questionable whether Cyrus was a success. Because of this, we are forced to ask, why was such a man who so excelled at ruling unable to protect his legacy – especially if it is true that he was “honored and was attentive to those under him just as to his own children, and his subjects venerated Cyrus as a father” (273)?

We can find some of the answers to this question, even from the beginning of Book I. “We know that Cyrus was willingly obeyed by *some* [emphasis added]” even though many of his subjects were far away and would never see him (22). But as it turns out, only a small part of the people he ruled over were “willing” subjects. Only the Persians, Medes, and Hyrcanians “were willing that he do so” (22). Xenophon next lists the names of eighteen nations who were not willing, but were “subdued” (22). How then did he encourage obedience in so many unwilling subjects who spanned such great lengths of land? “He was able to extend fear of himself to so much of the world that he intimidated all, and no one attempted anything against him” (23). These words stand out with greater force having read Xenophon’s story from beginning to end. So far, Cyrus’s success at ruling is not attributed to his role as friendly patriarch and benefactor; it is because he used fear to convince everyone that it was “proper to be governed by his judgment” (23).

It is even possible to see this meaning in Cyrus’s last piece of advice. “And remember this last thing from me, that by benefiting your friends, you will be able to punish your enemies” (272). In his parting words, he shows it is most important to him to harm one’s enemies. Benefiting one’s friends is only a means to this end and many others. But in Cyrus’s experience, it is a very effective means and so he gives this

powerful (though revealing) advice as his parting gift to his sons. Upon closer review and reflection, it does not seem that this empire is based so simply upon Cyurs' impulse to be benevolent. More than benefiting friends, he is driven by a desire to harm his enemies. This means that many of his actions must be geared toward this goal, rather than the goal of being a great benefactor.

Where has our esteemed prince gone? Where is the proud leader who would "endure every labor and face every risk for the sake of being praised" (23)? Where is the eager prince who held "being loved by one's subjects" to be "among the most important matters" (53)? Where is the noble warrior who asked his newly chosen leaders "what is more just than defending ourselves or more noble than aiding friends" (45)? Where is the generous king who claimed that "by enriching and benefiting human beings, I acquire goodwill and friendship, and from these I harvest safety and glory" (245)?

He is still here. We still see him within these pages appearing to benefit his friends, but now we spy on him with a more critical eye and we find that his role as benefactor is complicated by his other conflicting desires. For punishing one's enemy is not the only good in life. Cyrus is first and foremost a lover of praise, honor, and power and he frequently uses his friends to acquire these goods. The beneficent prince is still present, but now we see the motive behind his actions with more clarity. To understand the motives behind Cyrus's generous impulses better, I will try to show how his efforts to make himself beloved are also efforts to acquire power – a necessary tool in harming one's enemies.

From a very young age we can find Cyrus honing his skills geared toward gaining the advantage. In fact, in some instances, Cyrus's actions as a young boy seem brazenly

manipulative but because he is a child, and therefore generally free from suspicion, his antics come off as charming knavery. As a child, we find Cyrus is “by nature an affectionate boy... who loved beauty and honor” (28). It is through his affection and it is for his love of beauty and honor that Cyrus makes his first conquest – his grandfather. The first thing that Cyrus does when he meets the king of the Medes is embrace him with such familiarity, it was as if “he had been raised with him and had been friendly with him for a long time” (28). Then Cyrus surveys the expensively bejeweled Astyages and “so seeing the adornment of [him], he said while looking at him, ‘Mother, how handsome my grandfather is’” (28). As a result, his grandfather returns the embrace and similarly adorns his grandson. Cyrus’s benevolence has won him his first follower.

Cyrus’s first enemy is a man who puts himself the way of this first conquest. Sakas, Astyages’s cupbearer, is a kind of steward who waits at the ready to pour Astyages’ wine and also has “the honor of admitting those who sought Astyages and of excluding such as he did not think it opportune to admit” (30). Because he has this power, Sakas can prevent Cyrus from visiting his grandfather whenever he desires. Consequently, Cyrus has decided to “make war on Sakas” and asks his grandfather to permit Cyrus to rule over Sakas for three days (31). “‘Order Sakas to give me the cup, grandfather... that I too, by nobly pouring wine for you to drink, may win you over if I can’” (30). Cyrus declares that he would fulfill Sakas’s duties just as well if not better and to prove it, he demonstrates his ability to pour and present a cup of wine to his grandfather with refinement.

And indeed, Cyrus does win the battle for his grandfather in the long run, for Astyages promises that if Cyrus extends his stay with the Medes “Sakas will not govern

your access to me, but it will be up to you to come to me whenever you wish. And I will be more grateful to you to the extent that you come to me more often” (31). Cyrus decides to stay with his grandfather and take his encouragement to heart. Once, when Astyages was sick, “Cyrus never left him and never ceased weeping, but he made it plain to all that he was extremely afraid that he might die. Also at night, if Astyages needed anything, Cyrus used to perceive it first and would leap up with the greatest alacrity of all in order to serve him” (33). In these ways and others, Cyrus doted on his grandfather faithfully, and “he thus won Astyages over to the highest degree” (33). As a result, “Astyages was not able to refuse to gratify Cyrus in whatever he asked of him” (33).

Here we see Cyrus, even in his early youth, using benevolence to win over the affections of his friends and using his influence among them to gain power over his enemies. He uses his grandfather’s love for him to first rule over and then gain independence from his enemy Sakas. But these are the actions of a boy who was, by nature, “eager to please those around him” (33). In all his precocious rashness, Cyrus afforded his friends and family much amusement (31).

However, what seems guileless in a boy does not usually seem so in a man, and as Cyrus began to mature, he became aware of this in himself. “He was so filled with shame that he blushed and whenever he encountered his elders, and his puppyish running up to all alike was no longer so prominent in him” (34). Xenophon seems to imply that his ability to hide behind boyish roguery seemed no longer possible and that his blatant courtship for attention and praise made him ashamed. In other words, as Cyrus grew out of his childishness, it no longer seemed appropriate to be so unabashed about his ambition for influence. However, he soon discovered that his newfound bashfulness

would be an obstacle in his ability to make and maintain friendly conquests. Necessity required him to learn to be clever and hide his motives.

After moving to Media, Cyrus “quickly became involved with his agemates so that he became on familiar terms with them, and he quickly attached their fathers to him” (33). And because Astyages was unable to refuse Cyrus in whatever he wanted, Cyrus turned out to be a very good little diplomat. Because, “if they needed anything from the king, they used to bid their sons to ask Cyrus to accomplish it for them, and Cyrus... was very concerned to accomplish whatever the boys asked of him” (33). But once Cyrus lost his boyhood boldness, he found himself at a loss with Astyages.

This put Cyrus in a difficult situation for the kind of youth who has become accustomed to a certain level of influence. He and his agemates had become so skilled at horsemanship and hunting the wild animals, which Astyages collected in the park for the purpose, that there were soon none left to be hunted. Further, Astyages was not able to provide anymore. “And Cyrus, perceiving that Astyages wished to provide him with many animals but was not able to, said to him, ‘Grandfather, why must you be bothered looking for wild animals?’” (34)? He thought that if his grandfather would take them hunting in the wild, there would be an unlimited number of animals. Eventually, Astyages permitted Cyrus to go out hunting with his uncle, Cyaxares. Cyrus was full of zeal and captured many animals, but when Cyrus asked his grandfather to then take his friends out hunting as well, Astyages refused.

After telling his agemates about the exciting hunt he had been on, he exclaimed, “‘I do not know what sort of human being I have become! For neither am I up to speaking to my grandfather nor am I even capable of looking at him as I did before’”

(36). His friends, who were desirous of going hunting with him, responded by saying, “it is a bad problem... if you are unable to act on our behalf when it is needed; but rather it will be necessary for us to ask someone else for you” (37). Because of his newfound bashfulness, Cyrus could potentially lose his standing with these young friends.

After this lesson, Cyrus seems to have rediscovered his boldness and Xenophon never makes another mention of Cyrus’s bashfulness. However, for a young man who is eager to gain esteem and influence, this lesson was an important one. In order to maintain such a position of power, the benefactor must have the power to please those people over whom he wishes to maintain influence. He recalls this as he is conversing with his father and is getting ready to take his position as general of the Persian army in the war against the Assyrian. He opines that gaining the love of one’s subjects is the same as acquiring the love of his friends; “for I think one must be evident doing good for them” (53). His father senses the use of the word “evident” and gives his son some very good advice.

“It is difficult to be able at all times to do good for those for whom one would like to. But to be evident in rejoicing along with them if some good should befall them, in grieving with them if some evil, in being enthusiastic to join in helping them in difficulties, in fearing lest they should fail in something, in trying to use forethought that they not fail – in these matters one must somehow keep them company very closely” (Xenophon 54).

This is already something we have seen Cyrus practice in the conquest of his grandfather, but going forward, we see him bearing in mind this piece of advice in winning over the love of his subjects, allies, and friends. When Cyrus tries to convince Cyaxares that his use of Media’s troops was not unjust, he shows himself to be

sympathetic by shedding tears with him (170). However, his words seem otherwise hollow of sympathy when he suggests that Cyaxares is only upset because he was afraid of suffering harm at the hands of his own troops. And Cyrus goes on to say that he could understand why he would be frightened considering how harsh and angry Cyaxares was with his army. For this treatment of one's subjects must create many enemies. "This is why I assure you, I did not send these troops back without me, for I was afraid that your anger would provoke something painful for all of us" (170). He is essentially accusing Cyaxares of being fearful, lacking prudence, and being incontinent in his anger. He says all this to a very emotional Cyaxares even though Cyrus "know[s] that you would not take it well if you should hear me making a defense on their behalf" (170). Other than his show of tears, Cyrus seems otherwise unsympathetic to Cyaxares' situation. It is clear in this example that Cyrus uses his ability to be evident in being friendly to cover up the fact that he was wrong for taking Cyaxares' troops.

Later, in the first year of establishing his empire, Cyrus returns to this excellent piece of advice. Knowing that his position as king was on unstable ground, Cyrus sought to steady it by courting subjects and associates who might have been ill disposed toward him. "He used to try to hunt the friendship of his associates by taking forethought on their behalf, by laboring for them, and by being both visibly pleased along with them on good occasions and visibly grief-stricken along with them on bad occasions" (240).

Perhaps Cyrus is no longer wailing at the top of his lungs to display his attachment to his grandfather, but he is employing the same technique that worked for him as a child in a subtler way. Even the words used in this late chapter of the *Education of Cyrus* mirror the ones used to describe young Cyrus. As an adult, he no longer can

rely upon masking his brashness with the guilelessness of being a child. So instead, he disguises his desire to be loved, honored, and empowered with a mask of benevolence.

