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Edward Anson ✦ Michael Fronda ✦ David Hollander
Timothy Howe ✦ Joseph Roisman ✦ John Vanderspoel
Pat Wheatley ✦ Sabine Müller



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Contents of volume twenty-nine

Numbers 3-4

- 91 Benjamin Scolnic, *The Villages of the Carians in Diodorus Siculus and Seleucus I's Route to Babylon in the Winter of 312/311 B.C.E.*
- 115 Andrew G. Scott, *Leadership, Valor, and Spartan Death in Battle in Xenophon's Hellenica*
- 134 Guglielmo Bagella, *Il Metodo Compositivo di Plutarco per la Vita di Crasso*
- 157 Alexander Yakobson, *Cicero, the Constitution and the Roman People*

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Leadership, Valor, and Spartan Death in Battle in Xenophon's *Hellenica* Andrew G. Scott

Abstract: This paper examines the application of a specific phrase, namely μάχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν (to die fighting), throughout the works of Xenophon. As the majority of applications occur in the *Hellenica*, and specifically in a Spartan context, I assess the import of its usage, arguing that Xenophon applies the phrase when he wishes judgments, primarily negative, of both Spartan valor and leadership to be made. This finding has implications for Xenophon's view of Spartan hegemony more broadly.

I. Introduction

This paper explores the repeated use of a verbal formula throughout Xenophon's *Hellenica*, with the goal of clarifying the author's employment of the phrase in a Spartan context. The formula in question is μάχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν (to die fighting). Throughout his works, Xenophon uses this phrase with some frequency.¹ It occurs a single time each in the *Anabasis*, *Oeconomicus*, *Cyropaedia*, and *Agésilas*, and twelve times in the *Hellenica*.² Of the occurrences in the *Hellenica*, eight describe Spartan deaths in battle, while the other four are used to depict various other combatants. The use of this phrase is of considerable interest. First, it reveals something about Xenophon's views of leadership. Second, the phrase highlights the popular perception of the Spartans' preference for dying in battle.³ The Spartans, of course, were not the only individuals who could die fighting, as Xenophon's use of this formula shows (and common sense advises). The phrase, however, is overwhelmingly applied to Spartan battle deaths. In what follows, I will examine the use of the phrase in two particular modalities, specifically Xenophon's depiction of good or poor leadership and traditional beliefs about

¹ The body of evidence presented below was assembled from both a reading of Xenophon's texts and various searches of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. To my knowledge, Xenophon does not use a similar variant phrase. While he does use different verbs for dying, he does not similarly pair them with a verb of fighting. I would like to thank Paul Christesen and Tom Figueira for reading and commenting extensively on an earlier draft of this paper, as well as *AHB*'s two anonymous readers, whose criticisms helped sharpen and improve my argument. I also owe gratitude to Karen Bassi and the other participants in a 2014 NEH Summer Institute on Greek mortality, who helped me rethink various aspects of this paper. I take full responsibility for errors that remain. All translations are my own.

² Of these four uses in the *Anabasis*, *Oeconomicus*, *Cyropaedia*, and *Agésilas* only three are unique; the relevant passage in the *Agésilas* mirrors closely the same scene in the *Hellenica*. See further below.

³ E.g. Aristodemus' treatment after Thermopylae (Hdt. 7.231) and the description of the treatment of cowards in Xen. *Lac.* 9. The issue is dealt with in greater detail below.

Spartan valor.⁴ I shall argue that Xenophon uses this phrase to show both the persistence of Spartan *nomos* regarding valor, as well as the negative implications of this persistence. Specifically, this paper finds that despite a number of seemingly valorous Spartan deaths, Xenophon applies the phrase in circumstances in which he wishes to provoke a negative judgment of Spartan leadership or valor.

A related, and central, issue of this paper is Xenophon's relationship with and attitude toward Sparta, a matter that continues to be explored by scholars. While the more established, and still often current, view has understood Xenophon as generally sympathetic to Sparta, the extent of this sympathy has been debated, and more recent work has seen Xenophon in a different light.⁵ In particular, scholars have attempted to show that Xenophon could be critical of Sparta and was hardly a naïve laconizer, offering important nuance to Xenophon's depiction of Sparta and arguing that Xenophon is a subtle and subversive writer.⁶ In this paper, I accept that Xenophon could be disapproving of Sparta, while resisting the temptation to read each relevant passage as a subtly subversive critique of that city-state.⁷

II. μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν in Xenophon's corpus

A consideration of all the passages from Xenophon's corpus that employ μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν will help to establish the particular valence of the phrase. The first to consider occurs at the conclusion of Xenophon's lengthy obituary of Cyrus the Younger in the *Anabasis*. After an extensive list of praiseworthy attributes, Xenophon includes one final piece of evidence attesting to Cyrus' good leadership (*Ana.* 1.9.31):

μέγα δὲ τεκμήριον καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ τελευτῇ τοῦ βίου αὐτῷ γεγόμενον ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ἀγαθὸς καὶ κρίνειν ὀρθῶς ἐδύνατο τοὺς πιστοὺς καὶ εὖνους καὶ βεβαίους. ἀποθνήσκοντος γὰρ αὐτοῦ πάντες οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν φίλοι καὶ συντράπεζοι ἀπέθανον μαχόμενοι ὑπὲρ Κύρου πλὴν Ἀριαίου· οὗτος δὲ τεταγμένος ἐτύγχανεν ἐπὶ τῷ εὐωνύμῳ τοῦ ἱππικοῦ ἄρχων· ὥς δ' ἦσθετο Κύρον πεπτωκότα, ἔφυγεν ἔχων καὶ τὸ στράτευμα πᾶν οὗ ἡγεῖτο.

Great evidence that he was a good man and able to correctly discern those who were trustworthy, well disposed, and steadfast occurred at the end of his life. When he died,

⁴ For Xenophon's abiding interest in leadership in his literary works, see Breitenbach (1950) and Westlake (1966); Humble (1997) 46 n. 1 provides further citations. Recent work has expanded on this theme, notably: Hutchinson (2000), Nadon (2001), Gray (2011), Sandridge (2012), and Buzzetti (2014).

⁵ The tradition stretches back to Niebuhr (1828); more recently, see Cawkwell (1979) 37-41. Many other commentators see Xenophon as biased toward Sparta, or at least generally sympathetic, though it should be noted that this bias or sympathy is generally not understood to preclude all criticism: e.g. Ollier (1933), Tigerstedt (1965) 169-174, Henry (1966) 204-210, David (1981) 51-53, Lanzilotta (1984), Riedinger (1991), Lipka (2002) 17-18, and Daverio Rocchi (2007).

⁶ Those reading Xenophon as more critical of Sparta include Grayson (1975) 34-36, Proietti (1987), Tatum (1989) 50-53, Badian (1994) 48-51, Dillery (1995) 6, 15-16, and Cuniberti (2007). See also Higgins (1977) 65-75, Tuplin (1993), Humble (2004) 215-228, Humble (1997), Rebenich (1998) 31-35, Millender (2012), and Stronk (1995) 127-128. Christesen (forthcoming) surveys the issue.

⁷ See Gray (2011) 54-62 for a survey of such "darker readings" of Xenophon.

all his friends and dining companions around him also died fighting on behalf of Cyrus, with the exception of Ariaeus. He happened to be stationed as leader on the left side of the cavalry, and when he learned that Cyrus had fallen, he fled, retaining possession of the entire force that he commanded.

