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*Xenophon and the Tradition  
on the Strategoi in fourth-century Athens*

After several monographic studies on the careers and traditions pertaining to the greatest Athenian *strategoï* of the fourth century B.C., such as Iphicrates, Chabrias, Chares and Timotheus<sup>1</sup>, the time has come to provide an overall view of the interpretations that the main literary sources offer<sup>2</sup> and here I intend to focus in particular on Xenophon.

As far as the operations of these generals are concerned, this author often provides details that diverge from those found in other authors. Sometimes he contradicts them, sometimes omits important information, revealing that what he stresses or neglects probably fits more his political or moral background than his interest in the reconstruction of the precise historical context<sup>3</sup>.

Obviously, the case of the Athenian *strategoï* is only an example and should be seen into a more general analysis of individuals in Xenophon. This study instead only aims to fill a little gap, since usually in works on this sub-

<sup>1</sup> See BIANCO 1997, 2000, 2003, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> My forthcoming analysis of the Ephorean tradition, (and also Diodorean in the proceedings of the Congress “*Eforo di Cuma nella storiografia greca*” (Salerno 10-12/12/2008, ed. by P. DE FIDIO), with the specular title “*Eforo e la tradizione sugli strateghi del IV secolo*” can be considered parallel to this work on Xenophon. For the relationship between Ephorus and Xenophon see Daverio Rocchi’s contribution in the same forthcoming volume.

<sup>3</sup> See GIRAUD 2000, 101: “La distance est grande entre les *Hélléniques* et la réalité; entre les deux se trouvent les convictions que l’auteur veut faire partager”.

ject generals are not taken into account<sup>4</sup>. Probably, this is the consequence of the fact that in Xenophon's works they do not feature prominently part and never speak<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, the study of their treatment could be interesting.

Xenophon's attitude towards these *strategoï* is very peculiar indeed and seems to respond to a general desire to play down the new Athenian hegemony and to ascribe its success to the Spartan crisis. He tends to omit or mention only some of the greatest political and military events of the Athenian history of these years, thus obliterating as much as possible its chief exponents<sup>6</sup>.

Still we can notice that, beside the little interest shown for example in Chabrias (whose enterprises are systematically downplayed, even in the case of the great victory at Naxos), he has a more benevolent attitude toward Timotheus and Chares (who, on the contrary, is often criticized by other sources), and even a certain interest in Iphicrates' affairs.

Xenophon's attitude towards the Athenian *strategoï* is not uniform, since it is possible to point out many differences in their treatment. Our aim, however, is to investigate whether he succeeded in reconstructing the activities of these *strategoï*, by comparing his work with other traditions and looking for possible reasons to these changes.

The *strategos* to whom Xenophon shows the greatest goodwill is certainly Iphicrates. This is also the most cited in the *Hellenica*, which is indeed the only work where Athenian *strategoï* appear (29 occurrences of Iphicrates, compared with 7 of Chabrias, 12 of Timotheus, and 13 of Chares).

In spite of that, it is not necessary to insist too much on Xenophon's favour towards him, because his attitude is not unambiguous. For example, the beginnings of Iphicrates' career are not described in a very gratifying man-

<sup>4</sup> The attention of the scholars is usually focused on Cyrus, Agesilaus, Teletias, Jason, etc.: see for example WESTLAKE 1969, 203-225; HIGGINS 1977; WORO-NOFF 1993, 41-48; AZOULAY 2004, 217-221.

<sup>5</sup> The importance of speeches in Xenophon as a way to portray characters is well-known: see for example GRAY 1989, 137; PITCHER 2007, 111.

<sup>6</sup> For the slight attention paid to "prominent personalities of the New Imperialism", see TUPLIN 1993, 159. According to LÉVY 1990, 127: "l'attitude à l'égard des personnages importants de son histoire a aussi suscité des discussions".

ner (IV, 4, 9-12): he appears on the stage as a commander of an army of very frightening mercenary peltasts, whose results are not significant<sup>7</sup>.

He depicts his first intervention in the Peloponnesian affairs between 393 and 392 as a defeat. The Spartan Praxitas, despite the opposition of Argives, Corinthians and Iphicrates' mercenaries, was able to cross the wall that connected Corinth to the port of the Lechaion and conquered additional positions in the region. Iphicrates' men reacted by storming Phliasia and Arcadia, plundering and provoking fear. Still they only convinced the inhabitants of Phlius to surrender to the Spartans; moreover, in spite of the reconstruction of the wall of the Lechaion, they could not hinder the joint attack of Agesilaus and Teleutias (IV, 4, 15)<sup>8</sup>.

The insistence on the fear caused by these Athenian soldiers recalls more the description of an armed band than of a regular army. The results thus obtained were not certainly positive, but rather counterproductive, because they alienated a still neutral *polis*.

The parallel Diodorean account has a different tone (XIV, 91): it underlines some successful interventions of Iphicrates, who seems to have rejected the option to attack Corinth with the help of those in exile. Instead he defeated a part of the Lacedemonian army in the area and obtained victories against Phlius and Sicyon.

These two traditions are not consistent with each other. Xenophon seems to emphasize only the less positive aspects of Iphicrates' intervention, thus favouring the Spartans.

The same viewpoint returns in the description of the events in the Corinthian area, where Iphicrates' peltasts operated (IV, 5, 3): he focused on Agesilaus, to whom is attributed a victorious stratagem (IV, 5, 4). In this text he appears to control the other Corinthian port, the Peiraion, even if simultaneously he receives the news of the defeat of a Spartan *mora* at the Lechaion (IV, 5, 7).