It is perhaps an easy task for Xenophon to portray Cyrus as a benevolent leader hiding his inner motives, because this is in fact how Cyrus seems to be. In Book VIII we see Cyrus using his benevolence as a tool to charm his subjects. “He continually made his benevolence of soul every bit as visible as he could, for he believed that... it is not easy to love those who seem to hate you” (240). It is no coincidence that Xenophon discusses Cyrus’s policy on the image of his soul within such close proximity to a discussion on Cyrus’s attention to the image of his body. To this he adds many enhancements in order to “bewitch” his subjects into thinking he is taller, healthier, stronger, and more beautiful than he actually is (239). The two policies are similar if not identical; Cyrus only allows his subjects to see the aspects of his soul and body that will elevate his influence over his subjects. Here, it is apparent that Cyrus is using the power of appearing to be benevolent as a tool for stabilizing his kingdom and maintaining his power. It is not clear that Cyrus is actually benevolent or beautiful, but it is clear that he makes every effort to hide what may seem ugly.

Cyrus claims that this tactic is especially useful in times when he is low in funds. However, money is a great asset to the policy of being “evident” in being good. If he is in possession of money, then he is in a position to charm his friends not only with apparent beauty and benevolence, but also with gifts (340). This is also a practice that he began in his youth and elaborated on as an adult. As a child raised in the honored class of Persia, Cyrus was taught continence in eating. In Persia, his meals were simply composed of bread, greens, and water. The food at his grandfather’s table is by

comparison lavish and is overwhelmingly complicated by many side dishes of sauces and meats. As a child, Cyrus sees no value in satisfying his hunger according to Astyages's custom and continues to eat simply. Cyrus therefore had no need for all of the excess of food at the table and asked Astyages if the food was for him to do as he like. When his grandfather replied that it was, Cyrus gave gifts of meat from the table to all of the servants who could provide him with some good (29). Of course, still being at war with Sakas at the time, this servant was conspicuously left out of the benevolent young prince's charity. Here we see that Cyrus has learned early that gift giving can confer many benefits. In this way, the gifts cannot be seen as purely benevolent, or out of the goodness of his heart, but an inducement to get further goods from those around him.

As a youth, when Cambyses requests that Cyrus return to Persia, Cyrus distinguishes several of his agemates with gifts as he is leaving. Not being able to take all his adornments with him to Persia, Cyrus hands them out amongst his friends and gives Araspas his purple Median robe "showing that he liked him especially" (41). This Araspas turns out to be a key ally in Cyrus's battle against the Assyrian. Upon Cyrus's request, he pretends to defect from Cyrus's army out of shame even though this plan will cost him a great loss of honor and reputation amongst his fellow Medes. Once at the enemy's camp, he shares a couple carefully chosen secrets regarding Cyrus's plans in order to gain the trust of the enemy. When he learns all he can, he rejoins Cyrus and provides him with important information regarding the enemy's battle formation (194-6). After this battle, Araspas's name is never mentioned again. Here, it is also clear that by giving a gift, Cyrus gains more than the friend he is supposedly benefiting.

When he is parting from Media, Cyrus also gives a very tender gift of distinction to the Mede, Artabazus – a young man who is quite taken with Cyrus. As Cyrus is leaving, Artabazus sees Cyrus kissing several of his family members goodbye per Persian custom. Artabazus brashly rides up to Cyrus and asks for a kiss on the pretense that he is a cousin. Cyrus, admiring his daring, kisses him on the mouth twice (42). Later, when Cyrus needs help persuading the Medes to help him pursue the enemy instead of remaining with Cyaxares, Artabazus enthusiastically encourages his fellow Medes to follow this noble leader. In his speech “he added that he himself would not leave the noblest and best man” (117).

Gift giving is also a key strategy used by Cyrus in the mollification of Cyaxares. Having left his uncle vulnerable to attack by taking the majority of the Median army in pursuit of the enemy, Cyrus refuses to acknowledge Cyaxares’s demand for the return of his army (131-135). Cyrus only returns them many weeks later after he has thoroughly attached their affections to himself. When he is not able to prove through argument to Cyaxares that his actions were not unjust, he asks Cyaxares to cease his accusations until Cyrus can give him further proof. Cyrus then surreptitiously arranges for nearly every man in the Median army to visit and bring gifts to Cyaxares. Needless to say, this king who has been made soft by luxury is easily deceived by gifts (168-174). Again, Cyrus’s policy of gift-giving is of clear benefit to himself.

He further uses gift giving once his empire is established. “He distributed both houses and government buildings to the very ones he believed were partners in what had been accomplished” but if these men turned out to disobey him by not reporting to his gates for duty Cyrus arranged for the repossession of what “belonged to the person who

did not show up, and to profess that he was taking what belonged to himself” (224 and 236). And just as in Media, when he gave his favorite servants gifts of meat from his grandfather’s table, he would send food from his nightly banquet “to whichever of his friends he wished to show his remembrance or friendliness” (241). He would also send food from his table to servants or guards with whom he was most pleased. By giving gifts in this way, he hoped to make himself most beloved. “Who else by the magnitude of gifts, is said to make people prefer himself to their brothers, to their fathers, and to their children” (242)?

After all these examples, the reader might be inclined to ask why we should be suspicious of this desire to be loved. If Cyrus seeks to sympathize and be generous with his friends, allies, and subjects, where is the problem? After all, this impulse seems to result in a good for Cyrus (love and influence) and a good for his friends (companionship and wealth). Shouldn’t we instead applaud Cyrus for benefiting others while benefiting himself? Isn’t this a kind of common good? And isn’t the preservation of a common good, at least in part, the foundation of a stable nation?

CHAPTER 5

The Advantages of Friendship

As we have discussed above, to be loved by his friends and subjects is not Cyrus's only motivation. It is true that he thinks it is blessed to be beloved; but he also holds that it is a great good to be able to harm his enemies. And in order to do this, one must have sufficient power and influence over his friends to do so. Cyrus's desire for such power is not only expressed in his deathbed speech or in his accomplishments. He also has some rather candid moments when he is among men he trusts and speaks openly.

Before Cyrus has established a Persian cavalry, his army is rather limited in what it can accomplish in comparison to the allies. The allies are able to freely ride around and collect the spoils of the war. In the meantime, Cyrus and his army are earth-bound and are left to manage the camp and arrange for dinner like lowly servants. He watches the Hyrcanians and Medes flourishing and acquiring many goods, "while [the Persians] seemed to be waiting in a place of relative inactivity" (125). Annoyed, he calls his captains together and speaks candidly. "But how we could become lords over them, when we are not self-sufficient in acquiring them, I do not see, unless the Persians will have a cavalry of their own" (125). Here, he clearly expresses a desire to rule over the Hyrcanians and Medes. Perhaps his desire to rule over the Hyrcanians is not inordinate because they defected from the Assyrian to him (even though he ought to be looking to them as allies rather than subjects). But the Medes still owe their obedience and allegiance to Cyaxares, their king. In this way, Cyrus has made it clear that he intends to displace the influence Cyaxares has over the Medes and place himself as lord over them.

Cyrus then deceives his allies by giving them the gift of the spoils, which *they* have collected. The allies have been gathering these goods for him to distribute, and when Cyrus gives them this charge, they are so delighted that they hardly notice that he has asked for all the horses in return. To the allies, it seems like they are getting the clear advantage. The Medes declare that they do not even “have men whom [they] could mount upon these horses” (136). Thus, they acquire all the spoils, and Cyrus and his men can clumsily trot around on their awkward new vehicles. The Medes “proceeded to the distribution, laughing hard over the matter of the horses” (137). They do not realize that in giving up the horses, they have given up their allegiance to their rightful king. Cyrus has just taken the reigns of his new kingdom and has distracted his new subjects with gifts so that they believe they are getting the advantage.

Several pages later, Cyaxares sends to Cyrus and requests the return of his troops. On some level, Cyaxares is probably aware that his position as king of the Medes is threatened. Cyrus, eager to maintain his advantage and hopeful of keeping the Median army despite Cyaxares’ threats, believes that he will strengthen his position and influence even more if he has a larger army. He gathers together his honored Persian and addresses them. “It thus seems to me that one of you should go to Persia as quickly as possible... to urge that they send an army as quickly as possible, if at least the Persians desire that the rule of Asia and its fruits be theirs” (132). Cyrus’s ambition is not limited to usurping the king of the Medes and ruling over the allies; he is fixated on lording over all of Asia. The bounds of his desire to subdue are nearly unlimited.

In order to convince the Medes to remain with Cyrus even though their king has recalled them, he enlists the help of the Hyrcanians by suggesting that it is in their best

interest to keep the Medes as allies. Their first assignment is to win the Median messenger over with gifts. “You and I must therefore arrange things such that even the one doing the recalling will wish to remain with us. So find and bestow upon him a tent where he will pass his time in the finest way with everything he needs” (133). He also arranges so that conditions will be such that none of the other Medes will want to leave him either. Part of the spoils captured from the Assyrians in the second battle consist of coined gold. At this very opportune time, Cyrus orders that this gold be distributed to each soldier (135).³ He could have held onto this money for a later date, but at the very moment when the Medes are most conflicted about whether to stay or leave, he pays each knight a double wage and each soldier a single. Lastly, Cyrus consults Cyaxares’ “closest associates” and asks them to use his own possession whenever they want (135). One of these men asks for the use of one of Cyrus’s music girls. Cyrus eagerly gives him the music girl and says, “I think I owe you more gratitude for having asked than you owe me for getting her, so thirsty am I to do favors for you all” (141). It seems that Cyrus is most eager to give when he is most aware of what he will get in return.

If we recall the examples of gift giving in Chapter 3, I think we will see that for each gift Cyrus gives, he gives very little, but gets something great in return. He dotes on his grandfather and is granted access to every resource within the kingdom. He gives meat to his servants and gains skills that are necessary to generalship. He distinguishes Araspas with the gift of a cloak, and he provides Cyrus with inside information on the enemy, which enables him to win a decisive victory against the Assyrian. He gives two

³ Note that by doing so, Cyrus takes command of at least part of the distribution of the goods – a charge he had given as a gift to the Medes and Hyrcanians. In effect, he is giving the Medes a gift, which they have already been given. Therefore, there is no real benefit.

kisses to Artabazus and in turn received the faithful devotion of an intelligent and noble man who is willing to undertake any service for Cyrus. He gives the spoils of battle to the allies so that he can build a cavalry. And he arranges for the Medes to give many luxuries to Cyaxares in order to gain the extended use of the Median army.

There is a distinct connection between Cyrus's generosity and his attempt to gain the advantage. In the two examples provided within this chapter, Cyrus is particularly candid about his motives behind giving gifts and being generous. He is generous and liberal with his friends and allies because he wishes to make them love him but also because he wants to gain some advantage over them. In the case of the Medes, Cyrus wants them to love him more than their king so that he can be lord over them. More generally, with the rest of his allies, he wants their love so that they will help him increase his power until he rules over all of Asia. He is benevolent not simply because he enjoys being loved, but because he has a powerful appetite for domination.

It is becoming less clear that Cyrus intends to do good for his friends while they also do him some good. Instead it appears, that Cyrus offers some small gesture to his friends, in order to gain a great advantage in the end. To illustrate this point, we must return to examining Cyrus's relationship with Cyaxares. It must be remembered that Cyaxares is not just king of the Medes; he is Cyrus's ally and blood relative. Ordered properly, we ought to refer to Cyrus as Cyaxares' ally, as the king of the Medes summoned Cyrus – not the other way around. It is therefore Cyaxares who ought to be leading the allies.