This depiction is closely mirrored in the *Oeconomicus*, this time spoken by Socrates (*Oec.* 4.19):

ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἡγοῦμαι μέγα τεκμήριον ἄρχοντος ἀρετῆς εἶναι, ὃ ἂν ἐκόντες πείθωνται καὶ ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς παραμένειν ἐθέλωσιν. ἐκείνῳ δὲ καὶ οἱ φίλοι ζῶντί τε συνεμάχοντο καὶ ἀποθανόντι συναπέθανον πάντες περὶ τὸν νεκρὸν μαχόμενοι πλὴν Ἀριαίου· Ἀριαῖος δ' ἔτυχεν ἐπὶ τῷ εὐωνύμῳ κέρατι τεταγμένος.

I consider it to be great evidence of the excellence of a commander, when they willingly obey him and wish to remain by him in adverse circumstances. When he was living, his friends fought by his side, and when he was dying, they all fought about the corpse and perished with him, with the exception of Ariaeus. For Ariaeus happened to be positioned on the left wing.

These passages stress the sense of shared death, particularly in the clustering of particular words and phrases. In the first passage, the deaths of Cyrus and his companions are closely connected (ἀποθνήσκοντος γὰρ αὐτοῦ πάντες οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν φίλοι καὶ συντράπεζοι ἀπέθανον μαχόμενοι), the latter of whom perished while fighting. The second passage uses similar language (συνεμάχοντο καὶ ἀποθανόντι συναπέθανον πάντες περὶ τὸν νεκρὸν μαχόμενοι), perhaps stressing to an even greater extent the shared experience with multiple uses of the prefix συν-, and also ending with the fact that they all died fighting together (συναπέθανον πάντες περὶ τὸν νεκρὸν μαχόμενοι), where the companions (πάντες) and Cyrus' corpse (περὶ τὸν νεκρὸν) are sandwiched in between the actions of death and fighting. These passages emphasize both Cyrus' leadership and the valor of his men, which is further underlined by the flight of Ariaeus.⁸

Xenophon presents an idealized, yet not unproblematic, depiction of Cyrus the Younger as a leader, and from this portrait it seems that there can be little question that a commander's ability to instill such loyalty in his men was a component of this.⁹ The fact that both Xenophon, as narrator of the *Anabasis*, and Socrates claim that this is evidence of Cyrus' leadership suggests that we are receiving a true account of the author's belief.¹⁰ In the passage from the *Oeconomicus*, Socrates even prefaces his description of Cyrus' death with the claim that he believed that Cyrus would have been the best ruler.¹¹ It also seems reasonable to infer that those leaders who die in battle, but whose men flee, come up short as leaders in this regard. The salience of this point will be apparent later in a discussion of the use of the phrase in the *Hellenica*.

⁸ On Ariaeus' other negative qualities, see Pomeroy (1994) 251.

⁹ For Xenophon's treatment of Cyrus the Younger in the first book of the *Anabasis* as idealized, yet open to criticism, see Buzzetti (2014) 39-73, Flower (2012) 188-194.

¹⁰ Gray (2011) 73: "Putting the same praise as he delivered into his mentor's mouth is further 'evidence' of the soundness of Xenophon's judgment in *Anabasis*."

¹¹ Καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δί', ἔφη Σωκράτης, Κῦρός γε, εἰ ἐβίωσεν, ἄριστος ἂν δοκεῖ ἄρχων γενέσθαι, *Oec.* 4.18.

The second passage of note comes from the *Cyropaedia* and involves the phrase μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν in a discussion that touches on both leadership and valor. When asked by Chrysantas if Cyrus the Elder's word alone could make men courageous, Cyrus answers that it could hardly be the case (Cyr. 3.3.51):

ἼΗ καὶ δύναιτ' ἄν, ἔφη ὁ Κῦρος, εἷς λόγος ῥηθεὶς αὐθημερὸν αἰδοῦς μὲν ἐμπλῆσαι τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀκουόντων, ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσχυρῶν κωλύσαι, προτρέψαι δὲ ὡς χρὴ ἐπαίνου μὲν ἔνεκα πάντα μὲν πόνον, πάντα δὲ κίνδυνον ὑποδύεσθαι, λαβεῖν δ' ἐν ταῖς γνώμαις βεβαίως τοῦτο ὡς αἰρετώτερον ἐστὶ μαχομένους ἀποθνήσκειν μᾶλλον ἢ φεύγοντας σώζεσθαι;

"Could it be," said Cyrus, "that one word, spoken extemporaneously, might fill up the souls of those listening with a sense of honor or keep them away from cowardly deeds? Or that it might turn them toward every hardship and danger that is necessary for the sake of praise, or receive steadfastly in their minds that it is preferable to die fighting than to save themselves by flight?"

Cyrus then goes on explain that laws are needed to provide good men with freedom and honor, while the bad would receive a life that is not worth living (3.3.52-53). In addition, he stresses the need for training as a prerequisite for valor (3.3.54-55). In this scheme, to die fighting is a courageous act that is summoned not by the words of a leader, but by prior training. The valor of this act is apparent in its contrast with saving oneself by flight. When read in combination with the passages from the *Anabasis* and *Oeconomicus*, we infer that the good leader was able to arouse this courage in his men, which had already been developed in them by prior training and social sanction.

It seems impossible to ignore the connection between the last passage and Xenophon's discussion of Spartan valor in his *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. In chapter nine of that work (Lac. 9.1-5), Xenophon discusses the social strictures in place at Sparta to encourage courageous behavior. He opens this passage by stating that Lycurgus made it so that an honorable death was preferable to a disgraceful life (αἰρετώτερον εἶναι τὸν καλὸν θάνατον ἀντὶ τοῦ αἰσχυροῦ βίου, 9.1). After an authorial insertion that courage leads to safety while cowardice courts death, Xenophon details the sanctions against cowards at Sparta, concluding that it is little wonder that one would prefer death to a dishonorable and shameful life (οὐδὲν θαυμάζω τὸ προαιρεῖσθαι ἐκεῖ θάνατον ἀντὶ τοῦ οὕτως ἀτίμου τε καὶ ἐπονειδίστου βίου).¹² This discussion dovetails with Cyrus the Elder's prescription for instilling courage in his men, and it seems likely that Xenophon also believed that it was up to the leader himself to rouse this courage in times of need. The ability to do so would prove one's success as a leader.

These passages suggest that in his use of this verbal formula, Xenophon comments, or invites judgment, on both the leadership and valor of those involved. This theme can also be connected to Spartan practice and Sparta's societal views toward death in battle. Before turning to a specifically Spartan context, it will be necessary to examine the uses of the formula in the *Hellenica* that do not pertain to Spartan deaths in battle in order to further demonstrate the various ways that Xenophon employs it.

¹² Lipka (2002) 175 cites similar passages attesting to Xenophon's view regarding the salvific effect of courage and the detrimental effect of flight.

III. *μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν* in a non-Spartan context in the *Hellenica*

Xenophon applies the phrase *μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν* to non-Spartan situations in three passages. Taking these chronologically in the text, we will first consider the case of Polycharmus the Pharsalian. In this story, which takes place in 394, the Thessalians are unexpectedly set upon by Agesilaus and the Spartan forces.¹³ Most of the Thessalians flee, while others turn to face the Spartans. Polycharmus, on the side of the Thessalians, is one of those who remains, and he dies fighting along with others (*Πολύχαρμος μέντοι ὁ Φαρσάλιος ἱππαρχῶν ἀνέστρεψέ τε καὶ μαχόμενος σὺν τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ἀποθνήσκει*, 4.3.8). Xenophon specifically states his rank as hipparch, thus identifying him as a leader, and notes that he perished with his men around him. Reading this passage against the death scenes of Cyrus the Younger, we should conclude that Xenophon was portraying Polycharmus as a good leader.