<sup>7</sup> Xenophon seems right to think that in this phase Iphicrates, being of young age, could be only *archon* of the mercenaries and not the general elected by the *polis* (see Iust. VI, 5, 2-5; Oros. III, 1, 21). Probably Xenophon participated in Agesilaus' campaign of 390 and for this reason he was well informed (see also *Ages.* 2, 18-19; Plut. *Ages.* 22).

<sup>8</sup> For these events, see also Andoc. III, 18; Diod. XIV, 86, 3; 91.

Xenophon follows only Agesilaus' successes, and, at the beginning, he is completely silent on Iphicrates' role. Only after several paragraphs he mentions this Spartan defeat, which he describes as unusual and almost incredible (ἀήθους ... συμφορᾶς: IV, 5, 10). He even attributes it to the *strategos* Callias and Iphicrates, who is still represented as commander of the mercenaries<sup>9</sup>.

Even if the role of the latter is commonly considered more decisive, Xenophon emphasizes above all Callias, who seems to be more favoured by the historian and is one of the protagonists in the *Symposium* (1, 2 etc.) too. Here he appears to be one of the men who contributed to the greatness of Athens: it is likely that in this positive portrait an important role is played by the common Socratic experience, his moderate political ideas and his Spartan sympathies.

From now on, however, Iphicrates emerges as a very able commander, who obtains several successes (ἐκ τούτου δὲ μάλα καὶ τὰλλα ἐπετύγχανεν Ἰφικράτης: IV, 5, 19) and recovers most of the positions that the Spartans had occupied beforehand. Xenophon, however, stops his account immediately afterwards to focus instead on Agesilaus<sup>10</sup>.

Iphicrates returns in 389 on the occasion of the naval expedition to the Hellespont that the Athenians sent under Agirrius' command, who had replaced the dead Thrasybulus; but soon after Iphicrates and 1200 peltasts were sent to ensure that Agirrius did not vanish the results obtained by his predecessor (IV, 8, 31-34). Here, however, Xenophon emphasizes in a negative way the character of Agirrius, revealing the Athenians' distrust towards him, more than praising Iphicrates. Even when he describes some of the operations of the *strategos* in the Chersonesus, he mentions pirates (ληστῶς: IV, 8, 35) and stresses the figure of the Spartan opponent, Anaxibius, who courageously dies together with his men in a clash near Abidus (IV, 8, 38-39)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Iphicrates' role is always discussed, because, unlike Xenophon, Harpocration holds that he was *strategos*, even if less convincingly (s. v. ξενικὸν ἐν Κορίνθῳ = Androt. *FGrHist* 324 F 48 = Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 F 150; DEVELIN 1989).

<sup>10</sup> For Agesilaus' operations in this context, see CARTLEDGE 1987, 222; HAMILTON 1991, 114.

<sup>11</sup> See now GRAY 2007, 342-344, who underlines this account as a Xenophonic lesson on the "dangers of over-confidence".

Incomplete and obscure is also the Xenophonic account of Iphicrates' role in the control of the Straits at the end of the Corinthian War in 387; it is only thanks to Polyaeus that we can explain the development of the Athenian operations. From a short passage of Xenophon (V, 1, 25-27), in fact, we know that Iphicrates was in Abydos to block the Spartan fleet, when the enemies reached an advantageous position thanks to Antalcidas' arrival. This pretended to be called in aid of Chalcedon, but instead waited in ambush and succeeded in removing the Athenians from that area and destroying eight ships.

Xenophon's account lacks the key to understand the situation, because Iphicrates seems stationary in Abydos and is not mentioned among the deceived *strategoï* who set off in pursuit of Antalcidas. Moreover, the reason of the false intervention of the Spartans in aid of Chalcedon is unclear.

It is a neglected stratagem of Polyaeus (II, 24) that explains the situation. There we can read that Iphicrates left Abydos to besiege Chalcedon and that the other *strategoï* moved there in order to help him, after hearing that Antalcidas was also going there. Only they were deceived and attacked by the enemies<sup>12</sup>.

Thus the context becomes clearer and acquires a new meaning, that apparently Xenophon was not interested in explaining. If he had really wanted to underline positively the character of Iphicrates, he should not have hidden these details that relieved the *strategos* from the responsibility of a disastrous operation.

The historian shows a certain admiration and interest in Iphicrates above all in book six, after a long silence on the activity of the *strategos*<sup>13</sup>: here we can really say that he is one of the most enlightened Athenian protagonists of the 370s<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> I recently analyzed this text in BIANCO 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Fortunately other sources give us further information about his operations in Thrace in the 80s (see for example Nep. *Iph.* 2, 1; Polyaeus. III, 9, 46; 50; 60; 62, etc.), or in Egypt from 377/6 on (Diod. XV, 29, 3-4; 41; Polyaeus. III, 9, 56; 59; 63, etc.).

<sup>14</sup> These judgments, so favourable, always impressed scholars, who sometimes considered them exaggerated, see for example KRAFFT 1967, 135; MOSLEY 1974, 65-68. For Xenophon's admiration of Iphicrates' military skills see also WESTLAKE 1969, 207; AZOULAY 2004, 130.

As *strategos*, in 373 he replaced Timotheus, who had been removed<sup>15</sup>, as commander of the naval expedition sent to help Corcyra, where he showed his extreme energy (VI, 2, 13-14) and ability in leading the fleet and keeping it trained (VI, 2, 27 sgg.). At this point, Xenophon introduces the first explicit praise about his admirable skill to train his men in fighting without delaying the navigation (VI, 2, 32: “Now I am aware that all these matters of practice and training are customary whenever men expect to engage in a battle by sea, but that which I commend in Iphicrates is this, that when it was incumbent upon him to arrive speedily at the place where he supposed he should fight with the enemy, he discovered a way to keep his men from being either, by reason of the voyage they had made, unskilled in the tactics of fighting at sea, or, by reason of their having been trained in such tactics, any the more tardy in arriving at their destination”)<sup>16</sup>.