Further, Cyrus ought to regard him above all others as a friends and yet, it is Cyaxares to whom he does the most harm. It is becoming evident that Cyaxares'

assertion that Cyrus does him injustice is true. During their confrontation, Cyaxares demands that Cyrus “admit the truth: When I said to lead those who were willing to go, you took my entire power and left, leaving me deserted” (173). He also asserts that Cyrus is acting in such a manner so as to dispose his army “such that they wish to be [yours] rather than [mine]” (173). Above we have revealed that this actually is Cyrus’s intention, but in order to convince Cyaxares “that Cyrus was not leading [his army] to revolt from him,” he mollifies him with gifts (174). This man ought to be Cyrus’s closest friend; he is a family member who he spent extended time with as a child and he is the leader of Cyrus’s ally army. And yet, Cyrus gives him gifts not with the intention of doing Cyaxares some good; he gives gifts in order to disguise his secret motive to do Cyaxares the greatest harm one can do to a king.

In fact, Cyrus has had designs on Cyaxares’ kingdom from the very beginning. In the conversation Cyrus and his father share on the walk toward Media where Cyrus is to present himself for the first time as general of the Persians, Cyrus begins evaluating Cyaxares’s rule. “These friends of ours hold that the ruler must differ from the ruled by dining more sumptuously, by having more gold at home, by sleeping longer, and by spending his time freer from every labor than do those who are ruled” (48). Cyrus says that rulers who maintain their kingdoms this way “will be our antagonists” (48). Further, it seems to Cyrus to be “very shameful to be intimidated before such and not to be willing to go in contention against them” (48). Here, Cyrus has indicated to his father that “beginning with these friends of ours,” he will be contending for rule (48). According to Cyrus, leadership should go to men who excel in forethought and enthusiasm – not to those who wallow thoughtlessly in luxury. Cyrus has certainly given the appearance of

being enthusiastic in sharing the grief and joy of his friends; he has also shown himself tireless in preparing for his future empire through forethought. According to Cyrus, “rule should go instead to those with the appropriate virtues, and as Cyrus believes himself to possess these more than do others, there is no reason in principle why he should not take their places. Here... the almost limitless nature of Cyrus’s ambition stands revealed before his father” (Nadon 66). Beginning with the Medes (though not, of course, ending with them), Cyrus prepares for battle. But perhaps it is his particular style of battle, which makes Cyrus so successful at conquest. Instead of storming camps, taking prisoners, and causing disorder, Cyrus presents himself as the selfless and just benefactor and in this way wins his new followers over entirely.

Upon arriving on the boarder between Media and Persia, his father takes leave of Cyrus and warns him against being incontinent in his desire for power (59). Cyrus is conspicuously silent. However, the very next recorded words out of Cyrus’s mouth are used to create a lie meant for the ears of Cyaxares. The king of the Medes asks how many soldiers Cyrus is bringing, and Cyrus tells him that they will be receiving “twenty thousand of the sort who used to come to you even before as mercenaries, but others are coming from among the Peers⁴, who have not ever come out [of Persia]” (62). When Cyaxares asks how many will be coming from this group, Cyrus avoids answering altogether. The truth of the matter is that Cyrus will be receiving 30,000 troops from the commoner class – not 20,000. Cyrus intentionally under-represents the number of men in his army in order to get something from Cyaxares. The Persians and Medes are obviously outnumbered by the Assyrians, so Cyaxares asks Cyrus if they could get more

⁴ *Homotimos* is directly translated as *alike honored*. I have been referring to them “the honored class.” This translation of *The Education of Cyrus* refers to them as “Peers.”

men from Persia. Cyrus suggests another plan instead. “I would make such arms as those with which our so-called Peers will come. These are a breastplate to cover the chest, a shield for the left hand, and a scimitar or small sword for the right” (63). In Book IV, Cyrus tricks the Medes into giving him horses with which he will make a cavalry with the intention of becoming lord over the Medes. Here we see, two books earlier, Cyrus tricking the king of the Medes into arming his soldiers so he can better contend with this very king for power. Cyaxares is essentially arming the men who will one day occupy Media.

Although he ought to be, Cyrus is no friend of Cyaxares. He is bound to Cyrus by familial ties and he is Cyrus’s ally in the battle against the Assyrian. But he is not a friend; he is an enemy. For we do not trick, lie, steal, and harm those people who we call friends. Or do we? Cyrus’s father tells him of a man who long ago was “a teacher of boys” in Persia who taught children of the honored class “both to lie and not to lie, to deceive and not to deceive, to slander and not to slander, to take advantage and not to do so... and he taught moreover that it was just to deceive even one’s friends, at least for a good [result], and to steal the belongings of friends for a good [result]” (55). Cambyses tells Cyrus that this man taught the boys to practice these things on each other. But because some boys took this training too far, the Persians decided to ban this method of education. “So, consequently, there arose a decree that we still use even now, to teach the boys simply, just as we teach servants in their conduct toward us, to tell the truth, not to deceive, not to steal, and not to take advantage, and to punish whoever acts contrary to this” (56). By habituating boys to treat each other as friends as children, they hoped they boys would grow up to “become tamer citizens” (56). The problem with this new

teaching is that it requires the boys' rulers to lie to them until they reach an age where it would be "safe to teach also what was lawful toward enemies" (56). Simply put, it requires friends to lie to friends "for a good [result]" while teaching them that this very thing is unlawful and punishable (55).

In Cyrus's time, when Persian boys graduate to the class of men, they are then given the knowledge that it is lawful and just to do enemies harm. This teaching is given to men was out of necessity, as the men of the honored class in Persia, are also the primary defenders of Persia. It is therefore necessary for them to understand that in order to defeat the enemy one "must be a plotter, a dissembler, wily, a cheat, a thief, rapacious, and the sort who takes advantage of his enemies in everything" (54). At this point, it is hoped for that these citizens have a mutual regard and respect for one another, and so are not inclined to practice on each other what is only just against the enemy.

This story that Cyrus's father tells ought to be shocking to Cyrus, but his response is to implore his father to tell him everything he can about getting "the advantage over my enemies" (56). In fact, Cyrus has already been given this older teaching that it is lawful to harm, deceive, cheat, and steal from one's enemies far before the age of manhood. Cyrus participated in his first battle when he was about 15 or 16, still within the class of boys (38). In fact, it was Cyrus who was responsible for both the plan of action and the execution of the attack. He was the first to strike down and slay the enemy and he did so with madness and joy (38-39). When the battle was won, Cyrus rode around on his horse gaping with pleasure at the dead bodies. "He alone, apart from the others, did nothing but ride around and gaze at the fallen, and it was with difficulty that those who were ordered to do so dragged him away" (40).

Not only did Cyrus learn the lessons of this ancestral teacher as a boy, he also seemed to be very skilled at applying them. It seems that the law that decreed this teaching be postponed until adulthood was fashioned for boys of a nature like Cyrus. It is likely that Cyrus would have been among the group of boys in Persia who, “having natural gifts for both deceiving and getting the advantage, and perhaps also not lacking in the natural gift for the love of gain, did not abstain from trying to take advantage even of their friends,” presumably without a good motive (56). It is undoubtedly for this reason that Cambyses immediately recalls Cyrus to Persia; “he heard that Cyrus was already performing a man’s deeds” (41). In other words, Cyrus was already learning and acting on the teaching that was reserved for men.

And as it is likely that Cyrus discovered this teaching early, it is also likely that he saw the lie in the simple teaching that the boys received. Boys are permitted to pass on to the school of youths when they are sixteen, but upon returning to Persia, “Cyrus is said to have still been among the boys for another year” (42). It is likely that he was reintroduced to the teaching that boys ought to categorically tell the truth, respect the possessions of others, and never seek the advantage. And how would this teaching seem to one who already knew the truth and the gainful advantages of its implications?

By the time that Cyrus reaches manhood, he is already aware of the teaching which is reserved for men. In fact, at this moment when his father is revealing this truth to him, Cyrus has already made it clear that he is able to look beyond the simple teaching that citizens and allies are friends and the outsider is the enemy. For Cyrus, Cyaxares is like his first enemy, Sakas, in that he stands in the way of something that Cyrus wants. Sakas stood in the way of Astyages; Cyaxares stands in the way of ruling over the Medes.

Cyrus has learned to look beyond the simple distinction of friend and enemy and has learned to see Cyaxares as a man with whom he must “be willing to go in contention against” (48).

Here then we see Cyrus blurring the line between friend and enemy and we observe him using tactics that ought to be used in gaining the advantage over enemies instead against people who should be considered friends. It is clear what his policy is with his enemies; he means them no good and intends to gain the advantage. But Cyrus’s policy towards his friends is less straightforward, and even deceptive. By giving gifts, sharing grief, and celebrating in joy, Cyrus wages war while hiding within the subterfuge of friendship. He presents himself as benefactor while taking the real advantage from his friends. This at least turns out to be true with Cyaxares.

It is still possible for us to recover our benevolent prince. It is clear that Cyaxares stands in the way of what Cyrus sees as his good, and therefore Cyaxares is an enemy. It is clear that Cyrus holds it to be a good thing to do evil to enemies and to benefit his friends. But it now comes to light that Cyrus has a less conventional means of distinguishing friend from enemy. Those against whom he must contend for the good are his enemy. Therefore, it ought to be the case that those with whom he cooperates for the good are his friends. And these are the men who, according to his own professed policy, he ought to benefit.

CHAPTER 6

Friendship's Golden Cup

If we are to remain in awe of Cyrus as a benevolent ruler, it is necessary for him to be good and just. Even Cyrus agrees that tyrants, those who consider only their own private good, do not deserve to rule. These tyrants differ from the ruled in that they have a monopoly on all of the good things such as having better and more food, possessing more gold, having more leisure to sleep, and “spending his time freer from every labor than those who are ruled” (48). At the very beginning of his quest for empire, Cyrus asserts that the one deserving of rule is “enthusiastic in his love of labor” (48).

Cyrus seems to still be of this opinion once he has established his empire. He gathers together his closest friends and tells them that “moderation, continence, and strength” are like the body in that they too become flabby when one does not exercise them (230). He says, “one ought therefore not be negligent or abandon oneself in favor of the immediate pleasure, for I think it is a great work to gain an empire, but it is an even much greater work to keep one safe after taking it” (230). Having established himself as king, Cyrus holds that it is necessary to differ from the ruled by expressing a love of labor. “He did not think it was fitting for anyone to rule who was not better than his subjects” and to ward off flabbiness, “he himself especially worked at continence and the military arts and cares” (238).

The difference between a despot and a noble king is that the tyrant considers only his own private good. He avoids labor, pain, and exertion whenever possible and he forces his magistrates, servants, and subjects to have the larger share of these labors while

they are rewarded with a smaller share of the good reaped from them. As we have seen, Cyrus holds it to be one of the greater goods to be able to benefit his friends, so it already seems he is willing to share the good. Presently, we observe that Cyrus holds that a good king is also enthusiastic in sharing the labors and pains of ruling. If upon examination, these policies turn out to be true under Cyrus's rule, it would seem that he shares a common good with his friends beyond being able to benefit them. It would demonstrate that Cyrus is not a tyrant like his enemy Cyaxares and that he does not monopolize on all the advantages of having a kingdom for his own private good.