Another use is applied to the Thebans fighting at Leuctra. In this passage, Xenophon describes their motivation in engaging the Spartans in battle. Since a large number of Thebans had previously been in exile, they thought it better to die fighting than to go into exile again (*ἅτε δὲ καὶ πεφευγότες πρόσθεν πολλοὶ αὐτῶν ἐλογίζοντο κρεῖττον εἶναι μαχομένους ἀποθνήσκειν ἢ πάλιν φεύγειν*, 6.4.6). This passage is a bit different, as it discusses not what happened, but what the Thebans were thinking at the time. The contrast, however, between death in battle and flight seems significant, as if it attests to their decision to pursue the valorous route over the cowardly one. As the Thebans prevailed gloriously, the outcome casts retrospective validation upon their decision.

In a later instance, Xenophon applies the phrase to Stratolas and the other Eleans who perished in a conflict with the Arcadians in 364, in a passage that reflects positively on both the leadership of Stratolas and the bravery of the Eleans. Xenophon writes that the Eleans routed the Arcadians, before being attacked from above while fighting in the sanctuary of Olympia. As they had the disadvantageous position, many died fighting, including Stratolas, leader of a picked troop of 300 (*ἐν τῷ ἰσοπέδῳ μαχόμενοι, ἀποθνήσκουσιν ἄλλοι τε τῶν Ἡλείων καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τῶν τριακοσίων ἄρχων Στρατόλας*, 7.4.31). Throughout this section, Xenophon stresses the bravery of the Eleans on this occasion, despite the fact that their valor had previously been looked down upon by the Achaeans and Athenians (7.4.30). On the day of this battle, contrary to expectation, they acted as if they were the bravest (*ὥς ἀλκιμώτατοι ὄντες*), a phrase in which *ὥς* signals Xenophon's belief in their true, less valorous, nature. He concludes his narrative of these events by stating that, although the Eleans were brave on this day, it was the sort of bravery inspired by a god, not one held for a long period of time.¹⁴ Xenophon's skepticism seems to suggest that while bravery could be achieved in a single instant, it perhaps did not always extend throughout one's life.

¹³ The story is retold, in largely the same manner, in the *Agesilaus* (2.1-5). This is the one passage from the *Agesilaus* in which the phrase *μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν* occurs, as noted above.

¹⁴ 7.4.32, *τοιούτοι γενόμενοι οἷους τὴν ἀρετὴν θεὸς μὲν ἂν ἐμπνεύσας δύναιτο καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἀποδείξαι, ἄνθρωποι δὲ οὐδ' ἂν ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ τοὺς μὴ ὄντας ἀλκίμους ποιήσαιαν*. See Gray (2011) 99-100. Pownall (1998) 265-266 has suggested that the divine inspiration for their bravery may derive from, and serve as a counterpoint to, the impious behavior of their foes, who destroyed some of the temple buildings.

These passages show the same range of applications that are present in the *Anabasis*, *Oeconomicus*, and *Cyropaedia*. In the case of Cyrus the Younger, Xenophon employs the phrase in situations where he wishes to praise the excellence of a leader or the valor of the dead. But he also suggests that death in battle is not always a reflection of the learned bravery extolled by Cyrus the Elder, and which was also cultivated at Sparta. The consistency of usage suggests that Xenophon employed this phrase in passages where a judgment of leadership or valor was warranted.

IV. **μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν** and Spartan leadership in the *Hellenica*

As we turn now to Xenophon's application of the formula **μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν** in Spartan contexts in the *Hellenica*, it will be observed that these instances also elicit judgments regarding leadership and valor. The first group of passages will be examined in terms of leadership. Perhaps most striking is that, more often than not, it seems that Xenophon uses this phrase to highlight the poor leadership of particular Spartans.

The first such instance is the death of Mindarus, who perished in battle against Alcibiades at Cyzicus in 410. Prior to the engagement, Mindarus had been running his ships through maneuvers, when he was caught off guard by Alcibiades. When his men realized that they were outnumbered by the Athenians, they made their way to shore. Mindarus and his men disembarked, and Mindarus died fighting on the shore, while the rest of his men fled (αὐτὸς ἀποβὰς ἐν τῇ γῇ μαχόμενος ἀπέθανεν· οἱ δὲ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες ἔφυγον, 1.1.18). Mindarus' failure in leadership is apparent from the lack of steadfastness among his men. This depiction logically follows from what was made known of Mindarus by Xenophon prior to this engagement. Earlier, Mindarus had shown his inferiority in naval warfare at Abydus (1.1.4-7). In Xenophon's depiction of the battle at Cyzicus, Mindarus was no match for the more experienced and tactically superior Alcibiades, and his final stand, fighting on the beach, appears to be more of a way to stave off ignominy than achieve victory.¹⁵ There is present in this passage, however, the contrast between death in battle and flight. Although Mindarus was perhaps not a good leader, Xenophon appears to recognize his adherence to the Spartan social code.¹⁶

A similar example can be found in the figure of Peisander, the brother-in-law of king Agesilaus, who was left in command at sea in Ionia after Agesilaus' return to Greece. When Peisander engaged Conon in battle at Cnidus, despite possessing fewer ships, his allies on the left fled immediately. In the battle, Peisander died fighting aboard his ship (αὐτὸν δ' ἐπὶ τῇ νηὶ μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν, 4.3.12), while the rest of his men fled.¹⁷ Xenophon again has already

¹⁵ For Xenophon's positive depiction of Alcibiades in the *Hellenica*, see Krentz (1989) 91.

¹⁶ Xenophon's somewhat mixed depiction of Mindarus' death is perhaps also highlighted by a more positive tradition in Diodorus Siculus (13.51.6), who writes that Mindarus put up a heroic fight nearby the ships, placing himself in harm's way in front of all his men; he killed many of his attackers, but fighting in a way worthy of his country he met death at the hands of Alcibiades' men.

¹⁷ This position is stated even more strongly and intentionally in Diodorus Siculus (14.83.6-7), who relates that Peisander is said to have considered flight shameful and unworthy of Sparta (αἰσχρὸν εἶναι νομίσας καὶ τῆς

prepared the reader for this failure in leadership. At the time of his appointment, Xenophon states that Peisander was ambitious and strong of spirit, as well as inexperienced in making proper preparations (φιλότιμον μὲν καὶ ἔρρωμένον τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀπειρότερον δὲ τοῦ παρασκευάζεσθαι ὥς δεῖ, 3.4.29). Peisander's personal ambition and his inability to prepare properly suggest a negative reading.¹⁸ Still, Peisander's "Spartan death" seems to be confirmed, in contrast to the flight of his men.