In this way, the *strategos* obtained the control of Kephallenia, defeated several triremes that Dionysius of Syracuse sent off to help the Spartans. He fought in Acarnania, and caused problems in the Peloponnesus. At the conclusion of this long list of successes (VI, 2, 33-38), we find the most famous praise of Xenophon for this *strategos*: “Now for my part I not only commend this campaign in particular among all the campaigns of Iphicrates, but I commend, further, his directing the Athenians to choose as his colleagues Callistratus, the popular orator, who was not very favourably inclined toward him, and Chabrias, who was regarded as a very good general. For if he thought them to be able men and hence wished to take them as advisers, he seems to me to have done a wise thing, while on the other hand if he believed them to be his adversaries and wished in so bold a way to prove that he was neither remiss nor neglectful in any point, this seems to me to be the

<sup>15</sup> Xenophon relates Timotheus' delays in leaving for Corcyra and his destitution from the strategy, although he doesn't speak of a trial, but see Diod. XV, 47 and *infra*. On the difficult interpretation of these traditions, see also GRAY 1980, 306-326; TUPLIN 1984, 537-568; FAUBER 1999, 481-506; PARKER 2001, 353-368.

<sup>16</sup> Τοῦτο ἐπαινῶ, ὅτι ἐπεὶ ἀφικέσθαι ταχὺ ἔδει ἔνθα τοῖς πολεμίοις ναυμαχί-  
σειν ᾤετο, ἠὔρετο + ὅπως μήτε διὰ τὸν πλοῦν ἀνεπιστήμονας εἶναι τῶν εἰς ναυμαχι-  
ᾶν μήτε διὰ τὸ ταῦτα μελετᾶν βραδύτερόν τι ἀφικέσθαι. All Xenophon's English translations are by BROWNSON 1918-21.

act of a man possessed of great confidence in himself. He, then, was occupied with these things” (VI, 2, 39)<sup>17</sup>.

This praise, however, is not consistent with what the historian said in the previous chapters, because it presupposes facts he actually avoids mentioning: the most obvious, for example, is the action brought by Callistratus and Iphicrates against Timotheus in 373 that we know from other sources<sup>18</sup>), while the connection with Chabrias is darker, maybe only for his link with Callistratus.

Generally speaking, Xenophon shows ambiguous feelings towards many other Athenian *strategoi*: Conon (who is a protagonist of the first book, whereas his role in the victory at Cnidus and in the reconstruction of the Athenian hegemony is not emphasized<sup>19</sup>), Callistratus (who first is remembered superficially only on the occasion of the naval expedition to Corcyra, whereas later plays an important part in the peace between Athens and Sparta in 369<sup>20</sup>) and, as we saw, he is explicitly hostile towards Agirrius.

If Iphicrates is not affected negatively, it means perhaps that at least at the beginning of his career he was an outsider<sup>21</sup>, but later he was compelled to approach Callistratus and Chabrias for political reasons of opportunity, whose need is recognized by the historian. A sign of these new relations is also the fact that in 372 Xenophon attributes to Callistratus the engagement to send money to Iphicrates to support the fleet or to make peace (VI, 3, 3; 4,

<sup>17</sup> Ἐγὼ μὲν δὴ ταύτην τὴν στρατηγίαν τῶν Ἰφικράτους οὐκ ἦκιστα ἐπαινῶ, ἔπειτα καὶ τὸ προσελέσθαι κελεύσαι ἑαυτῷ Καλλίστρατόν τε τὸν δημηγόρον, οὐ μάλα ἐπιτήδειον ὄντα, καὶ Καβρίαν, μάλα στρατηγὸν νομιζόμενον. Εἴτε γὰρ φρονίμους αὐτοὺς ἠγούμενος εἶναι συμβούλους λαβεῖν ἐβούλετο, σῶφρόν μοι δοκεῖ διαπράξασθαι, εἴτε ἀντιπάλους νομίζων, οὕτω θρασέως μῆτε καταραθυμῶν μῆτε καταμελῶν μηδὲν φαίνεσθαι, μεγαλοφρονοῦντος ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ τοῦτο μοι δοκεῖ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι.

<sup>18</sup> See above all Ps.-Demosth. XLIX, 9; Diod. XV, 47, 3. HANSEN 1983, 169; TUPLIN 1984, 539 and *infra*.

<sup>19</sup> *Hell.* IV, 3, 11; 8, 1, gives the impression that this naval battle was a Persian success, more than an Athenian one, against the Spartans. TUPLIN too (1993, 80) underlines that Xenophon was not interested in Conon, who is considered only as a Persian agent.

<sup>20</sup> See *Hell.* VI, 2, 39; 3, 3; CLOCHÉ 1923, 14-16; BEARZOT 1978-1979, 7-27.

<sup>21</sup> See *supra* and BIANCO 1997, 192. STRAUSS (1986, 133 and 156), on the contrary, thought of Iphicrates as a Conon's *protégé*.

1); thanks to this change in the Callistratus' politics and to his attempts at peace, this rhetor seems to gain credit anew in Xenophon's eyes<sup>22</sup>.