We will first examine whether Cyrus shares in same labors involved in maintaining an empire and then we will turn to see how far Cyrus goes in considering the good of his closest associates and friends. Cyrus seems to believe that the maintenance of his kingdom in some way requires the practice of a kind of civic virtue. Further, "he realized that the good men, the very ones who... provided for his conquest, must be kept together and that one must take care that they not slacken in their practice of virtue" (229). So Cyrus took it as his responsibility to make his men behave as they ought.

After the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus called together all his partners, chief aids, and best men and spoke to them about the role of virtue in holding onto the good things in life. "If we turn toward easygoingness and the pleasure seeking of bad human beings, who believe that laboring is misery and living without labor happiness... I say that we will quickly be deprived of all the good things" (230). If men become lazy and develop a lust for leisure, they will neglect the virtues that helped them achieve the good things in the first place.

In order to take care that they not become this way, Cyrus sets forth several principles for remaining good and noble. These are the same principles that he himself intends to practice. He asks his men of honor to “pass their time at the government buildings” and report to the gates of Cyrus’s palace every morning so that “on seeing me when you are here, you must consider whether I pass my time caring for what I ought, and I will consider and watch you, and I shall honor those whom I see practicing what is noble and good” (232). Of these men in honor who were in attendance at his gates daily, “Cyrus appointed different people to be responsible for different matters” (234). Some of these men served as tax collectors, some became guards, and some took care of the animals of the palace. Additionally, Cyrus thought that piety was especially important and so “he sacrificed every day to the gods the Magi named” and the other Persians imitated him in this (237). Cyrus also held that moderation was very important “for wherever people see that he is moderate for whom it is especially possible to be insolent, the weaker are more unwilling to do anything insolent in the open” (238). He also thought that military exercise was important and so he often took his men hunting. He thought that these activities would best teach his partners to be “able to bear labor, cold, heat, hunger, and thirst” (238). It was by encouraging his men to behave in these ways that Cyrus took care that “everyone appear to Cyrus as excellent as possible” (239).

Now that we know the ways in which Cyrus intended to promote the labors of virtue and discourage the laziness of leisure, we can examine more closely Cyrus’s role in them. If he shares in these labors, this would demonstrate that Cyrus is interested in sharing a common good with his subjects. A tyrant reclines and reaps the rewards of his subjects’ hard work, but a good king shares both the labors and advantages of a

prosperous kingdom. Cyrus declares that he is enthusiastic in sympathizing in the griefs and joys of his best men, and that this makes him beloved. The reason this method is effective is because it makes Cyrus appear to share a common experience with his followers. But being alienated from the labors, which often produce the griefs and joys of men, means Cyrus will also be unable to truly share in their experiences. And how can a king share a common good with people who live fundamentally different lives? Let's explore Cyrus's actions and see whether or not he participates in the labors that he encourages others to undertake.

His first request is that his honored men dutifully attend court. Cyrus cannot report at his own gates for duty to himself. That is a bit ridiculous. But he did make inquiries about those who were and were not in regular attendance and he punished those who were absent by taking their possessions. Sometimes, he would give these possessions "to another who he thought would be able to report when needed" (236). He also rewarded those who did attend by giving them the "easiest and most profitable assignments" (236). Lastly, for those who were present at his gates, he tried to induce them to virtue by trying "to display himself to his subjects as having been most of all adorned with virtue" (237).

With regard to his men's responsibility for attendance at his gates, Cyrus never mentioned that there would be great punishments for those who were absent. He only promised to "honor those whom I see practicing what is noble and good" (232). However, his policy for rewarding those in attendance is very weak. He does not give them gifts or give them honors, he simply displays himself like a peacock "adorned" in virtue (237). So far, all this policy achieves is a general feeling that nobody truly

possesses anything because it all can be taken away by the king who actually owns it all. Further, those possessions that Cyrus takes, he redistributes not to the good men who report to his gates, but to those who “he thought would be able to report when needed” (236). Also, it is not a reward to be given the easiest assignments, when those who do not attend, and escape notice, have no assignments at all. So far, it seems as though Cyrus’s request for attendance at public buildings is a role call whose aim is to gain blind obedience. This is not the same thing as encouraging public virtue. The difference is that obedience is good for the ruler, whereas public virtue is good for all. This first policy seems aimed directly at Cyrus’s private advantage and not the common good.

Those assignments that Cyrus does meat out are incredibly servile. Men of honor are given the busy work of clerics, servants, guards, and stablemen (234). Some of these honored men were responsible for administrative tasks like making “provisions for daily life” (235). Others were responsible for collecting revenues so the kingdom would be funded (234). “So Cyrus centralized his administrative affairs in just this way” (236). As a result, Cyrus has many fewer responsibilities and menial tasks with which to concern himself. “He now had more leisure than someone responsible for but a single house or single ship” (236). Cyrus’s first priority was to see that his men not covet leisure or laziness, but the very first thing that Cyrus does to hedge against this easygoingness is to put his men to work in order to provide himself with leisure. Cyrus is in no way taking part in labors he prescribes as necessary for others, nor do the above labors he assigns seem to encourage any good other than his own. It would be different if the assignments seemed to benefit his best men, but as of yet, there is no claim that tax collection is good for the soul.

As far as piety goes, all Cyrus contributes to these efforts and these labors is to assign many Magi to “sing hymns to all the gods with the coming of every day” (237). Again, Cyrus is delegating rather than participating. He also sacrifices to the gods each day, but this can only be symbolic for Cyrus, as he owns everything in Babylon and to “sacrifice” must mean little. Further, he only “displayed himself laboring more over things concerning the gods... *when he was happiest*” (emphasis mine 237). So on his unmotivated or uninspired days, Cyrus takes a break from the laborious task of summoning a magi to kill a bull. Xenophon tells us that Cyrus held the opinion that encouraging piety in his men was for his own good for no one would want to be on a ship (or share a palace) with many evil men who were careless of the gods. “He calculated that if all his partners were pious, they would be less willing to do anything impious both concerning each other and concerning himself” (237). Regardless of whether Cyrus is truly pious or not, it is clear that his interest in his friends’ piety is purely utilitarian. His interest in the piety of his men is a concern rooted in regicide – not in the condition of his friends’ souls.

Cyrus also encourages moderation. But after Xenophon tells us of this policy, he gives no examples of Cyrus practicing being moderate. He only goes on to say that Cyrus would “display himself not being dragged away from the good things by the pleasures of the moment but being willing to labor first, in accord with what is noble, for what is delightful” (238). But Cyrus himself distinguishes between actions put on display in the open and true moderation which men practice “even where it is invisible” (238). Here, Cyrus only puts himself on “display” as spurning the pleasant in favor for the noble (238). Later in the narrative, Xenophon describes Cyrus as passing his time in the

different regions of his kingdom so as to only experience the most pleasant of the seasons. “He himself spent seven months around wintertime in Babylon, for this place was warm. Around springtime, he spent three months in Susa... they say that he always spent his time in the warmth and the coolness of spring” (268). Based upon this account, there is no need to point out the hypocrisy in habituating his associates “in being able to bear labor, cold, heat, hunger, and thirst” (238).

While ostensibly encouraging virtue, Cyrus is training his men to work obediently in a way that is advantageous to Cyrus alone. Instead of trying to make his honored men more virtuous, it would appear that Cyrus is instead trying to tame them for his own benefit. One might draw a comparison here between the Persian law that aims at creating tamer citizens by keeping the truth of lawful actions against enemies from the boys. However, the similarities go no further than the intended effect of trying to make men less wild. For the Persians want to create men who will hold each other in “mutual respect”, whereas Cyrus wants to de-claw his men so that they do not “envy him, plot against him, and become his enemies” (230). Cyrus wants his men to be more focused on what the gods do to evil men, than what evil they themselves could do to Cyrus. The Persians have a common good in mind; Cyrus has only his own private good in mind.

So, it is not true that Cyrus shares in all the unrewarding labors of ruling a vast empire. Yes, he takes up the pleasant labor of horseback riding and hunting, but only occasionally “whenever there was not any necessity to stay back” (238). Nor is it true that Cyrus believes in being nobler and more virtuous than his subjects. He still believes that it is necessary to *appear* better than his friends and subjects, but he does not participate in the activities that would make him actually better. Instead, Cyrus is

interested in displaying his virtue and his excellence more than he is interested in being either of the two. Cyrus “did not believe that rulers must differ from their subjects by [excellence] alone, by being better, but he also thought they must bewitch them” with makeup that assists kings in appearing more beautiful, cloaks that make them appear stronger, and shoes that make them appear taller (239). But really, hasn’t Cyrus always been interested in what is apparent rather than what is real? Even when he was conversing with his father, he makes it clear that he is not interested in becoming “truly noble and good”; he is merely interested in “ruling nobly,” in seeming “to be more prudent,” and being “evident doing good” for friends (47-53). Here we see him *seeming* to provide an example in excellence, while he is really living within a palace filled to the ceiling with treasure and enjoying a life of leisure as his most honored aids labor under an administrative workload.

But just because he is not sharing in the menial tasks of keeping up a kingdom does not mean that Cyrus is not benefiting his friends in other ways. Perhaps he does not share in the pains of labor, but this does not exclude the possibility that he shares the rewards of ruling a vast empire. We now turn to an examination of Cyrus relationship with his closest allies and friends. In order to narrow our scope, it is necessary to select a few of Cyrus’s closest partners. The men I am selecting are ones who have achieved many good things for Cyrus, been most obedient, and shown themselves to be most aligned with Cyrus’s interests. Because they seem to share an interest in Cyrus’s good, it would seem that it would be most just and most easy for Cyrus to benefit these men. Insofar as they share an interest in what is good for Cyrus, there ought to be an established common good between Cyrus and his closest associates.

I am choosing Artabazus, Chrysantas, and Phaulas from amongst Cyrus's friends to demonstrate Cyrus's generosity towards his honored men. First, I have chosen them because they are all devoted and dedicated to Cyrus from the very beginning. Each of them performs great services on Cyrus's behalf. Second, I have chosen them because they survive the quest for empire and are rewarded with promotions. Third, they are ideal candidates as friends because Cyrus has grown up alongside each of them from his boyhood. For this reason, Cyrus has had leisure to observe their natures and select them deliberately as men he can trust. I will review them in alphabetical order.

We are already somewhat acquainted with Artabazus. In Chapter 3 of this thesis we noted that he became familiar with Cyrus during his boyhood visit to Media and that Artabazus was somewhat in love with Cyrus. After the first battle with the Assyrian, Cyrus is desirous of pursuing him and doing more damage to his army, but needs the assistance of the Median cavalry. Cyrus asks Cyaxares if he has his permission to take as many Medes with him as are willing to follow. Cyaxares, believing that his men would rather stay behind to drink, party, and celebrate, bids Cyrus to take whomever he can persuade. Cyrus asks for one of Cyaxares's trusted men to "announce what you command" (116). Cyaxares allows him to pick "whomever of these you want" not realizing that one of his trusted men has been holding a torch for Cyrus (116). Of course, Cyrus picks Artabazus, the young man who "had gotten kissed" and says in an underwhelming way, "he is sufficient for me" (116). Cyrus knows that this passionate young man will make an enthusiastic speech on his behalf, so he asks him to do this favor. In response, Artabazus says, "yes, by Zeus, to the extent that I shall make you also pleased to gaze on me" (117). He also declares that he will never leave Cyrus's side.