The narrative of Phoebidas' demise shows similarities to that of Peisander. Xenophon again foreshadows his death with a notice about his desires and ability. Phoebidas wanted to achieve something illustrious even more than he wished to live; indeed, he was not considered practical or wise (καὶ γὰρ ἦν τοῦ λαμπρόν τι ποιῆσαι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ζῆν ἐραστής, οὐ μέντοι λογιστικός γε οὐδὲ πάνυ φρόνιμος ἐδόκει εἶναι, 5.2.28). After a good beginning in his engagement with the Thebans at Thespieae, Phoebidas pursued the enemy boldly (θρασέως), trapping the Theban cavalry. When the Thebans turned to face Phoebidas' forces, the peltasts fled and the Theban cavalry attacked. Phoebidas then died fighting with two or three others, while the rest of the mercenaries fled (καὶ ὁ μὲν δὴ Φοιβίδας καὶ δύο ἢ τρεῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ μαχόμενοι ἀπέθανον, οἱ δὲ μισθοφόροι τούτου γενομένου πάντες ἔφυγον, 5.4.45).¹⁹ The fact that Phoebidas only commanded the loyalty of the two or three who died with him, while the rest of his troops left his side, signals his shortcomings as a leader. Xenophon had already prepared the reader for such an outcome, through his earlier description of this character. He further criticizes Phoebidas by stating that the Thebans were so excited by their victory at Thespieae that they continued attacking Thespieae and the surrounding towns (5.4.46).²⁰ Yet again, however, Xenophon juxtaposes Phoebidas' death in battle with the flight of his men, suggesting poor leadership but his retention of Spartan values.

The final example of this type is Polytropus, who led Corinthian mercenaries and died fighting against the Mantineians in 370 (6.5.11-14).²¹ In the sentence just prior to the narration of his death, Xenophon writes that Polytropus' men were approaching very boldly (μάλα θρασέως, 6.5.13), highlighting his poor leadership.²² In addition, while Polytropus died fighting in that very spot (καὶ ὁ μὲν Πολύτροπος μαχόμενος αὐτοῦ ἀποθνήσκει), the rest of his men fled, and Xenophon states that many would have been killed had not cavalry from Phlius been present. This example is rather straightforward, in light of the passages on Cyrus the Younger

Σπάρτης ἀνάξιον τὸ φυγεῖν ἀγεννῶς). As in the case of Mindarus, Xenophon seems to shy away from this more positive tradition.

¹⁸ Similarly, Callicratidas' ambition is excessive and puts the Spartans at risk; see Gray (1989) 81-83.

¹⁹ Diodorus Siculus (15.33.6), on the other hand, gives a more extensive account. He notes that Phoebidas fought illustriously (λαμπρῶς ἀγωνισάμενος, corresponding to Xenophon's notice of his desire above) and died heroically suffering many frontal wounds. He also lost more than 500 men. Xenophon's avoidance of such an elaborate depiction of his supposedly heroic death suggests the author's critical stance toward Phoebidas.

²⁰ Cf. Plut. *Pel.* 15.4. Tuplin (1993) 129: the "defeat and death of Phoebidas rekindles Theban confidence and sends them onto the offensive against Thespieae and other Boeotian cities."

²¹ Polytropus' Spartiate status is not entirely clear from the context of this passage or from Diodorus Siculus 15.62.1-2. In the assumption that Polytropus was a Spartiate, I follow Poralla (1913) no. 633.

²² Similarly, Spartan peltasts pursued the Olynthians too boldly (μάλα θρασέως) and were attacked, resulting in Tlemonidas' death, along with 100 others (5.3.4). This action led directly to Teleutias' anger and death (see below). Xenophon also calls Nicolochus, a Spartan navarch, μάλα θρασὺν ἄνδρα (5.4.65), whose boldness leads him, undermanned, into a battle with Timotheus, which he loses.

quoted above. Polytropus exhibits poor leadership prior to his death, and when he dies, he does so without the loyalty of his men.²³ His death, however, follows Spartan strictures, in contrast to the flight of his men.

Perhaps the one instance in which this phrase reflects good leadership is the case of the Spartan Pasimachus. In his final scene, Pasimachus exhibits the distinct trademarks of Spartan identity, including deception and valor. As hipparmost, Pasimachus abandoned his horse in battle against the Argives in order to aid the Sicyonians, who were being routed. His small force took shields from the Sicyonians, which were decorated with sigmas. The Argives, however, thinking they were up against Sicyonians, were not intimidated in the least. As the two sides met in battle, Pasimachus swore by the Dioscuri that the sigma-bearing shields would deceive the Argives and attacked.²⁴ Xenophon states that the two sides met in battle, few against many, and there Pasimachus died fighting, along with the rest of his companions (καὶ οὕτω μαχόμενος μετ' ὀλίγων πρὸς πολλοὺς ἀποθνήσκει καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν περὶ αὐτόν, 4.4.10). The similarity to the language in the passages on Cyrus the Younger quoted above suggests that Xenophon wishes the reader to understand Pasimachus' leadership as excellent, given that his men showed loyalty in following him to death. This anecdote should be seen as a moral story of Spartan courage.²⁵

Not all examples, however, are as straightforward as the passages above. Two examples might be classified as “mixed” depictions of Spartan leadership. In the case of Anaxibius, Xenophon criticizes him in some respects, but also suggests that some of his men were loyal in following him to his death, seemingly evidence of his good leadership. The story goes that Anaxibius, finding himself trapped in an ambush set by Iphicrates nearby Abydus in 389, declares that it is a fine thing to die and dismisses his men. Despite his order, his *paidika* and twelve Spartan harmosts remain by his side and fight to the death.²⁶ The lines are worthy of quotation (4.8.38):

καὶ ταῦτ' ἔλεγε καὶ παρὰ τοῦ ὑπασπιστοῦ λαβὼν τὴν ἀσπίδα ἐν χώρᾳ αὐτοῦ μαχόμενος ἀποθνήσκει. καὶ τὰ παιδικὰ μέντοι αὐτῷ παρέμεινε, καὶ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων δὲ τῶν συνελλυθέντων ἐκ τῶν πόλεων ἄρμοστήρων ὥς δώδεκα μαχόμενοι συναπέθανον·

So he spoke these things and taking his shield from his shield-bearer, he died fighting in that very place. His *paidika* remained by his side, and twelve of the Spartan harmosts who had gathered from their cities died fighting together with him.

The similarity to the encomium for Cyrus the Younger is strong, especially with the repetition of the phrase “to die fighting,” in the second instance with the συν- prefix, which marks a variation from the other instances of the formula, emphasizing here the collective versus singular decision to choose death. It would be difficult to think that Xenophon does not wish his reader to understand the loyalty of the fellow dead to Anaxibius. He also seems to

²³ Modern critics have been equally harsh: Cartledge (1987) 323 describes this event as the “fatal blunder of Polytropus.”

²⁴ His action seems to be a classic example of Spartan duplicity. For examples of similar uses of deception as a motivating tool, see Powell (1989) 178-179.

²⁵ Gray (1989) 155-157.

²⁶ Although Xenophon refers to them as Lacedaemonians, I take him to mean that the harmosts were Spartiates; cf. Cartledge (1987) 367.

point up the Spartan valor of the group, as Spartan harmosts died with him, while the mercenaries fled. When he realized that safety was impossible, Anaxibius did the “Spartan thing,” consigning himself to his death and specifically claiming that it was a fine thing for him to die (ἐμοὶ μὲν ἐνθάδε καλὸν ἀποθανεῖν, 4.8.38).