After this laudatory parenthesis towards Iphicrates, the *strategos* vanishes again from the political stage, to re-emerge in the days of the operations in the Peloponnesus against the Thebans in 369. Here we can find a judgment unequivocally not gratifying on part of Xenophon, who says that Iphicrates, although a good general, in this case lead useless – or rather inconvenient – operations (εἰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλο τι καλῶς ἐστρατήγησεν, οὐ ψέγω· ἐκεῖνα μὲντοι ἃ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ ἐκείνῳ ἔπραξε, πάντα εὐρίσκω τὰ μὲν μάτην, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἀσυμφόρως πεπραγμένα αὐτῷ: VI, 5, 51)<sup>23</sup>.

Actually, the *strategos* probably gained some results, because both Nepos (*Iph.* 2, 5) and Pausanias (IX, 14, 6-7) seem to attribute to Iphicrates' arrival the withdrawal of Epaminondas who left without attacking Sparta<sup>24</sup>. Xenophon's interpretation could mean that he would have preferred a stronger help for Sparta, and was instead disappointed by the Athenian armed intervention.

After this Iphicrates disappears from the *Hellenica* and nothing more is said about his operations in Macedonia and in Thrace, where he was active from then onwards<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> The famous speech of Callistratus in *Hell.* VI, 3 is often considered as the true voice of Xenophon: see for example HIGGINS 1977, 122; DILLERY 1995, 244. For the importance of this trilogy of speeches cfr. also GRAY 1989, 123-131; BEARZOT 2004, 89.

<sup>23</sup> “When, accordingly, they proceeded to retire from Lacedaemon, then, of course, Iphicrates likewise proceeded to lead back the Athenians from Arcadia to Corinth. Now I have no fault to find with any good generalship he may have shown on any other occasion; but as regards all his actions at that time, I find them to have been either futile or inexpedient. For while he undertook to keep guard at Oneum so that the Thebans should not be able to get back home, he left unguarded the best pass, which led past Cenchreae”.

<sup>24</sup> Polyaeus describes further diplomatic activities, among which the mediation between Argives and Arcadians and an avoided clash against the Beotians (see, for example, III, 9, 28 and 37). Diodorus, on the contrary, is close to Xenophon in this case, as he dismisses the Athenian operations in the Peloponnesus because they were not worth mentioning (XV, 65-67). On the historical and historiographical problems arisen by these four Theban invasions to Peloponnesus, see for example ROY 1971, 590-594; BUCKLER 1980, 90, 185.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Aesch. II, 27-29; Demosth. XXIII, 149; Nep. *Iph.* 3, 2; KALLET 1983, 239-252.

Therefore, it is true that the portrait of Iphicrates in Xenophon is more detailed and positive than that of other *strategoí*, although this is only because the historian reserves less attention to the others, and not because he is particularly interested in Iphicrates.

Much less favourable is Xenophon's attitude towards Chabrias, many episodes of whose career are just ignored. For example, no mention of his or his actions appear until 388, not even his contrasts with Iphicrates in Corinth at the end of the 390s, that lead to the replacement of the latter with Chabrias for the strategy<sup>26</sup>.

The first episode in which Chabrias appears as a major player has also very little prominence in Xenophon's narrative: the nocturnal landing in Aegina that ends with a successful ambush that allows the Athenians to sail undisturbed (V, 1, 10-13). Here Chabrias is represented as a mercenaries' commander on his way to Cyprus in aid of Evagoras, i.e. without any official role. Nepos records this episode too, but assigns him an official role<sup>27</sup>.

Even the apparently favourable comment on the renewed Athenian power is immediately toned down, as Antalcidas succeeds in blocking the Straits and therefore the Athenian activity on the sea, compelling the Greeks to accept a peace according to the Spartan terms.

After a long silence that covers ten years of history<sup>28</sup>, always Xenophon disparages Chabrias' activity in the operations in defence of Boeotia from 379/8 onwards (that appears limited to the defence of the Athenian neutrality: V, 4, 14); in fact it is only thanks to other sources that we can reconstruct his activity together with Timotheus and Callistratus in the organization of

<sup>26</sup> Xenophon, in fact, only hints at generic problems of Iphicrates in Corinth (IV, 8, 34), whereas Diodorus describes in detail a diplomatic turn over in that area (XIV, 92, 2). See, for example, THOMPSON 1985, 51-57.

<sup>27</sup> Nep. *Chabr.* 2: "publice ab Atheniensibus Evagorae adiutor datus". For this expedition see also TUPLIN 1983, 172.

<sup>28</sup> During these ten years Chabrias probably conquered 'international' glory, thanks to his successes in Cyprus and in Egypt. Diodorus called him "a man distinguished both for his prudence as general and his shrewdness in the art of war, who had also won great repute for personal prowess" (XV, 29, 2). See also Nep. *Chabr.* 2-3.

the Athenian defensive positions on the occasion of the two successive campaigns of Agesilaus<sup>29</sup>.

Among the operations passed over in silence (particularly on the occasion of the first campaign, but also of the second one), we can place also the well-known episode of the clash against the Spartans, that was long-awaited by the men of Chabrias with strong contempt of the danger, and that carried to Agesilaus' withdrawal<sup>30</sup>. Xenophon's silence here is easily comprehensible, due to Agesilaus' involvement in these operations and to the will of defending Spartan conduct<sup>31</sup>.

The account of the subsequent operations is hardly more detailed: not even the battle of Naxos, Chabrias' great naval victory against the Spartans in 376, earns more than a hint (ναυμαχήσαντες πρὸς τὸν Πόλλιν Χαβρίου ἡγουμένου νικῶσι τῇ ναυμαχίᾳ: V, 4, 61)<sup>32</sup>. Instead in this account it does not look nothing more than a defensive operation to allow for the passage of some grain ships, not a true Athenian attack<sup>33</sup>.