Even if it is not clear to Artabazus, Cyrus has just asked him to betray his king. Cyrus has begun corrupting “a very noble and good man” (41). Artabazus has just helped Cyrus take the first step in claiming Cyaxares’ army as his own. However lacking in devotion Artabazus is for Cyaxares, he proves to be a faithful servant and friend to Cyrus. His stated reason for being devoted to Cyrus is that he wants this charismatic leader to return his gazes, affections, and attentions. In return for his service, Cyrus trusts him, a Mede, to take charge of the Persian targeteers and archers. During the third battle against the Assyrian, Artabazus is second in line for the fight behind Chrysantas. After Cyrus conquers the Assyrian, Lydia, and Babylon, he includes Artabazus in his select circle of associates and advisors.

Artabazus is devoted to Cyrus through to the end with the hope that he will prove himself deserving of Cyrus’s time and attentions. However, Cyrus has acquired many new responsibilities along with his new empire and he has little time for friends. In a speech given after the conquest of Babylon to his closest associates, he says, “if, however, to have great success entails the result that it is not possible to have leisure either for oneself or to enjoy oneself with friends, I bid farewell to this happiness” (225). Artabazus, who has worked faithfully on Cyrus behalf for this very purpose is upset by the implications of this speech. In response, he says he understood that during the campaign there was no “leisure for you to be around me, and I forgave you” (226). But now that the empire has been established, he feels he fully deserves that for which he has worked. “Now then, if there will be any way that we who have been most deserving will obtain the greatest part of you, [fine]; if not, I am willing once against to proclaim in your name that everyone is to go away from you except us, your friends from the beginning”

(227). To this sincere and impassioned plea for just desserts, Cyrus only laughs at him. This is far from the response of a man who returns Artabazus' affections.

Through to the end of the narrative, Artabazus remains unsatisfied. Cyrus distinguishes him by inviting him to feasts, providing him Cyrus's own horse, and gifting him a golden cup (254 and 258). But when Artabazus receives the present of the golden cup, Chysantas receives a kiss. Artabazus responds as we would expect by saying, "the cup you gave to me and your gift to Chysantas are not of similar gold" (258). Cyrus promises to give Artabazus a kiss too, but not for another thirty years. Considering these men are likely in their mid thirties, it is not likely they will live another thirty years. Artabazus is aware of the emptiness of this promise when he warns Cyrus to "be prepared, then, for I will be waiting and will not die" (259). Artabazus' reward for being a faithful friend is to receive a lifetime of empty cups and vacant promises of reciprocated affection from Cyrus. Although he does countless goods for Cyrus, this leader never truly reciprocates even while he acknowledges the true desires of his devoted servant. Cyrus is not lacking in the ability or knowledge necessary to satisfy his friend, and yet he leaves him unrewarded.

As we have just seen, it already appears that Chysantas's story has a happier ending. In the end, he is given the golden kiss over the empty vessel that is a golden cup. Cyrus and Chysantas were raised together as boys from the honored class in Persia, so the two men received the same education. He is a favorite from the very beginning and is selected as a conspirator early on. Even as early as the raid on Armenia, Chysantas is given a key role in battle and receives special directions from Cyrus revealing how well they are acquainted. "Chysantas listened to [these directions] and exulted in the charge

Cyrus gave him” (84). After their first victory against the Assyrian, Cyrus honors Chrysantas with the very first promotion above captain and makes him a colonel (114). In the third battle against the Assyrian, he is second in line only to Cyrus, and in the final battle against the Assyrian he is commander over the entire cavalry (157 and 203). After Cyrus has acquired Babylon, Chrysantas becomes one of Cyrus’s closest confidants, is invited to dinners, and is generally given the most honored seat on each occasion. In the end, after Cyrus has conquered the limits of Asia, Cyrus designates certain men from among the honored class of Persia to be governors over important territories. Cyrus selects Chrysantas for the richest of the territories – Lydia and Ionia.

It would seem that Chrysantas worked faithfully for Cyrus and was rewarded generously. Clearly, Cyrus benefits from having such a capable soldier as Chrysantas and it only makes sense for him to promote his best man to the highest positions. While this is a great honor for Chrysantas, it also puts him in the front line of risk. So, while it is clear that his bravery is being honored, it is more obvious that his daring benefits Cyrus, and it is not clear that being promoted to the front lines is advantageous to Chrysantas himself. Cyrus gains the clear advantage in the promotion of such a selfless servant.

Even if we were to ignore this small detail, Chrysantas’s story is not one so simple as it would seem. Although he played an essential role in commanding the troops during important battles, Chrysantas secretly was responsible for an even more crucial role in Cyrus’s quest for empire. During one of the feasts that Cyrus host’s for his honored men, another Persian-born man, Hystaspas, asks why Chrysantas is seated in the more honored place at the table. Cyrus tells him of course of Chrysantas’s service, his

obedience, and his devotion to the larger good of the army. But what is especially interesting in Cyrus's answer is something that we first learn here. "Whenever it was necessary to say something to the allies, he counseled me on what he thought it was fitting for me to say. Whatever points he perceived that I wished the allies to know, but was ashamed to say about myself, he said himself, declaring them as his own judgment" (256). This is key information, because Chrysantas gives many important speeches, which greatly affect the outcome of policies that correlate with Cyrus's will. Below, I will briefly touch on some of the more influential speeches.

In Book II, Chapter 2, Chrysantas begins a discussion on the topic of the Persian commoners who have recently joined the army. Some of them are uncommonly doltish, vile, and lazy and Chrysantas says that he is worried that these corrupt members of the army will believe that they deserve an equal share of the goods achieved in battle. Cyrus picks up on this line of thought immediately and declares that it is necessary for them "to announce a council to the army to decide whether... to make all share equally or, examining the deeds of each person, to assign honors to each in light of them" (71). Like a well-timed clock, Chrysantas chimes in by asking, "why must you announce a discussion about this... and not just proclaim that this is how you are doing it" (71)? Cyrus responds that the goods men acquire on campaign, they hold to be theirs in common. So Chrysantas asks if Cyrus really thinks that these commoners will vote against the equal share and vote for a merit based distribution. Cyrus says that he does believe the commoners will vote in the way desired "partly because we advise it" (72). By advise, Cyrus means there will be orchestrated speeches given before the vote. By

we, Cyrus means Chrysantas will be giving one of the speeches. And he does, and the vote has the outcome that the men from the honored class desire.

The implication of this discussion followed by a speech is that there is a conspiracy against the common class of Persia. To understand it fully, we must understand how Persian society was structured. In order to have the freedom to labor at their time-intensive education and duties required of the honored class, there needed to be another set of human beings who would take care of the more menial but necessary labors in keeping up a small nation. These jobs included farmers, artisans, manufactures, and servants. Technically, “it is permitted to all Persian to send their own children to the common schools of justice. Any yet only those who are able to raise their children without putting them to work do sent them; those who are not able do not” (27). In other words, the children of commoners are free to be educated in the honored class only if their parent can afford to both support them, and do without their assistance. It is a rare commoner who has such a surplus in resources. Further, education in the honored class is required if one wants to graduate to the honored class of men, and it is only men of this education and class that are “permitted to be enrolled among the mature men and to share in political offices and honors” (27). Therefore, if boys are not educated in the honored class, they are not eligible to participate in politics. Because so few of the commoners can afford the luxury of such an education, they are essentially, though not legally, men without rights or claims.

When Cyrus becomes general, he promises to change all of this. He tells the commoners that they were excluded from true citizenship, but that they are all now potentially eligible to share in the same rights and claims. “It will be possible for you, if

you wish, to take such weapons as we have, to enter upon the same risk as we, and, if anything noble and good should arise from it, to be held worthy of [rewards] similar to ours” (64). By taking the same arms and the same risks as the honored class, Cyrus is offering them the same honors.

As we have seen, this offer of equality is little more than a gesture. Few of the men who began in the commoner class will rise up through the ranks. This is because Cyrus sets a trap for these commoners and tricks them by speeches, persuasion, and shame into voting against an equal share for all. “It was decided that each be honored in accord with his worth and that Cyrus be the judge” (76). One might argue that, given the proper weapons and the right amount of ambition, some commoners might rise to the top and become honored. In fact, some do. Pheraulas, the last friend we will be examining, is the token commoner included in Cyrus’s inner circle. Although generally, considering these commoners are picking up their weapons for the first time and men of the honored class have been training in military affairs their whole lives, it is unlikely that many commoners will distinguish themselves above the men of the honored class. But the commoners are complicit in this vote for unequal shares in honor, and so, with Chrysantas’ help, the deception is complete. Without this advisor, Cyrus would have been in the awkward position of advocating for a policy, which would make him appear less evident in doing good for his soldiers.

Another illuminating speech made by Chrysantas is delivered after Cyrus has taken Babylon, and is in response to Cyrus’s exhortation on virtue. Here, Chrysantas insists that the king is like a father and those under him are like his children insofar as he provides for them. In return, the children owe the father complete obedience. But this

obedience is good for the children too! He asks what good can be had from disobedience. Safety? No. Stability? No. Victory? No! “As for the good things we now have, by what else did we attain them more than by obeying the ruler?... If, then, obeying the ruler appears to be a very great good for attaining the good things be assured that this same thing is a very great good also for preserving what must be preserved” (234). Chrysantas goes on to observe that obeying Cyrus does not make them slaves (but why assure them against such a possibility if there is no concern?), because slaves obey involuntarily whereas “if in fact we think it right to be free, we need to do voluntarily what appears to be most worthwhile” (234). In other words, the difference between these men and slaves is that they will do the work of slaves willingly. In conclusion, “let us offer ourselves to Cyrus to use in whatever way might be needed” (234). Again, he assures these men, these closest associates, that Cyrus will not use them for ill, but for good, but what use are these assurances if there is no apparent concern? By trying to persuade his fellow partners to offer themselves as willing slaves who blindly trust in the benevolence of their master, Chrysantas is aware that he is raising the concern and tries to cover it up with assurances. But this fine attention to detail is ultimately unnecessary.

As a result of Chrysantas’s speech “it was decided that those in honor always report at the gates and offer themselves to Cyrus to use in whatever way he wished, until he should dismiss them” (234). We have seen what duties Cyrus assigns them. He makes these honored men into common servants and stable hands. These are not exactly ennobling activities. They are the kind of activities that are better for the served than they are for those serving. This is the kind of service that, were Cyrus to ask for it, would make him appear to be concerned with his own private good above the good of his

honored men. But because one from amongst them offers the idea, the honored men have fewer misgivings and Cyrus avoids suspicion. Chrysantas is the kind of bird one trains for hunting who “serve[s] your advantage and deceive[s] birds of the same breed” (57). Chrysantas is a tool Cyrus uses in hunting his fellow Persians.