This seemingly positive portrayal, however, is tainted both by the flight of some of Anaxibius’ men, as well as by Xenophon’s earlier depiction of Anaxibius. Xenophon states that Anaxibius was marching despite unsuccessful sacrifices (so it was reported) and was not keeping his men in order (4.8.36).²⁷ He acted in this way because of his arrogance (καταφρονήσας), believing that he was traveling through a friendly country and people.²⁸ When it comes to Anaxibius’ death scene, it is perhaps telling that it is the Spartans that are willing to die with him, not the mercenaries. Thus, Anaxibius’ Spartiate peers also conformed to the Spartan ideal, while Anaxibius’ leadership is undercut by the flight of the mercenary force. In the end, Anaxibius at least claims for himself a valorous death, facing down the enemy and refusing flight.²⁹ Xenophon presents him as a bad general, though with a commitment to the Spartan dictate to die rather than avoid a shameful survival.

A more difficult example is the death of Teleutias, whom Xenophon depicts as an excellent leader throughout much of the *Hellenica*.³⁰ Teleutias’ death scene, however, evokes Xenophon’s explicit criticism, and perhaps his implicit reproach as well. Xenophon writes that Teleutias died fighting, while the men around him fled (καὶ ὁ μὲν Τελευτίας ἐνταῦθα μαχόμενος ἀποθνήσκει. τούτου δὲ γενομένου εὐθύς καὶ οἱ ἄμφ’ αὐτὸν ἐνέκλιναν, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἔτι ἴστατο, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἔφευγον, 5.3.6). At this point, Teleutias comes in for criticism from Xenophon, who quickly notes that the event was a disaster for Sparta and begins a disquisition on the danger of acting out of anger.³¹ Xenophon also writes that very many were killed in this engagement, and that Teleutias’ death forced the Spartans to send out an even greater force, so as to lessen their enemies’ resolution and preserve their previous accomplishments (5.3.8). Still, despite his shortcomings on this occasion, Teleutias is portrayed as fighting to the death in contrast to the flight of his men. The negative aspect of their flight, however, might be mitigated by the fact that the escape was delayed until after Teleutias fell and could add a certain nuance to his death, in comparison with the other cases. While a lapse in leadership is apparent, Teleutias’ death still conforms to expected Spartan behavior.

²⁷ Tuplin (1993) 78: Anaxibius “provides a second, and more elaborately narrated, case-study in bad generalship.” Pownall (1998) 264 n. 88 provides counter-examples of success following proper attention to sacrifices in the *Hellenica*.

²⁸ See Hau (2012) 594.

²⁹ The positive tradition surrounding Anaxibius can be seen in the *Apophthegmata Laconica* (Plut. *Mor.* 219c), which may be derived from Xenophon’s account: <Ἀναξί->βιος ἐνεδρευθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰφικράτους τοῦ Ἀθηναίου στρατηγοῦ καὶ ἐρωτώμενος ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν τί δεῖ ποεῖν, ‘τί γὰρ ἄλλο’ ἔφη ‘ἢ ὑμᾶς μὲν σώζεσθαι, ἐμὲ δὲ μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν;’ (“Anaxibius, ambushed by Iphicrates, the Athenian general, was asked by his soldiers what they should do. ‘What else,’ he said, ‘than that you save yourselves and that I die fighting.’”)

³⁰ His leadership skills are attested at, e.g., 5.1.3-4; cf. Tuplin (1993) 83, who calls him an “*exemplum* of technical virtue.” Humble (1997) 176-185 provides an analysis largely along the same lines, though she notes the somewhat mixed depiction, highlighted by Teleutias’ “unimpressive end” (185).

³¹ Diodorus Siculus (15.21.2) also notes the high number of casualties on the Spartan side. Tuplin (1993) 46 compares Teleutias’ failure with Pausanias’ losses of notable men (2.4.31-32).

Throughout these examples, we have seen that Xenophon criticizes Spartan leadership, at least as it contrasts with the ideal leadership of Cyrus the Younger as seen in the *Anabasis* and *Oeconomicus*. More often than not, Spartan leadership seems unable to rouse the courage that was supposed to be instilled in Spartan citizens, or which was simply lacking in their mercenary forces. On the other hand, Xenophon consistently portrays the deaths in battle of Sparta leaders according to the tenets of Spartan society and in the manner that the code of Spartan valor had come to be imagined in the fifth and fourth centuries. It is to this issue more specifically that we now turn.

V. μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν and Spartan valor

As observed above, Xenophon's use of the phrase μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν extends to judgments both of leadership and of one's commitment to Spartan social strictures. The latter half of this equation needs to be explored more fully. That the phrase should reflect valorous action is hardly surprising, as the frequent use of a synonymous phrase in funeral orations attests. Perhaps the most well known example of a similar verbal usage comes from the Periclean *epitaphios*, which commemorates those fallen in battle with the phrase μαχόμενοι ἐτελεύτησαν (Thuc. 2.41.5). Likewise, Lysias (2.66) praises the foreigners who gave aid to the expulsion of the tyrants and who "fighting for our safety ... ended their lives in such a way" (περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας μαχόμενοι ... τοιαύτην τοῦ βίου τελευτὴν ἐποιήσαντο;).³² Hyperides (6.16) asks who could deny praise of those citizens who died in war and gave their lives for the freedom of the Greeks, believing that the clearest display of supporting Greece's freedom was to die fighting for it (τὸ μαχομένους τελευτῆσαι ὑπὲρ αὐτ<ῆ>[ς];).³³

At Sparta, death in battle was viewed as especially important, and this aspect of Spartan courage was a central part of Spartan propaganda.³⁴ The tradition of Spartan bravery can be found in various sources, beginning with Herodotus.³⁵ In a well known passage, Herodotus has Demaratus explain to Xerxes the Spartan *nomos* of never fleeing, but maintaining one's position and conquering or dying (7.104). This *nomos* is upheld later when Leonidas dismisses the allies but requires the Spartan forces to remain, believing it unbefitting them to leave their posts (7.220). This event in particular becomes a touchstone for notions of Spartan valor, and is frequently invoked when appeal to Spartan bravery is needed.³⁶

³² For the context, see Todd (2007) 265-266, who connects the sentiment here to the "beautiful death" mentioned at 2.23.

³³ The speech was delivered in 322 in the midst of Athenian resistance to Macedon; see further Herrman (2009) 3-14.

³⁴ For the special importance at Sparta, see Loraux (1995) 63-64; as an aspect of Spartan propaganda, Hooker (1989) 133-135.

³⁵ It is perhaps possible to trace it even to the poetry as Tyrtaeus (esp. fr. 11-13W), though I do not believe his poetry presents as strongly the imperative for death in battle.

³⁶ In addition to the following example from Thucydides and from the speech of Procles below, one might also consider the material from the orator Lycurgus (*in Leocr.* 108) and the sayings attributed to Leonidas in Plutarch (*Mor.* 225a-e).

This appeal can be seen specifically in Thucydides' account of the events at Sphacteria during the Peloponnesian War. The Spartan reputation for bravery was so well developed by the end of the fifth century that when the Spartans surrendered at Sphacteria, Thucydides records the surprise of the other Greeks, who believed that they would die fighting as well as they could; notably, Thucydides employs the same verbal formula examined here: μάχομένους ὡς ἐδύναντο ἀποθνήσκειν (4.40.1). In addition, Thucydides expressly compares the situation to Thermopylae (4.36.1).³⁷ The employment of the formula in this passage in a Spartan context prefigures its use in Xenophon and its particular application to such Spartan deaths.