Thus the connection between the battle of Naxos and the defence of merchantmen at Geraestus is lost, whereas Diodorus (XV, 34, 3-35) clearly distinguishes two different and successful interventions, one on behalf of the merchants of grain freed from the grip of the Spartans and the other against Naxos, where the Spartan Pollis came to aid of the besieged island.

<sup>29</sup> In particular Diod. XV, 29-34, who compresses the operations in a single campaign. See also Plut. *Ages.* 26, 7-9; Polyae. II, 1, 7; 11-12; 18; 20-21, etc.; DEVOTO 1987, 75-82; CARTLEDGE 1987, 229; HAMILTON 1991, 174.

<sup>30</sup> This episode was so famous that Chabrias received even a statue for it (see Aristot. *Rhet.* 1411 b 6; Diod. XV, 33, 4; Nep. *Chabr.* 1, 3).. Still, scholarship debates on the real position in which the *strategos* was represented (if kneeling or standing with his shield leaning to his knees; for the ideological significance of these statues in honour of the winners, see now OLIVER 2007; MONACO 2009).

<sup>31</sup> For the little attention that Xenophon pays to these operations, see now JEHNE 2004, 468; for the "alternate, and contradictory, version of events" and for the fact that "he too often omitted crucial events from his history" see HAMILTON 1991, 162.

<sup>32</sup> See, on the contrary, Demosth. XX, 76-87; XXIII, 198; Aesch. III, 243; Din. I, 75; Diod. XV, 34-35; Plut. *Phoc.* 6, 5-7; Polyae. III, 11, 2 and 11, etc.

<sup>33</sup> Great importance is attributed to this wrong Xenophontic interpretation by TUPLIN 1993, 159.

But, on the other hand, there is no trace of all other operations conducted by Chabrias (and not only) in favour of the expansion of the Second Athenian League, that, as we know, is not even mentioned by Xenophon<sup>34</sup>.

The seventh and last appearance of Chabrias is only a short reference to his mercenaries, who blocked the Argives in the Peloponnesus during the second Theban invasion in the 60s. Any additional, close examination, however, lacks (VII, 1, 25).

Although Xenophon says that Chabrias was considered a *strategos* of great value (μάλα στρατηγὸν νομιζόμενον: VI, 2, 39), he is not really interested in his career: there is no attention either to his personality or skills, particularly in the financial field. It is difficult to say why this is so. Perhaps it was because of his link with Callistratus (attested by many sources, and in particular by the fact their joint involvement in the trial for the loss of Oropus in 366<sup>35</sup>), but this may be not enough. More generally, in this case the Xenophontic will of passing over in silence, as much as possible, the greatest protagonists of the new Athenian revival and of the Spartan crisis seems clearly to emerge.

Furthermore, Xenophon does not even seem to be particularly interested in Timotheus, whom he mentions only twice (the naval expedition to the Peloponnesus in 376/5 and its results)<sup>36</sup>, although he shows some benevolence towards the character.

In particular the first mention is of special value (V, 4, 63-66), because it concerns a crucial moment of the fourth century history, when the Athenians, still irritated against the Spartans for Sphodrias' raid, decided to equip a fleet of sixty ships and send it to the Peloponnesus under the command of the *strategos* Timotheus.

<sup>34</sup> On this macroscopic and not at all single omission, and for Xenophon's silences as "art de la déformation", see LÉVY 1990, 139-140; RIEDINGER 1991, 41; ZAHRT 2000, 295-325; JEHNE 2004, 463-480. For the different perspectives of ancient and modern historians see also VELA TEJADA 1998, 19.

<sup>35</sup> For Oropus' affair, see also *infra*; Xen. *Hell.* VII, 4, 1; Demosth. XVIII, 99; Aesch. III, 85; Diod. XV, 76, 1; Plut. *Demosth.* 5, 1; vd. BEARZOT 1987, 80-99; BUCKLER 1980, 250-251. For the trial: Demosth. XXI, 64; Aristot. *Rhet.* 1364 a 18-21; Plut. *Demosth.* 5, 1; Diog. Laert. III, 23-24.

<sup>36</sup> Xen. *Hell.* V, 4, 63-66; VI, 2, 2-3; 11-13. See now BIANCO 2007, 104.

As far as his operations of circumnavigation are concerned, Xenophon stresses that Timotheus subjugated Corcyra (ὕφ' ἑαυτῶ ἐποιήσατο). Considering the type of intervention performed by the *strategos*, this formula has a very significant implication, because it seems to allude more to a submission than to a free alliance, if not in the reality, at least in its interpretation<sup>37</sup>.

The historian not only is silent on the foundation of the Second League. This he interprets as an Athenian imposition, reached through the military superiority of few *strategoï*, whose successes are generally minimized, instead as a free alliance against Sparta.

Also in the description of Timotheus' operations during this campaign, the historian never emphasizes his diplomatic role (for example, unlike many other sources, he does not mention any alliance<sup>38</sup>). We must, however, recognize that Xenophon underlines his moderation: "as for Timotheus, after he had sailed round Peloponnesus he brought Corcyra at once under his control; he did not, however, enslave the inhabitants or banish individuals or change the government. As a result of this he made all the states in that region more favourably inclined to him" (ὁ μέντοι Τιμόθεος περιπλεύσας Κέρκυραν μὲν εὐθὺς ὑφ' ἑαυτῶ ἐποιήσατο· οὐ μέντοι ἠνδραποδίσσατο οὐδὲ ἄνδρας ἐφυγάδευσεν οὐδὲ νόμους μετέστησεν· ἐξ ὧν τὰς περὶ ἐκεῖνα πόλεις πάσας εὐμενεστέρας ἔσχεν: V, 4, 64).