From these two speeches (and many others provide similar evidence), we see Chrysantas conspiring not against the allies (who we already know are the objects of many plots) but against Persians – men from his own country. Cyrus tells us that Chrysantas says what Cyrus is ashamed to say and declares these thoughts and judgments as his own! The reason Chrysantas is so honored by Cyrus is that he is willing to act and speak shamefully against his own friends in order to gain the advantage for Cyrus.

“Consequently, in these matters at least, what prevents him from being even better for me than I am myself” (256)? Like a bird trained for battle, Chrysantas doesn’t think about his own advantage, but only of Cyrus’s. Chrysantas is not honored for his valor in battle, for his courage in war, or for his deliberations on strategy. He is honored for submitting all his actions and judgments to the will of Cyrus. “And as for himself, he always says that his present possessions suffice, but for me it is always evident that he considers what possible further acquisition would be beneficial” (256). In other words, Chrysantas does not consider his own private good; he does not have them. He is completely bent to the provision of goods for Cyrus.

What makes Cyrus most willing to honor him is that he has demonstrated complete subservience to his ruler. So yes, Chrysantas is rewarded for his service, but Cyrus certainly gains the greater share of advantages in this relationship. If this is what it takes to be rewarded by Cyrus, to be elevated to the most honored seat at the table, to

receive the golden kiss, I am not sure that most men of honor would deem the reward worth the debasement. If Cyrus were to answer Hystaspas's question ("why... did you write that Chrysantas is to be seated in a more honored place than I?") with blunt honesty, it would sound something like this (256). Unlike you, Chrysantas asks for nothing and takes pleasure only when I am happy. And because he is interested above all in what is advantageous for me, his position next to me is akin to a human shield for he would unthinkingly cushion the blow of a sword were it intended for his king.

If we hope to find a friend with whom Cyrus shares a common good, it is not Chrysantas, for Chrysantas has completely abandoned his own good to the service of Cyrus. Chrysantas not only willingly undertakes labors that Cyrus deems shameful, he does them to the detriment of his own people and he fulfills these orders solely for the benefit of Cyrus. Not only does Cyrus absent himself from the labors that Chrysantas undertakes, he reaps all the rewards of Chrysantas's efforts, leaving his friend little more than a seat on his shoulder and a peck on the beak.

Now we turn to examine Pheraulas. Of all of Cyrus's friends, Pheraulas begins with the least and gains the most. He was born in Persia to a common farmer, but his father had ambitions for his son and sent him to be educated amongst the boys "while he himself worked to support me" (251). However, when Pheraulas graduated to the class of youths (at around 16), his father could no longer support him and needed his help back on the farm. Because he did not complete his education amongst the youths, he was not able to graduate to the class of honored men. So, even though he received a good education as a boy, he was confined to a life of hard labor and limited citizenship.

However, one possible good resulted from his education as a boy; it is here that he is likely to have become acquainted with Cyrus.

When Pheraulas makes his debut in Xenophon's narrative, he is introduced as follows: "He was one of the Persian Commoners, a man who was somehow acquainted with Cyrus even long ago and was agreeable to him." (75). This introduction is given just before Pheraulas delivers a speech in favor of the policy discussed above regarding the unequal distribution of goods achieved in battle. That he is a man from the commoner class whose speech is aligned with the interests of the men from the honored class is no coincidence. In order to convince the commoners to vote in favor of a policy that will likely deprive them of many of the honors of war, it is necessary to have more than a Chrysantas speak; it is necessary for one of their very own kind to make an argument.

If Cyrus has no scruples against using Chrysantas as his bullhorn, it is unlikely that he is ashamed of asking the same of others. Further, it is worth noting, as Xenophon does, that the representative of the honored class (Chrysantas), is "a man neither tall nor strong to look at," while the representative of the commoner class is "not without natural gifts in body" (74-75). It seems these men were very deliberately selected. The commoners, not having been educated in hunting, military arts, and exercise from the beginning of their boyhood, will not on average be in better physical condition than men from the honored class. But in order to persuade them that the case is in fact otherwise, it would seem that Cyrus has selected a weak looking man from the honored class and a strong man from the commoner class. Cyrus is not just interested in his own appearance, but in the appearance of his closest associates.

Pheraulas's argument is that performing well in battle is more a matter of enthusiasm than it is an art to be perfected. He insists that just as it is natural for a boar to use his tusk or a bull to use his horn, it is natural for a man to use a sword. And with nature and enthusiasm on one's side, the honors of battle seem open equally to all. But what is not equal is what each class has to lose in war, because the men of honor stand to lose more (for a life of honor is "alone the most pleasant") and the commoners have only lives of labor at stake, and they stand to lose less (76). Further, the things that the honored men were educated to endure, the commoners had to learn by necessity and so they will perform equally alongside each other in matters of bearing "hunger, thirst, and cold" (76). For these reasons, he argues that the commoners should enter into contest for the spoils of battle against the honored men with great enthusiasm.

There are problems with every single one of these points. First of all, Pheraulas is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He is not a true commoner; having been educated to the age of sixteen or seventeen amongst the honored men, he is a kind of hybrid. Xenophon acknowledges this when he describes Pheraulas as a man "not without natural gifts in body, and in soul was not like a man lowborn" (75). He does not have the soul of a commoner because he was thoroughly educated in justice, moderation, obedience, continence, and military matters during the most formative years of his life (25). The staircase to honor is therefore not such a steep one for him to climb as it will be for the other true commoners.

Second, anyone who has been trained to shoot arrows or throw spears (and most of the commoners have) knows that this kind of activity takes skill and practice to do well. Having knowledge of this, they would know by inference that it also takes skill to

wield a sword properly. There are all kinds of deceptions, maneuvers, and manipulations one might make with a scimitar that are not immediately apparent to a neophyte. Third, when one's life is one's own, it does not matter how much honor one has accumulated; we are all generally disposed to avoid losing our lives. Unless he has a death wish, the commoner whose life is one of labor is not more willing to die in battle than a man who has lived a life of honor. Further, men from the honored class are taught to be selfless in the service of the common good. They are aware that they will be awarded with more honor if they perform selflessly in the name of this common good. They are therefore more disposed to risk their own private good. Last, the commoners may have been taught by necessity to endure harsh conditions of nature, but when that necessity is not present, they are willing to go soft. On the other hand, because the honored men have been habituated by their education to endure hunger, heat, thirst, and cold, it makes no difference to them whether necessity is present or not.

All of Pheraulas' arguments are deceptions and this is exactly what is needed to persuade the commoners to vote for an unequal share of honors although they still must take an equal share of the risks. But next to all these deceptions, we find one truth. We have already seen, in the case of Chrysantas, that Cyrus rewards obedience and service above all. The one piece of truth in Pheraulas' speech is with regard to this policy. "To obey the rulers is required of all in common, and I see that whoever is evident in doing so without excuse obtains honor from Cyrus" (75). Not only is this absolutely true, but it is excellent advice. As it turns out, the best way to be honored by Cyrus is to be completely obedient to his will. It would seem that Pheraulas speaks from a place of experience.

The second time we see Pheraulas, Cyrus has given him the honor of arranging Cyrus's first procession as king. He chose Pheraulas well because everything was ordered beautifully, and Cyrus made his debut adorned with as much luxury, strength, and beauty as possible. During this parade, we find only reinforcements for what has been said above about Cyrus's willingness to reward service. "There was a certain Daiphernes, a human being whose manner was rather clumsy, who thought that he would appear more free if he did not respond quickly" to Cyrus's beck and call (249). Cyrus took notice of this and dismissed this man from the ranks of his honored men forever.

After the parade is over, Cyrus slaughtered many bulls, horses, and other sacrificial victims to the gods. This complete, Cyrus holds contests for his best men. Cyrus asks one of the winners of a horse-racing contest what he would accept in return for his wonderful horse. The youth responds, "I would not accept a kingdom for it, but I would accept a good man's gratitude" for such is the response that Cyrus has conditioned all of his subject to have ready (250). He is essentially telling Cyrus that he is not in competition for Cyrus's kingdom or his goods, but that he would happily serve hi king for a little gratitude.

Instead of taking his horse, Cyrus decides to play a trick on his friends. He shows the young man where all of his friends are gathered, so that when the youth throws a clod in their direction with his eyes closed, he will be sure to hit one of them. "I am certainly willing to show you where, even if you throw with your eyes shut, you could not fail to find a good man" (250). The youth throws hard and by chance hits Pheraulas as he happens to ride by at the right moment. Because he was "conveying an order from Cyrus" he did not stop even though he had been hit and his nose was bleeding (250). The

youth, a Sacian, is amazed that Pheraulas did not stop or even turn around after such a blow. Cyrus too seems impressed by Pheraulas's complete dedication to the completion of Cyrus's orders. In response to the Sacian's amazement, he responds by saying that he did not stop "because he is a madman, as it seems" (250). So complete is Pheraulas's devotion to Cyrus's orders that care for his own bad fortune seems to be absent.

Impressed, the Sacian seeks out Pheraulas to give him his horse. In return, Pheraulas invites the Sacian over for dinner and it is during this meal that we hear a most serious critique of Cyrus and his empire. When the Sacian arrived, Pheraulas "entertained him and provided him with things in abundance" (251). The Sacian cannot help but observe that Pheraulas is quite wealthy for his table is elaborately set and his house is beautifully adorned. He asks if Pheraulas had always been wealthy and to this Pheraulas replies that he had been quite poor in Persia and only possessed a worthless bit of earth. "Everything you see now Cyrus gave me" (252). The Sacian exclaims that he must be the most "blessedly happy person... that you have become rich after having been poor" (252).

As Deborah Levine Gera points out, this exchange is similar to the one in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* when Socrates visits Theodote in her beautifully adorned abode. "Both visitors are impressed and perhaps surprised by the luxuriousness of their surroundings and both immediately try to find the source of this affluence; their questions serve as a smooth, natural transition to the main topic at hand" (Gera 176). But the similarities do not end with the visitors, for the hosts both have in common the source of their possessions. Both Theodote and Pheraulas find themselves in relative wealth because of the gifts of others. Pheraulas unquestioningly performs whatever service for

Cyrus as he needs. In turn, Cyrus gives him payment in gold cups, servants, and beautiful furniture. Theodote on the other hand performs whatever services her male guests request of her and in turn, they give her beautiful jewelry, maidservants, and beautiful furniture (Xenophon 102). In return for all of his service, Pheraulas is treated as nothing better than a courtesan and nothing worse than a common whore.

But contrary to the Sacian's expectation of happiness, Pheraulas is dissatisfied with his lot. He goes on to say that all the material things Cyrus has given him have caused him many burdens and even some pain. For "having money is not so pleasant as losing it is painful" (252). And "he who has a lot also [has to] spend a lot on gods, on friends, and on guests. Be assured that whoever is intensely pleased by money also feels intense pain on spending it" (253). Further, there is the problem of managing all of the servants Cyrus has given him, because they all demand food, clothing, shelter, and doctors. On top of this one needs to care for livestock that "have been mangled by wolves, or cattle that have fallen off cliffs, or professing that a disease has come upon the flocks. Consequently, I think... that I am in more pain now because I have many things than I was before because I had few" (252).