These literary depictions find analogues in the constitutional tradition and physical record of Sparta. The most salient example of its social importance can be observed in the special dispensation for an inscribed tombstone, attested in both in the literary and archaeological record. Plutarch notes, in both his *Life of Lycurgus* and *Instituta Laconica* (Plut. *Lyc.* 27.2, *Mor.* 238d), that Lycurgus severely restricted burials, requiring every deceased male to be wrapped in his red cloak and in olive leaves, and to be buried in this way with no other grave goods. Those who died in battle were some of the few for whom an inscription might be made, along with mourning and lamentation.³⁸ A significant number of such markers have been discovered, dating from the mid-fifth century onward. These measures in effect exalted the fallen in a way that was unavailable to others and thus privileged their action, elevating the deaths of those who fell in battle to a position of prominence.

The corollary to the memorialization of the war dead at Sparta was the censuring of cowardly behavior. From at least the time of the Persian Wars, those deemed cowards were punished and dishonored. Two individuals in particular, Aristodemus and Pantites, serve as a counterpoint to the valorous behavior of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans at Thermopylae. Herodotus (7.231) relates that Aristodemus, when he arrived at Sparta safely after Thermopylae, was branded a "trembler" and was socially marginalized.³⁹ Rather than suffer the same fate, Pantites preferred to hang himself upon his safe return at Sparta (7.232). Several other examples of the punishments of such men occur.⁴⁰ Although the mechanisms of this punishment are not presented consistently from case to case, the sources generally attest to a societal practice of marginalizing those who did not uphold Sparta's standards of bravery, which seem to have forbidden flight in the face of the enemy. The special burial practices at Sparta, along with the censuring of cowards, indicate the cultural importance of maintaining the ideal of fighting to the death and the imperative to commemorate those who had fallen in battle.⁴¹

³⁷ Cf. Connor (1987) 118 n. 19.

³⁸ On Spartan burial of the dead in the classical period, and these two passages in particular, see Hodkinson (2002) 243-259 and Low (2006) 85-91. The passage in Plutarch's *Lycurgus* seems to state that priestesses received a similar burial, but the text has been notoriously emended to include women who died in childbirth. On this issue, see recently Brulé and Piolot (2004) and Dillon (2007).

³⁹ On the figure of the "trembler," or *tresas*, at Sparta, see Ehrenberg (1936) and Ducat (2006), the latter especially bringing out the complexity of the sources and of the issue as a whole.

⁴⁰ See Ducat (2006) 1-7.

⁴¹ Loraux (1995) 66-70.

As we have seen, Xenophon himself was aware of the importance of death in battle at Sparta, which he discusses in his *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, chapter 9. In this context, one particular use of this phrase *μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν* in the *Hellenica* stands out, both for its presence in a speech (as opposed to narrative) as well as its appeal to idealized Spartan behavior. The phrase occurs in a speech by Procles of Phlius, in which he attempts to convince the Athenians to make an alliance with Sparta. This speech comes at a crucial point in the *Hellenica*. The Thebans, having defeated the Spartans at Leuctra in 371, have crossed the Eurotas and caused damage to perioecic villages, as well as to the port town of Gythium (6.5.30-32). In response, the Spartans appealed to Athens for help. This section of the work is replete with references to mutual aid between Athens and Sparta, including the Spartans' help in driving the tyrants from Athens, their combined efforts to defeat the Persians, and their splitting control of sea and land after the Persian Wars (6.5.34).

After a speech by Cleiteles, Procles, a friend of Agesilaus, discusses the mutual benefit of alliance, as well as the need for stronger states to acquire the goodwill of weaker states when they are in a position to do so (6.5.38-41).⁴² Procles then states that it would be advantageous to have the Spartans as allies if Athens were threatened by the Persians, recalling the valor that the Spartans had shown at Thermopylae (6.5.43):

πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἐνθυμήθητε καὶ τάδε. εἴ ποτε πάλιν ἔλθοι τῇ Ἑλλάδι κίνδυνος ὑπὸ βαρβάρων, τίσιν ἂν μᾶλλον πιστεύσαιτε ἢ Λακεδαιμονίοις; τίνας δὲ ἂν παραστάτας ἥδιον τούτων ποιήσαισθε, ὧν γε καὶ οἱ ταχθέντες ἐν Θερμοπύλαις ἅπαντες εἴλοντο μαχόμενοι ἀποθανεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ ζῶντες ἐπεισφρέσθαι τὸν βάρβαρον τῇ Ἑλλάδι; πῶς οὖν οὐ δίκαιον ὧν τε ἔνεκα ἐγένοντο ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ μεθ' ὑμῶν καὶ ὧν ἐλπίς καὶ αὐθις γενέσθαι πᾶσαν προθυμίαν εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ ὑμᾶς καὶ ἡμᾶς παρέχεσθαι;

In addition, consider the following. If danger from the foreigner should ever come again upon Greece, whom would you trust more than the Spartans? Who would you consider better to have by your side than those who, when they had taken their positions at Thermopylae, all chose to die fighting rather than living to have the foreigners enter Greece? Is it not just that both you and we offer aid to them, who were brave men at your side and for whom such a hope again exists?

This passage encapsulates the major aspects of Spartan valor: remaining in position (*ταχθέντες*), choosing death (*εἴλοντο*), and fighting to the death (*μαχόμενοι ἀποθανεῖν*).⁴³ When Procles talks about the Spartans' bravery and their willingness to fight to the death, he is appealing to their former glorious past, which one expects also to be part of their present. Reading the formula *μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν* activates this appeal to idealized Spartan behavior, and Xenophon's repeated application of the phrase to Spartan deaths suggests that the author is in part concerned with this aspect of Spartan identity.

⁴² On this speech, see Soulis (1972) 158-161, Buckler (1982) 193-196, and Baragwanath (2012) 322-329.

⁴³ The appearance of choosing death was an important part the Spartan ideal, as Xenophon well knew. In the *Lac. Pol.*, Xenophon presents death in battle as a choice, freely entered into, by frequently employing words with a *αἰρ*- root (*αἰρετώτερον*, *αἰρουμένων*, 9.1; *προαιρεῖσθαι*, 9.6); on *proairesis*, see Loraux (1986) 101-104. The freedom of this choice at Sparta, however, is questionable. Xenophon depicts this choice as coerced in the same way that the rest of Lycurgus' laws were enforced, through supervision and public shaming; cf. Humble (1997) 228-229 and Lipka (2002) 175; see Christesen (forthcoming) for Xenophon's critique of "coerced obedience."

After mentioning Sparta's faithfulness and connections with Athens going back even to the founding of Sparta itself, Procles closes his speech with two more appeals to Spartan valor. Procles brackets the final sentence of his speech with descriptions of the Spartans as *ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί*:

ὁπότε δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀγαλλόμεθα οἱ συναγορεύοντες βοηθῆσαι *ἀνδράσιν ἀγαθοῖς*, ἧ που ὑμῖν γε τοῖς ἔργῳ δυναμένοις βοηθῆσαι γενναῖα ἂν ταῦτα φανείη, εἰ πολλάκις καὶ φίλοι καὶ πολέμιοι γενόμενοι Λακεδαιμονίοις μὴ ὧν ἐβλάβητε μᾶλλον ἢ ὧν εὖ ἐπάθετε μνησθείητε καὶ χάριν ἀποδοίητε αὐτοῖς μὴ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ πάσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ὅτι *ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί* ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἐγένοντο.