These comments seem anachronistic when referred to the first years of existence of the Second Athenian League, but they could allude to an imperialistic evolution in the relations between Athens and her allies<sup>39</sup> thus provide also an element for dating the Xenophontic work in a later period of crisis<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Scholars are indeed still discussing whether Corcyra was in the Second League or not, see, for example, TUPLIN 1984, 545, 551.

<sup>38</sup> *Contra* see Diod. XV, 36, 5-6; Nep. *Tim.* 2, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Cargill's theory (1981), which denies the imperialistic evolution of this League, is always discussed.

<sup>40</sup> It is not possible to take into account another very difficult matter, i.e. the genesis of the *Hellenica*, but also these details lead us to date the work in the Fifties, in a context of crisis of the Second League, as the social war: see DAVERIO ROCCHI 1978, 32-34; RIEDINGER 1991, 61; DILLERY 1995, 241.

The attention on Timotheus' *epimeleia* and the list of his merits seem in fact to recapitulate the criticism towards the management of the Athenian *arché*, that could be countered by a more moderate *hegemonia*<sup>41</sup>.

Interesting is also the representation of Timotheus' great naval victory against Nicholocus at Alyzeia (V, 4, 65-66)<sup>42</sup>: this success seems in fact no more than a little naval clash and only due to Athenian superiority in numbers. There is also a significant attempt to speak favourably of the Spartan navarchus, Nicholocus, who described as too impulsive, but very brave. While searching for redemption, he tried to provoke the Athenians to a second battle. This is useful also to further belittle Timotheus' victory, because when he refused the second battle, Nicholocus raised a trophy on his side.

In this context appears a reference to the situation of lack of means that Athens was living and that had many consequences on the campaign (V, 4, 66). Xenophon does not praise of Timotheus' ability to manage the situation at all, which instead other sources do<sup>43</sup>. Such representation is perfectly coherent with the usual attitude of Xenophon, who is both beware of the economical matters and disinterested in Athenian *strategoi*<sup>44</sup>.

When he mentions again Timotheus, in connection with the facts of Zacynthus, Xenophon describes briefly the event (VI, 2, 2-3), saying that, immediately after the peace of 375, two ambassadors sailed to reach Timotheus and report him the order to come back with the fleet. But, on the way home, he disembarked some exiles of Zacynthus on their territory and the Zacynthi sent a delegation to Sparta to denounce the offense. After that, the Spartans

<sup>41</sup> So also PERLMAN 1991, 277-278. For the analysis of the civic virtues, that were taken into account by Xenophon, see SEAGER 2001, 391, and for the connection between "moeurs et politique" AZOULAY 2006, 133-153.

<sup>42</sup> About this famous victory, mentioned by Xenophon with the correct placing (at Alyzeia, which was a little town on the Acarnanian coast in front of the more renowned island of Leucades; for this reason in the following centuries the name of Leucades was preferred), see also Diod. XV, 36, 5; Polyæn. III, 10, 4, 6, 11-13, etc.

<sup>43</sup> In particular the second book of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica* (1350 a-b) and Polyænus (III, 10, 1; 9-11). For the importance of the generals' financial skills, see also FRÖLICH 2000, 100.

<sup>44</sup> Xenophon demonstrates his interest in economic matters particularly in the *Oeconomicus* and the *Poroi*; for the new consciousness of the importance of economic aspects, above all in the half of the fourth century and not only in Xenophon, see also FRENCH 1991, 24-40.

considered the Athenians responsible for breaking the peace and prepared a new fleet.

It is especially interesting in this case to compare the account of Xenophon with Diodorus, who provides more details, although in a text full of gaps (XV, 45, 2-4). According to him, because of a *stasis* in Zacynthus a group of exiles (not well identified<sup>45</sup>) found shelter in Timotheus' army. After the peace they obtained his collaboration and, thanks to him, could return to the island. There they took possession of a stronghold called Arcadia, from which, with the support of Timotheus, they moved against the other inhabitants of the town. The residents of Zacynthus asked for help to the Spartans, who first sent an embassy to Athens to denounce Timotheus; but when they saw that the *demos* supported these exiles and did not take the necessary steps against the *strategos*, beginning on the contrary to organize a new naval expedition, they prepared a fleet and sent it in aid of the Zacynthi.

Despite the complexity of these events, it seems possible to conclude that Timotheus supported the democratic exiles in their return to the island, and that the other Zacynthi did not accept passively this interference, denouncing the fact to the Spartans and the Spartans to the Athenians. The fact that nothing was done against Timotheus is very significant: clearly the Athenians did not perceive this as an arbitrary intervention, and revealed their will of recovering the greatest number of positions. This could have been also an Athenian revenge of the Athenians on the Spartans, who a few years before refused to punish Sphodrias after his raid in Attica.

The interference of Timotheus in the internal politics of Zacynthus has provoked a lot of discussions among scholars, who are divided between those who consider his action as a wrongful and little justifiable intervention, and those who think that such decision should be rather considered as a normal result of the general peace<sup>46</sup>. The exiles for political reasons, in fact, were often recalled home after the signing of a peace treaty, and it is not impossible that Timotheus helped the return of a group of exiles, who had fought with him during the war.

<sup>45</sup> The text in fact has many *lacunae* in this chapter and it is reasonable to think that there has been a change in the subject about the exiles, who must be the democrats and not the oligarchs.

<sup>46</sup> So also STYLIANOU 1998, 364, with *status quaestionis*.

Xenophon does not show hostility towards Timotheus when he stresses that the Spartans regarded this as a violation of the agreement and of the autonomy of the island; actually, the historian seems even to consider the Spartan accusation specious. Moreover, it is necessary to stress that, in this interpretation, the fact that Sparta was the first to set up a new fleet, gives this *polis* the responsibility of reopening the war. For Diodorus (XV, 46-47) the Athenians were the first to vote the preparation of a new fleet under the command of Timotheus.