One could argue that Cyrus does not intend to harm Pheraulas by making him rich. However, this is not clear. When Cyrus is speaking candidly with Croesus (the man who used to be king of the Lydians before Cyrus usurped him), he tells him that he believes he makes a good investment by enriching his friends. "I... make these friends of mine wealthy and believe that they are treasuries" (244). This is because Cyrus knows that he can recall any gift of any value from his friends either by asking for it or by taking it (again, everything in the kingdom belongs to him). Even though he is "insatiable for

money, just as others are” he thinks that it is a better use of his time that his friends take care of his wealth. For “these things must be counted, weighted, and cleaned; they either spoil or must be guarded with great care” (Nadon) 148). And this does not even account for the excess, for “the rest of it gives them trouble” (244). This is because his friends cannot get more pleasure from an excessive amount of wealth. There is only so much that they can eat, drink, wear, and store; so “with their superabundant valuables, they get only trouble” (244). In other words, Cyrus gives gifts to his friends, not for their benefit, but for his own safekeeping. Further, not only is it true that Cyrus gives some of his goods to his friends because it eases his own burdens, but he is perfectly aware that his presents in turn will inconvenience his friends. For Cyrus, every part of gift giving is concerned with protecting his own good while being careless of the good of his friends.

In the *Memorabilia*, it seems at least that Theodote takes pleasure in her luxury. However, Pheraulas has too much good sense and experience to not see his riches for what they are – burdens and troubles. So Cyrus is not merely a man using Pheraulas for his services and paying him in return. Cyrus is the kind of John who pays for the services he gets with more requests for service. By making his friends rich, he makes them take charge of the painful and burdensome duties that go along with wealth. By giving them money (which can always be recalled), he gets “safety and glory. These neither spoil nor harm us by overabundance, but glory, to the extent there is more of it, becomes that much greater, more noble and lighter to bear, and it frequently makes lighter even those who bear it” (245). In summary, Cyrus asks for complete obedience and having gained it, he rewards his friends with goods that only further burden them under the weight of service.

Not only is Cyrus aware it is not in their best interest to make his friends rich, he is also conscious that his gifts cause them actual harm.

We began this chapter aware that Cyrus did not always share a common good with those whom he ought. We began with the observation that Cyrus has an unorthodox way of distinguishing between friend and enemy. In the previous chapter, we established that an enemy is a man who stands in the way of what Cyrus desires. In this chapter, we attempted to explore whether Cyrus could be redeemed by being held to be the kind of man who shares a common good with his closest associates and friends. We discovered that Cyrus is unwilling to share in the less rewarding labors of maintaining an empire and that he allotted these duties to his friends under the auspice of encouraging virtue. And by exploring his relationship with his best friends, we found that Cyrus is not even disposed to share the advantage with these men. Instead, he selects as friends the kind of men who will subvert their own goods for the sake of Cyrus's advantage.

However, Cyrus has remained consistent in cloaking his motives behind the appearance of benevolence. His ostensible policy is to habituate his men to labor for the goodness of their souls, although his real motive is to lighten his own load of burdens. He appears to be just in the promotion of his friends even though his main interest is in surrounding himself with yes-men. He seems evident in being generous with riches, gifts, and luxuries although he can recall these goods at any time. He further lightens his own burdens by placing them on his friends under the auspice of liberality. Cyrus seems to consider his private good at every turn. The only way that he could redeem himself as the prince of benevolence would be if his selfish pursuit of his own advantage aligned in

a common good with his friends. However, he fails in even this when he acknowledges that the rewards he gives to his friends cause them pain.

CHAPTER 7

The Taming of Friends and Citizens

Although I feel we must be well acquainted with the moral character of our prince at this point, I would like to conclude with a brief survey of some of Cyrus's other policies toward his friends and subjects. Although he ostensibly had certain policies that are geared toward the improvement of his friends' souls, it has become clear that they were more truly geared more toward encouraging servitude. Just as he appoints men from his honored circle to take care of his beasts and put them in the "best condition for his use," he appoints himself as care-taker of his friends in order to make them as "good as possible" for his own use (235). Men ought to be honored for their virtues, but Cyrus rewards his men like dogs for their obedience. The only way for one of Cyrus's soldiers to make his way up the ranks is if he abandons pride in his own worth and submits himself completely to the will of his king. Cyrus's friends are little better than dogs and horses who, through stick and carrot training, he can improve for his private advantage. In fact, the *Education of Cyrus* is littered with references to Cyrus's treatment of men as beasts.

Because it is still fresh in our minds, I would like to start with the animal that best corresponds to the three friends we discussed in the previous chapter. We now know that when Cyrus asks his father how to get the advantage of his enemy at the end of Book I, Chapter 6, his scope for getting the advantage includes his friends. His father describes many tactics that Cyrus learned from hunting. Tucked safely within this speech is a key sentence, which allows us to understand Cyrus's true motivations behind the education of

his friends. “You educated birds to serve your advantage and to deceive birds of the same breed” (57). Indeed, this is another thing that Artabazus, Chrysantas, and Pheraulas have in common. Each of them was trained by Cyrus to use speeches to deceive friends of the same ilk so that they would more easily fall into Cyrus’s traps. Artabazus deceived the Medes into betraying their king. Chrysantas deceived the Persians of the honored class into accepting policies that led to their abject servitude. And Pheraulas tricked the Persian commoners into believing that it was fair for them to share in the risks without sharing in the rewards.

As we have seen in Chapter 3, it is not unusual for Cyrus to compare the courting of his friends with hunting. Right before he embarks on his hunting expedition, armed to the teeth in preparation of winning the friendship of the Armenian, Cyrus says these words to Cyaxares. “Regarding those whom one wishes to make into eager co-workers in the works of war, they especially... must be hunted with both good words and good deeds, for they must be friends” (80). Apparently Cyrus takes this hunting literally, because shortly after this, we see Cyrus pursue his second ally, the Armenian, as if he were a prize buck.

Xenophon describes Cyrus’s preparations for capturing this creature over the course of five pages that are rife with hunting references (80-85). Cyrus has so blurred the line between hunting and battle that he bids his army to hunt actual game when they arrive at the Armenian’s boarder (82). “After Cyaxares with his infantry and cavalry power had already gone in advance on the road to the guard posts, Cyrus’s sacrifices for going against the Armenian were favorable. And thus he went out, prepared, of course, as if for hunt” (82). Immediately, there is an abundance of animals before him, and

Cyrus is pleased at this sign from the gods. After “they took many boars, deer, antelope, and wild asses” Cyrus prepared his men to take the Armenian (82). “Just as in hunting, we will be the ones who seek from behind, and you the ones with nets. Remember, then, that the paths must be secured before the game is roused. And those stationed at the mouths must not be noticed, if the game approaching is not to turn away” (83). No, Cyrus is not here speaking of actual game like pheasant or turkey; he is speaking of human beings. Fortunately, because he is nearly as dumb and pliant at the animal Cyrus seems to have mistaken him to be, the Armenian and his family are captured and spared as friends. Although, considering how Cyrus treats his friends, this is still a rather dour fate for the Armenian.

For, those hunted “must be friends, not enemies, who are going to be allies not given to excuses, nor inclined to envy when things go well for the ruler, nor to betrayal when they go badly” (80). Cyrus wants to turn the wild game he hunts into docile beasts of burden. He wants them to obey without complaint, to be without resentment for their ruler, nor unite against him when he is weak. He wants them to bend entirely to his will and “allow him to use the profits” he obtains from them without resistance (22). These sound a lot like the cattle and horses of Book I. Generally, the wild beasts he hunts in the forest have a better fate than do those allies and friends whose affections he hunts. For the beasts of the forest die quickly as noble sacrifices to the gods, but when Cyrus aims his arrow at friends, the stretched bow portends a life of slavery and servitude.

The problem is, men are wild creatures. We are not easily habituated or tricked into a life of obligation and obedience. Our natural self-interest is what causes the problem of obedience and stability in the first place. It is a difficult task to convince us to

take an interest in the common good, much less the private good of a distant king. But as was discussed in the first pages of *The Education of Cyrus*, this leader has a science up his sleeve. He is in possession of knowledge, which if executed properly, makes men obedient and government stable. “Ruling human beings does not belong among those tasks that are impossible... if one does it with knowledge” (22). The possession of this knowledge is what gives Cyrus the ability to transform men from into wild and disobedient creatures into tame and docile beasts of burden.

When Cyrus first conquered Babylon, he considered the problem of a foreigner king living within a city of men who were likely to resent and envy him. “So of course in light of these calculations, he held that he needed bodyguards” and he determined that the best type of human being for such a job would be eunuchs (277). Because men that have wives, children, or lovers were most devoted to these people that they loved and Cyrus needed bodyguards who would not have this conflict of interest. “Seeing that eunuchs were deprived of all these ties, he held that they would most value those who were especially able to enrich them; to help them, if they should be treated unjustly; and to bedeck them with honors” (228). He thought they would be like castrated bulls who ceased being headstrong, independent, and disobedient, but still retained their physical strength. “And dogs, similarly, cease to abandon their masters when they are castrated, but they become no worse at guarding and for the hunt” (228). In order to have bodyguards that are single-mindedly devoted to Cyrus, “he made all those who served near his own person, beginning with the doormen, eunuchs” (228).

This reading does not mean that Cyrus made all his bodyguards into eunuchs, but it also does not exclude this possibility. “It is not clear from Xenophon’s wording here...

whether we are meant to understand that Cyrus actually had those who served under him castrated or merely chose his bodyguard from a pool of available eunuchs” (Gera 287).

The Greek appears to be ambiguous in such a way that it reflects poorly on Cyrus. Gera argues that it is likely that this negative portrayal of Cyrus is intentional on the part of Cyrus, for he “often omits or transmutes unsavory features of the historical Cyrus’s life in the *Cyropaedia*, and he could well have ignored the entire eunuch question” (288).

Instead, Xenophon chose to include this morally ambiguous account of Cyrus’s selection of bodyguards. If he does not mean to imply that Cyrus castrated his bodyguards, it at least seems likely that he is prodding us to critically consider the rationale behind his reasons for selecting eunuchs. It is important that Cyrus can so hardly bear the thought of his bodyguards loving someone more than himself, that he chooses men who do not have a choice. His formula for creating a body of obedient men is to cut off the part of them that makes self-interest undeniable.

But Cyrus is not only afraid of his bodyguards’ capacity to direct love and devotion at someone other than himself. He is also looking with concern at his closest partners in the empire. “He perceived many of them also having the high thought that they were competent to rule. It was especially these who approached his guards, and many of them often mingled with Cyrus himself” (Xenophon 240). Concerned that his friends might pose a risk to Cyrus’s rule, he devises a plan to tame them. He decided that it would be best for his safety “if he should be able to make the strongest become more friendly to himself than to each other” (240). In other words, Cyrus will attempt to make himself the foremost object of love in his friends’ lives.