When we, advocating that you come to the aid of brave men, are glorified, it would be noble for you, who are able to give help by your action, if you, who have often been both friends and enemies of the Spartans, not remember being harmed but rather faring well and give them favor, not only for their own sake but on behalf of all of Greece, since they were brave men on your behalf in the past.

A significant part of Procles' appeal is based on the image of Spartan warriors as brave individuals willing to die fighting, an image that was best observed at Thermopylae and presumably persisted down to the time of Procles' speech. As Baragwanath has pointed out, Procles' use of the Thermopylae exemplum focuses on the ethical achievements of Sparta, in the context of a military defeat. The conclusion of the speech is an extension of this idea, that Athens should repay the Spartan bravery of the past.⁴⁴

The reference to Thermopylae, made specifically with the use of the phrase *μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν*, invites readers to consider Spartan deaths throughout the *Hellenica* in this same light. As noted earlier, Thermopylae was the most famous exemplum of Spartan valor, one which manifested itself through death in battle. The connection to Thermopylae suggests that Xenophon still sees Spartans as trying to live up to the ideals of bravery that they pursued in the aftermath of Thermopylae. Throughout the examples above, particularly in the non-Spartan examples, it seems clear that Xenophon believed that death in battle could be considered valorous or cowardly. Several uses of this formula in the *Hellenica* appear to reflect more on valor than on leadership, and it is in this light that the following passages will be considered.

The first will be the death of Cleonymus (5.4.25-33). Cleonymus was the son of Sphodrias and lover of Archidamus, himself the son of Agesilaus. The background to Cleonymus' demise is situated within the conflict regarding his father Sphodrias' failed attempt in 378 to raid Athens, after having been bribed by the Thebans, who wished to embroil Athens and Sparta (5.4.20-21). Sphodrias was on trial for this action, and as Xenophon tells the story, the relationship between Cleonymus and Archidamus led to Sphodrias' acquittal. Once Archidamus pleads with his father to have Sphodrias acquitted, Agesilaus spreads the word that Sphodrias should be let off, claiming that throughout his life Sphodrias had always done the best for Sparta and that the city needed such men (5.4.32).⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Baragwanath (2012) 326-328.

⁴⁵ I cannot agree with de Ste. Croix (1972) 135, that Agesilaus' true reason for bringing about Sphodrias' acquittal was a concern of *oliganthrōpia*; this reason appears, rather, as a pretext for favoring the father of his

After the acquittal, Cleonymus promised Archidamus that he would bring him no shame, and it is here that Xenophon states that he later died fighting at Leuctra. The passage is significant and worthy of quotation:

ὁ δ' ἡσθεὶς, εὐθὺς ἐλθὼν πρὸς τὸν Ἀρχίδαμον εἶπεν· Ὅτι μὲν ἡμῶν ἐπιμελῆ ἤδη ἴσμεν· εὖ δ' ἐπίστω, Ἀρχίδαμε, ὅτι καὶ ἡμεῖς πειρασόμεθα ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ὥς μήποτε σὺ ἐπὶ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ φιλίᾳ αἰσχυνοῖς. καὶ οὐκ ἐψεύσατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ζῶν ἅπαντ' ἐποίει ὅσα καλὰ ἐν τῇ Σπάρτῃ, καὶ ἐν Λεύκτροις πρὸ τοῦ βασιλέως μαχόμενος σὺν Δείνωνι τῷ πολεμάρχῳ τρεῖς πεσὼν πρῶτος τῶν πολιτῶν ἐν μέσοις τοῖς πολεμίοις ἀπέθανε. καὶ ἡνίασε μὲν εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα τὸν Ἀρχίδαμον, ὥς δ' ὑπέσχετο, οὐ κατήσχυνεν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐκόσμησε. (5.4.33).

Pleased [with the acquittal of his father], he immediately went to Archidamus and said, "We knew already that you cared for us. But know well, Archidamus, that we will endeavor to take care that you are never ashamed of our friendship." And he did not lie, but while living he did everything that was considered fine in Sparta, and at Leuctra, fighting in front of the king with Deinon the polemarch and falling three times in the midst of the enemy he died, the first of his fellow citizens. While this greatly grieved Archidamus, he did not feel ashamed, just as Cleonymus promised, but rather he felt honor.

The valor exhibited by Cleonymus at Leuctra is undeniable, and one would be hard pressed to argue that Xenophon does not agree. Not only does Cleonymus die fighting, but he does so while fighting in front of the king, just as Cyrus the Younger's loyal soldiers had. In his narration of the battle of Leuctra, Xenophon notes that the king Cleombrotus would not have been able to escape the battle unless those fighting in the front had been succeeding (6.4.13). Xenophon also notes the deaths not only of Cleonymus, but also of Deinon and Sphodrias (6.4.14). This behavior was hardly surprising, since Cleonymus had proved up until his death that he followed all of the strictures (τὰ καλὰ) of Spartan society, just as Sphodrias had done throughout his life (πάντα τὰ καλὰ, 5.4.32). Cleonymus' death (and by extension Sphodrias' as well) is simply the expected outcome of a Spartan life lived well. Cleonymus proved himself a good Spartan throughout his life, and his valorous death only confirmed his earlier behavior.

Xenophon also employs the phrase in his narrative of a battle against the Arcadians in 365/4, in which the Spartans suffer defeat and their king Archidamus is wounded. Xenophon writes that no fewer than thirty died fighting in front of him, including Polyxenidas and Chilon, the latter of whom was married to Archidamus' sister: οἱ μαχόμενοι πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἀπέθνησκον, Πολυαίνειδας τε καὶ Χίλων ὁ τὴν ἀδελφὴν τοῦ Ἀρχιδάμου ἔχων, καὶ οἱ πάντες δὲ αὐτῶν τότε ἀπέθανον οὐκ ἔλαττον τῶν τριάκοντα (7.4.23). This passage nicely parallels the earlier depiction of Cleonymus' death at Leuctra, both suggesting that Spartan valor was alive and well, and could be summoned by the leadership of a Spartan king.

Although Xenophon highlights the valor of particular individuals in these passages, the overall contexts should not be ignored. While Spartan valor might have been on display at Leuctra, the outcome of the battle and its implications for Spartan hegemony were

son's lover. Plutarch's account (*Ages.* 25.4-5) more clearly states that Agesilaus' words and actions were not in complete accord; cf. Dillery (1995) 233. See also Cartledge (1987) 137, 144; Hamilton (1991) 170-173; and Cartledge (2001) 104-105 for a consideration of the political aspects of the trial.

devastating. In the battle against the Arcadians a few years later, the Spartans also suffered defeat, a psychologically wounding outcome. Xenophon states that when the other Spartans learned of this loss and Archidamus' wounding, they became despondent (οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι μάλα ἀθύμως εἶχον, 7.4.24), for the names read out were of men who were brave and practically the most famous at Sparta (ἀνδρῶν τε ἀγαθῶν καὶ σχεδὸν τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων).⁴⁶ In a dramatic conclusion to the battle, one of the older Spartans shouts to the Arcadians that their preference was for a truce rather than to continue fighting; a truce is made, and the Spartans collect their dead while the Arcadians erect a trophy. This plea for a truce, certainly contrary to the Spartan custom of fighting to the death, comes very late in the *Hellenica* and punctuates the decline of Spartan circumstances. Not only did Sparta suffer defeat, it was losing all of its bravest men, and those who remained seem to be on the verge of abandoning their valor, which up to this point has been consistently seen as the cornerstone of Spartan identity. Up to this time the image of Spartan courage may have been maintained, but the resilience of this valor was being seriously tested.