For Xenophon, on the contrary, this decision is only an answer to the Spartan initiative. In his account, after the intervention of Timotheus in favour of Zacynthus' democrats, the Spartan mobilization immediately follows, and then Athens, when it is involved by the Corcyrean ambassadors who ask for help, approves the allocation of a fleet of sixty ships under Timotheus (VI, 2, 10-11).

Such an account, however, while putting directly in connection these facts with the renewal of the war, seems too compressed: perhaps it is possible to think that these phases could be diluted, following the account of Diodorus, who expatiates these events in a longer period of time, of 'cold war' according to Stylianou<sup>47</sup>.

In the *Hellenica*, then, the *strategos*, not finding sufficient crews for the allocated ships, goes around the Aegean islands to recruit men; in this way, however, he misses the favourable season for the navigation and is criticized by the Athenians, who dismiss and replace him with Iphicrates (VI, 2, 11-13).

Xenophon again describes only briefly the dismissal of Timotheus in 373 and adds his personal, in this case favourable judgment. Here he disagrees with the criticism of the Athenians towards the *strategos*, and considers instead his behaviour conscientious.

But he is not as exaggerated as Diodorus (XV, 47, 2-3), who supports that the *strategos*, before leaving for this campaign, went to Thrace, where he invited a lot of towns to join the League and obtained even other thirty triremes. This delay provoked the discontent of the people and the dismissal of Timotheus from the strategy; but when he returned to Athens, with the ambassadors of the new allies, with a bigger perfectly equipped fleet, the people would have changed their mind and restored him to his office.

<sup>47</sup> STYLIANOU 1998, 352.

The version of Diodorus is usually considered not reliable in this context, and rightly so<sup>48</sup>, as it seems biased towards Timotheus, who is wrongly rehabilitated and restored. Probably this interpretation is due to the ephorean source that scholars normally accept in these books.

Timotheus, on the contrary, probably delayed his campaign to Corcyra, not because he went to Thrace (as Diodorus says) or to the Aegean islands (as Xenophon makes us believe), but perhaps for a third reason: he was compelled to stop in the Peloponnesus for lack of money and had to resolve many problems with the allies, according to the speech XLIX of the *corpus demosthenicum* (*Against Timotheus for debts*, 13-15, 48-50, etc.<sup>49</sup>).

Xenophon on the whole is unbiased towards the *strategos*, even if, apart from the episode that was meant to avoid an inglorious dismissal for Timotheus, usually Diodorus reports a better and more complete account. But even though the Athenian is not hostile to Timotheus, sometimes describing his behaviour as more innocent than in reality, it is also true that he pays him little attention and describes too concisely his operations and only for the second half of the 370s. Certainly Xenophon is not our best source for Timotheus before or after this time.

Finally, the Xenophonic representation of the *strategos* Chares is peculiar too, although the historian mentions him only twice in the seventh book, but stressing repeatedly his name and with a rather positive judgment.

The first occurrence is above all significant (VII, 2, 18-23): while dealing with his activity in 367/6 in aid of Phlius during the Theban invasions, Xenophon devotes a long account to a small event, whose only result seems to be the positive light shed on the value and the pity of Chares.

He is described as the right man for the intervention to Phlius, a very important town both for Athens and Sparta, but surrounded by enemies, who

<sup>48</sup> According to STYLIANOU 1998, 372, this is one of the two principal confusions in the fifteenth Diodorean book. For the analysis of the reasons of the Diodorean favour towards Timotheus (tracing back probably to his source Ephorus), see now BIANCO 2007, 109.

<sup>49</sup> This oration, that can be probably attributed to Apollodorus, the son of the banker Pasion, reports many interesting and plausible details about these events, despite a peculiar *bias* against Timotheus: see BIANCO 2007, 30, 98.

where the Argives and the Sicyonians<sup>50</sup>. For this reason it was in serious difficulties, while the Athenians were sending to the Peloponnesus one after the other their chief *strategoi* in order to hinder Theban activity, with no success<sup>51</sup>.

Phlius, however, kept faithful to the alliance with Sparta and Athens, despite the threat of the Argives, who had already attacked and plundered the Phliasian territory and then conquered and fortified the Trikaranon; simultaneously the Sicyonians had blocked the boundaries of the *chora*, provoking shortage of supplies. So the Phlians were compelled to go to Corinth to get the supplies, but the journey was dangerous.

Under these conditions of extreme precariousness, they finally found in Chares a general who could escort the convoy (ἤδη παντάπασιν ἀποροῦντες Χάρητα διεπράξαντο σφίσι παραπέμψαι τὴν παραπομπήν: VII, 2, 18), in what may be considered the first official campaign of the *strategos*. He succeeded not only in defeating the enemies who attacked the convoy, but also the Sicyonians who were fortifying a part of the border; his operation was conducted with great tactical ability and value, after the celebration of a sacrifice that put the men under the inspiration of the deities (VII, 2, 21).

While Chares was in that region, there was the crisis of Oropus and the Athenians mobilized all their forces, recalling also this general from the Peloponnesus (VII, 4, 1). In Xenophon the two episodes seem almost contemporaries, whereas in Diodorus they are recorded under two different years (367/6 and 366/5), which is perhaps more likely<sup>52</sup>, this can mean also

<sup>50</sup> Xenophon widely analyzes (VII, 2) Phlius' problems because of its loyalty to Sparta and Athens; probably this particular attention toward this little town was due to his personal interests (see also *Hell.* IV, 4, 15; V, 2, 8 ; 3, 10). On the paradigmatic attention to Phlius see for example GRAY 1989, 165-170; DILLERY 1995, 130; LUPPINO MANES 2000, 173.