Here, he is applying the same method he used on the eunuchs; except instead of castrating his friends (which would probably make them more vengeful than tame) he intends to usurp their affections. By castrating the eunuchs, Cyrus made it less likely that they would love anyone else more than him. By using a variety of methods to make himself the primary object of love amongst his friends, he cuts off his friends' ability to be loyal and devoted to anyone above himself. "He tried to make them more friendly to himself by making his philanthropy as evident as possible, by rewarding and honoring his 'friends' with food from his table – as indeed he rewarded his dogs when he wanted to make them favorably disposed towards him" (Bruel 117). In addition to rewarding his friends with gifts of food and drink, he also sent them jewelry, furniture, and other adornments. "Who else, by the magnitude of his gifts, is said to make people prefer himself to their brothers, to their fathers, and to their children" (Xenophon 242)? Not only is Cyrus trying to make them love him more than they love each other, he is trying to turn them into household pets would obey him over everyone else. He is also trying to usurp their natural affections for the families, so that if he cannot castrate them in reality, he can do so spiritually. By taking away their ability to experience erotic desire, Cyrus makes the eunuchs loyal to him. But because he cannot use this method on his friends, he takes away their ability to love anyone else more than him.

Cyrus also takes less generous steps to make himself most beloved. He believes that by making his friends competitive, spiteful, and suspicious of one another, he could more easily surpass them in friendliness. To this end, he aims to make spies out of everyone by "richly benefiting those who reported what it was opportune for him to learn" (243). He does not make assignment for this position, instead he encourages

everyone to be the “Eyes of the King” (242). For this reason it is possible for anyone to be a spy, for everyone knows that Cyrus will give gifts to whoever has pertinent information. “Thus there are believed to be many Ears of the king, and many Eyes; and people are everywhere afraid to say what is not advantageous to the king, just as if he were listening, and afraid to do what is not advantageous, just as if he were present” (243). This inherently makes each man distrustful of those around him. For the consequence of such a law is that not even children and wives can afford to be candid around their fathers and husbands for fear of being betrayed. Xenophon reports that this surveillance policy survives Cyrus’s time and exists within the fourth century. “Yet now, even if someone... leaves his wife, offspring, and his friends’ children as hostages in the hands of the Egyptian king, and after transgressing the greatest oaths may seem to do something advantageous for a king, these are those who are rewarded with the greatest honors” (274).

In addition turning all his subjects against each other by making them into spies, he also “injected strife as well as competitiveness” to create more enmity between them (245). This he did by pretending to exercise their virtue in contests for prizes. If any of his men disputed the result of a contest, “Cyrus established a law that whenever a judgment should be required... those who required the judgment must concur on the judges” (245). Each would strive to have their friends be judge, and whoever lost the case “would hate those who had cast their judgments against him” (246). In this way, he made his friends hate each other, redouble their devotion to Cyrus, and admire him for “taking care that virtue be practiced” (245). Just as Cyrus made it difficult for anyone to

displace his esteem in the eyes of his eunuchs, Cyrus is eliminating all contenders for loyalty or friendship in the hearts of his friends.

And because Cyrus is so good at making himself beloved above all else, people must even watch what they say within their own homes. For the man who is preferred over brothers, fathers, and children will also be the man that they defend above their family. Having divided natural allegiances in this way, Cyrus made sure that he was “superior in attending to and caring for his friends” (243). In fact, Cyrus like to think of himself as being like a shepherd, “for he said that just as the shepherd ought to make use of his flocks while making them happy (in the happiness of sheep, of course), so a king ought to make use of cities and human beings while making them happy” (243). So while his friends were being tricked into adoration, Cyrus only looked upon these men as beasts who are ready for the harvest. “By enriching and benefiting human beings, I acquire goodwill and friendship, and from these I harvest safety and glory” (245). In this way, he sees his friends as being like beasts who have been tamed for his own personal use.

“It was said, then, to have been apparent that there was nothing at which he would have been so ashamed at being defeated as in the service of his friends” (243). In all of these ways, Cyrus outdid himself to make his name first in the hearts of all of his men. “So this makes it clear how he contrived that all those who were superior would love him more than each other” (246). Cyrus was persistent in his attempt to be the first object of attachment and in accomplishing this, displaced all the men, women, and children who ought to be the most beloved.

All of these actions should remind us of Cyaxares complaint against Cyrus. “If you were raising dogs to guard yourself and what belongs to you, and if someone were attentive to them and thereby made them more familiar to himself than you, would he delight you by this attention” (173)? The answer is of course “no.” But this is in effect what Cyrus is doing amongst his friends. He is making them more attentive to himself than they are to their friends, lovers, and families. Cyrus is fully aware that what he is doing is unjust, for when he is presented this very same argument with regard to another man, Cyrus is sympathetic to the one whose affections are usurped. When his friend, Tigranes tells Cyrus that his father had his teacher executed, Cyrus asked what injustice he had committed. His father, the Armenian, replied “I envied him, because he seemed to me to make my son wonder at himself more than at me” (93). The Armenian compares Tigranes’s teacher to “other men consorting with their wives” who must be seen as enemies because “they divert their affection toward themselves” (93). In other words, the lover courting a man’s wife ought to be punished for stealing what does not belong to him. This is the same with Tigranes’s teacher; he displaced his father’s affections by making himself more loved and so the Armenian put him to death. Cyrus is very sympathetic to this complaint and responds, not by remonstrating the Armenian for such a casual murder, but by asking Tigranes to “have sympathy for your father” (94).

If Cyrus can sympathize with the Armenian, then this means he is fully aware of the injustice of making himself loved above those who ought to be first. By making himself more loved than anyone else, he is taking affection from those people to whom it might otherwise belong. He is making his friends displace the love owed to their wives, their children, and their friends. But more than this, by taking away their ability to love

their children, wives, and friends, Cyrus is turning them into eunuchs. He does not remove any skin from his friends, but he does cut off their relationships with everyone except himself. He doesn't prevent them from procreating, but he does disable and corrupt the relationships his friends have with their offspring. One could easily replace the word "eunuch" in this next quote with "friend." "Seeing that the eunuchs were deprived of all these ties, he held that they would most value those who were especially able to enrich them... he held that no one would be able to surpass him in doing good to eunuchs" (228). He hasn't gone so far as to castrate his "friends," but he has severed them from the ones they love.

Just as he has tamed his bodyguards by ensuring their dependence on him, he is doing the same to his closest friend and allies. There is something inhuman and hive-like (or herd-like) about being unable to devote oneself to one's children or one's family because service and obedience to the leader eclipses these joys. By taking away his friends capacity for Eros, Cyrus is doing what has already been done to his eunuchs. Still worse, where it is not clear that he has caused this condition in his eunuchs, it is abundantly clear that he is the cause of spiritual castration in his friends. And, there is no surer way of turning men into service animals. For dogs "cease to abandon their masters when they are castrated, but they become no worse at guarding and for the hunt" (228). He has taken the dogs that belong to others and castrated them so that they will be devoted to Cyrus, and only Cyrus.

This is not a benevolent king. This is a ruler of cattle and horses. "For herds go wherever their keepers direct them, they feed on whatever land their keepers drive them to, and they abstain from whatever land their keepers turn them from" (22). His best men

who are put in charge of cities and towns are not placed there because it is their wish, but because it is Cyrus's will. And although he cannot be there to watch their every move, Cyrus sends a man with an army who "goes on patrol in order that... if anyone has become insolent, he may make him moderate; and if one neglects either the paying of the tribute or the guarding of the inhabitants, or if he disregards that the land is to be worked... he may straighten out these things" (267). Cyrus is tireless in his quest to create docile beasts of burden.

Further, cattle and horses are completely subservient and obedient to their rulers just as Cyrus's friends and subjects are. Additionally, we have seen that his friends allow themselves to be used for Cyrus's glory and safety, even to their own disadvantage. Cyrus uses some of his men in direct opposition to their own good, places others at risk of their lives, and uses the rest as treasuries even while acknowledging the pain this causes them. He has trained his men to yield up their own good in favor of his, and in this respect, they are no better than cattle. "As for such profits as arise from them, these they allow their keepers to use in whatever way they themselves wish. Nor have we ever perceived a herd uniting against its keeper, either so as not to obey or so as not to allow him to use the profits" (22).

I think it is fairly apparent that we have lost our noble prince. However, it is now clear how Cyrus solved the problem of political science. By turning his men into cattle and horses, he removed the problems inherent in ruling human beings. "We thought we saw all these herds more willing to obey their keepers than are human beings their rulers" (21). But Cyrus was inventive; he discovered that if you turned human beings into herds, you could rule them with the ease of domestic beasts. "There was Cyrus, a Persian, who

acquired very many people, very many cities, and very many nations, all obedient to himself” (22). But this was not because he possessed some special skill for justice or benevolence; it was because he had a gift for taking away what is human and replacing it with the beastly. Xenophon forces us to wonder if Cyrus’s solution is worth the stable regime and obedient subjects. True, Cyrus brought relief from war to what was, for him, the whole world, but does relative peace merit the loss of human vitality?

If the subjugation of the known world to Cyrus’s complete will is a victory, it is a hollow one. It is fairly apparent now that Cyrus is not interested in being a benevolent ruler or good friend. There is no common good in Cyrus’s kingdom; there is only Cyrus and what is advantageous for him. He is only interested power, praise, and honor. And he can gain all of these things by converting his friends and subjects into beasts who praise and prostrate before him. Through their obedience, he has the power to harm his enemies. But this must be Cyrus’s only consolation for the praise and honor he acquires from such soulless beasts must be empty of value.

Cyrus claims that gift giving and being a benefactor is among the greatest pleasures. However, if he is honest with himself, Cyrus must be forced to see that, though he is praised for being benevolent, all of his gifts lead to great disadvantages for the ones that receive them and all the honors lead to servitude. His policies are ostensibly aimed at improving the souls of his people, but in truth there are directed at spiritual castration. Cyrus seems aware of the injustice of his actions when he is most candid and on his deathbed he seems to mourn the loss of his ability to benefit his friends. His last piece of advice to his sons is that “by benefiting your friends, you will be able to punish your enemies” (272). Benefiting ones friends is not the primary good here; punishing

enemies is. In his early adulthood Cyrus declared that “being loved by one’s subjects” is “among the most important matters” (53). But those who are not capable of true Eros cannot truly love one, and so Cyrus has deprived himself of the pleasures inherent in this important matter. Not long after Cyrus has conquered Babylon Cyrus admits, “I display the works of benevolence with much more pleasure than those of generalship” (255). It is more pleasant to undertake work that makes him admired than it is to wage war and subdue nations. But in the end, Cyrus cannot be truly admired and all that is left to him is the unrewarding work of generalship. If being genuinely loved and praised is one of the great joys that ruling offers, Cyrus deprives himself of this satisfaction by removing his men’s capacity to give it. In those moments that Cyrus is able to fool himself into believing he is a benefactor, his ability to be gratified must be limited by knowledge that the image he has created of himself is an illusion. If he listens closely, all the songs of praise sung in his honor must be indistinguishable from the bleating of sheep or the lowing of cattle.

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