All of the Spartan deaths in battle considered above might be seen as equally valorous as the two episodes considered here, regardless of the judgment of leadership that can be made for each. They all conform to the Spartan ideal of death in battle, and Xenophon seems to have no interest in significantly altering that portrait. The two episodes examined here, however, highlight Spartan death in battle at times of significant military setbacks for Sparta, and overall Xenophon records a very large number of deaths among commanders and other elite Spartans throughout the *Hellenica*.⁴⁷ The appeal to Thermopylae in Procles' speech seems to stand in stark contrast to the Spartan present. After the Persian Wars, Sparta was ascendant, while in the first half of the fourth century, Sparta's fortunes were in decline. It seems that Xenophon attempted to convey this difference through the consistency of Spartan action in the midst of hegemonic decline, which in turn leads to the question of the significance of Spartan valor as Spartan power waned. For his own part, Xenophon appears to recognize, and respect, Sparta's method of military success, which relied on specific training in bravery and the ability of Spartan leaders to draw this bravery out of the men they were leading into battle. The corollary to this, however, is that as Sparta's hegemony expanded and Spartans were forced to be the leaders of others, it became increasingly difficult for Spartiates to rouse this learned valor from their non-Spartan forces. Xenophon also appears to question the value of Spartan valor, or specifically, death in battle.

⁴⁶ A similar situation arises in the passage concerning the death of Peisander, noted above.

⁴⁷ Emphasized by Powell (2001) 236-237. I count the following: Mindarus, navarch (1.1.18); Labotes, harmost (1.2.18); Hippocrates, harmost (1.3.6); Callicratidas, navarch (1.6.33); Chairon, polemarch (2.4.33); Thibracus, polemarch (2.4.33); Lacrates, olympic victor (2.4.33); Lysander (3.5.19); Peisander, navarch and brother of Agesilaus' wife (4.3.12); Gylis, polemarch (4.3.23); Pelles, comrade of Gylis (4.3.23); Pasimachus, hipparch (4.4.10); Podanemus, navarch (4.8.11); Thibron, polemarch (4.8.19); Therimachus, harmost (4.8.29); Anaxibius, harmost (4.8.39); Gorgopas, navarch (5.1.12); Tlemonidas (5.3.4); Teleutias, harmost (5.3.6); Cleas (5.4.39); Epicydidas (5.4.39). Phoebeidas, harmost (5.4.45); Alypetus, polemarch (5.4.52); Mnasippus, navarch (6.2.23); Cleombrotus, king (6.4.13); Deinon, polemarch (6.4.14); Sphodrias, member of king's council (6.4.14); Cleonymus (6.4.14); Ischalaus (6.5.26); Geranor, polemarch (7.1.25); Socleides (7.4.19); Polyaenidas (7.4.23); Chilon, married to Archidamus' sister (7.4.23).

VI. Conclusions

The most salient conclusion to be drawn is the consistent application of a verbal formula in instances requiring judgment of leadership, valor, or both. Xenophon sets the parameters for judgment in his other works, then applies this thematically in his narrative history, the *Hellenica*.⁴⁸ The general focus on Spartan leadership and Spartan valor is simply part of his overall focus on Sparta affairs throughout the *Hellenica*.⁴⁹ Xenophon, however, does not seem to hesitate in criticizing Spartan leadership in this work, but he does not do so in an ironic manner or with any sleight of hand.

Xenophon seems to confirm the portrait of Spartan valor that can be found in other sources, though it is perhaps here that a critique can be found. Xenophon suggests that Spartans continued to do the “Spartan thing,” following their own custom of welcoming death in the face of danger, at least at the higher levels of leadership. It is difficult, however, to read the *Hellenica* and not be struck by the number of Spartan deaths and the demise of Spartan hegemony. Xenophon may be commenting specifically on the inability of Spartan leaders to instill loyalty in their mercenary troops, in contrast to the bravery that was instilled in Spartiates through their Spartan upbringing. Examples here include the deaths of Anaxibius, Teleutias, Phoebidas, and Polytropus. Mercenary forces were also used extensively at Leuctra, where Xenophon points out the brave Spartan deaths of Cleonymus and others.⁵⁰ The naval examples of Mindarus and Peisander perhaps make similar implicit claims, since in these instances the Spartan leaders were performing in an arena that required non-Spartan forces fighting in alliance. In the case of Mindarus, Xenophon stresses multiple times that the commander’s fleet was made up of sixty Peloponnesian (i.e. not strictly Spartan) ships (1.1.11, 1.1.16-18). As for Peisander, Xenophon makes it clear that he was commanding a fleet comprising ships contributed by the friends of Agesilaus (3.4.28-29). In these examples, Xenophon highlights the Spartan mandate of fighting to the death that might have been instilled in Sparta’s own commanders but was difficult to pass on to non-Spartans. It may not simply be the case, however, that Sparta’s allied or mercenary forces were wanting in courage. Rather, Xenophon stresses the poor leadership qualities of these Spartans, suggesting their inability to bring out the valor of their men.

This leaves the issue of what Xenophon thought about Spartans’ dying in battle. Xenophon was clearly aware of the Spartan dictate for death in battle over flight, as can be seen not only in the references in Procles’ speech to Thermopylae but also Xenophon’s account of Spartan valor and cowardice in his *Constitution*. Just as Xenophon appears to pass negative judgment on Spartan leadership in the passages examined above, it is difficult not to detect an undercurrent of pessimism in his narration of Spartan deaths in battle. Since many of these deaths lead to negative outcomes for Sparta, it seems that Xenophon is questioning the value of maintaining such an ideal in a period of decline. While he may not be attacking

⁴⁸ I do not mean to suggest a chronological ordering of the composition of his works, only that the various texts of the corpus are useful in illuminating one another.

⁴⁹ Tuplin (1993) 41 (cf. 163): “The most obvious characteristic of 2.3.11-7.5.27 as an historical account is that it is much more a history of Sparta than of Greece or of Athens or any other individual polis....”

⁵⁰ On the use of mercenaries in these passages, see Cartledge (1987) 323-324.

the stricture *per se*, he highlights Sparta's inability to maintain hegemony, which is seen in contrast to Sparta's insistence on preserving its long held customs. The *Hellenica* closely traces the rise and fall of Spartan hegemony, through the Spartan defeat at Leuctra and down to the battle of Mantinea, the aftermath of which Xenophon describes as a period of "confusion and disorder" (ἀκρισία δὲ καὶ ταραχή, 7.5.27).⁵¹ As has been observed throughout this paper, Xenophon calls attention to both Spartan leadership and Spartan valor with his sustained use of the formula μαχόμενον ἀποθανεῖν. While the latter is alive and well, Spartan leadership does not always appear quite as strong. Although ideals of valor were maintained, Spartan hegemony was in decline. Xenophon seems, then, to be questioning the persistence of this ideal, or at least the inability to export it to non-Spartans, on whom Sparta was increasingly relying for the maintenance of its hegemony. Without proper leadership, the employment of the ideal perhaps masks shortcomings in this aspect of Sparta's management of its empire.

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⁵¹ For these concepts in the Xenophontic corpus, see Dillery (1995) 27-38.

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