<sup>51</sup> This was principally the result of Callistratus' diplomatic action, who had already sent Iphicrates (see *supra*; *Xen. Hell.* VI, 5, 49; *Diod.* XV, 63, 2), Chabrias (*Xen. Hell.* VII, 1, 25; *Diod.* XV, 68, 1-2; 69, 1-4), and other *strategoi* (for example Timomachus: *Xen. Hell.* VII, 1, 41); SEALEY 1956, 178-203; BEARZOT 1978, 7-27.

<sup>52</sup> *Xen. Hell.* VII, 2, 1-3, 1; *Diod.* XV, 75, 3. Chares' enterprises in that area must have been different, as it is well described by THOMPSON 1983, 303-305, who distinguishes the events told by Xenophon from those of Diodorus. In this context we can perhaps insert Aeschines' reference (II, 168), who mentions his participation to the armed escort of a convoy, without reminding of Chares' role, because of their political enmity.

that the *strategos* obtained the renewal of the office, thanks to his success in the Peloponnesus, so that the Athenians decided to send him to the boundary with Boeotia in order to try to resolve this problem.

However, he probably arrived too late, when the situation was compromised; the Thebans had already seized the town that was crucial for its position on the shortest road from Euboea to the grain supplies, while no ally intervened to defend Athenian interests.

Actually, in the sources the role of Chares is unclear. It is possible that he did not even arrive in Oropus. Xenophon emphasizes only that his departure meant the loss of the control of the port of Sicyon (VII, 4, 1) and immediately after he cites Chares' new intervention in the area of Corinth (VII, 4, 5). Moreover, it is necessary to remember that this *strategos* was not involved at all in the action brought by the Athenians against Callistratus and Chabrias for the loss of Oropus: probably this means that he had nothing to do with this failure.

Chares had been indeed sent to help the allied Corinth, that was threatened by the enemies, in order not to lose the control of a strategic town, as it happened for Phlius. But the Corinthians feared the intervention of the Athenians and preferred to dismiss the army, though with many praises for Chares' promptness.

Even on this occasion, that could be easily interpreted as a diplomatic humiliation, the historian emphasizes the military and moral skills of the *strategos*, and hastens to explain that if the Corinthians suspected the Athenian good faith in this context, it was not because of Chares, but of the Athenian alliance with the Arcadians<sup>53</sup>.

In Xenophon there is no trace of that hostility continuously shown to Chares by many sources (both ancient and modern<sup>54</sup>), that led to a true *damnatio memoriae*, whose origin can be found in his accusation against Timotheus at the time of the social war<sup>55</sup>. From this famous trial onwards – that caused the conviction of Timotheus and the resentment of his teacher

<sup>53</sup> BUCKLER 1980, 199, too realizes the Athenian responsibilities in general.

<sup>54</sup> It is therefore obvious that Chares wasn't unanimously criticized by the ancients, as CARGILL 1981, 193 pretends. For a *status quaestionis* on criticism on Chares, I don't repeat here what I wrote in BIANCO 2002 and 2003.

<sup>55</sup> For the sources about this trial: e.g. Isocr. XV, 129; Nep. *Tim.* 3, 4-5; Diod. XVI, 21, 4; Polyæn. III, 9, 15 and 29, etc.

Isocrates – Chares was the pre-eminent object of the orator's barbs, whose influence was widely spread<sup>56</sup>.

On the contrary, the observation of Xenophon's neutrality perhaps can also carry weight on the difficult matter concerning the dating of the *Hellenica*<sup>57</sup>, because it could be a further element to date their composition before (perhaps only a little) the tradition started by Isocrates in the *Antidosis*, which can be dated at 354/3.

In any case the attitude of the historian is surprising since, out of the ordinary, he stresses Chares' military and moral virtues<sup>58</sup>, reminding of his successes and minimizing his possible failures, showing him as attentive to the necessities of defenceless people and pious in religious affairs.

It is very difficult, however, to understand the reasons of these different judgements of Xenophon on the Athenian *stratego*i of the fourth century, due probably to a wide variety of factors, among which we can remember for example his admiration for their military skills, in particular as mercenaries' commanders<sup>59</sup>.

But the general attitude of the historian, as we said, can find coherence in the will of minimizing the new Athenian hegemony and obliterating as most as possible its chief protagonists<sup>60</sup>. Perhaps for Xenophon none of them really knew how to manage the hegemony and didn't deserve to replace the Spartans; in Greece by that time only the disorder was reigning sovereign.

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<sup>56</sup> BIANCO 2003. Also DAVERIO ROCCHI 1978, 363 n. 4, notes the difference in Xenophon's treatment of this *strategos* from the others.

<sup>57</sup> About which see *supra*, n. 40.

<sup>58</sup> Among the texts examined, this is the only case in which Xenophon praises moral virtues of an Athenian *strategos*. Interesting the ideas of TAMIOLAKI (forthcoming) that the connection between leadership and virtue belongs mainly to the sphere of ideal and that in reality the two concepts can perfectly be dissociated.

<sup>59</sup> For his admiration towards military skills, see for example ANDERSON 1970, 129-131; HIGGINS 1977, 141. In addition to personal elements, there could be different political interpretations: ZAHNT 2000, 295-325.

<sup>60</sup> For the Xenophontic will of showing "imperialism's intrinsic and sometimes ignoble futility" see HIGGINS 1977, 126; of denying substance to Athenian fourth century imperialism, see TUPLIN 1993, 166-167.

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