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## DIVINE NARRATIVES IN XENOPHON'S *ANABASIS*\*

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*Abstract:* This paper builds on recent work that has focused on the interplay between Xenophon the narrator and Xenophon the character in the *Anabasis*. It illustrates how crucial the divine is in the construction of Xenophon's character and the overall shape of the narrative. By referring to oracles, dreams and sacrifices, as well as his divine estate at Scillus, Xenophon the narrator contributes substantively towards wider thematic concerns in the narrative: the meaningful rôle of the divine in warfare; Xenophon's stellar record during this opaque foreign campaign, and the signal connection between piety and good leadership.

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*Keywords:* Xenophon, *Anabasis*, divine, leadership, narrator, religion

οὐ μόνον ἐς Πέρσας ἀνέβη Ξενοφῶν διὰ Κῶρον,  
ἀλλ' ἄνοδον ζητῶν ἐς Διὸς ἦτις ἄγοι.

Not only on account of Cyrus did Xenophon march up towards Persia,  
but also seeking a road that would lead to Zeus.  
—Diogenes Laertius<sup>1</sup>

I begin this paper by quoting from one of Xenophon's most influential modern readers, J. K. Anderson, specifically his interpretation of Xenophon's attitude towards supernatural phenomena:

Xenophon's education in religion and politics, whatever it may have owed to Socrates, was, like his moral instruction, not complicated by abstract speculations. Throughout his life, Xenophon remained the sort of conservative whose acceptance of the doctrines and principles that he has inherited seems either unintelligent, or dishonest, or both, to those who do not share them.<sup>2</sup>

\* A special vote of thanks must go to Joe Skinner and the Classics and Ancient History department at the University of Newcastle for first inviting me to give this paper. I also wish to thank Fiona Hobden, Christopher Tuplin, Mary Harlow, Graham Shipley, Thomas Harrison, John Moles, Christopher Krebs, Federico Santangelo, and the two anonymous reviewers, all of whom have helped me to see the wood for the trees. I am, of course, responsible for any errors that remain.

<sup>1</sup> D. L. 2.58. On Diogenes Laertius' biographical account of Xenophon, see esp. Tuplin (1987), Badian (2004).

<sup>2</sup> Anderson (1974) 34. Cf. Cawkwell (1979) 45 (discussing *Hellenica*): 'The hand of God is an explanation that dulls the quest for truth, but it is the explanation to which Xenophon, so unlike Thucydides, readily had recourse', Hornblower (1987) 182, *contra* Bowden (2004) esp. 242–3. Tuplin (2004b) 19 well remarks on the way that Xenophon has been negatively contrasted with the hyper-rational Thucydides.

Readers may rightly feel uneasy with such a stark choice: Xenophon as either credulous naïf or insincere author. Yet what is most intriguing here is Anderson's interest in Xenophon as a writer who ostensibly accepts contemporary religious 'doctrines and principles'.<sup>3</sup> Although my approach towards Xenophon's religiosity is fundamentally different from that of Anderson, this paper will examine further Xenophon's interest in religious mores in the *Anabasis*—a work richly adorned with references to the divine.

While there has been less scholarly interest in Xenophon's attitude to religion as compared with his predecessor Herodotus,<sup>4</sup> the last decade has seen a number of significant developments in terms of our understanding of Xenophon's religious interests, with particular emphasis placed on the *Anabasis*.<sup>5</sup> Robert Parker has illustrated the significance of divination as a fundamental component of Xenophon's religious life, arguing that Xenophon's 'gods are reasonable if slightly remote figures with whom one can do business'. And Michael Flower has illustrated the significance of religion, particularly divination, in terms of Xenophon's character development and establishing character motivations.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, for the majority of Xenophon's contemporary readers, his religious interests are interpreted predominantly in terms of communication with the gods, that is divination, and the practical value (both on the battlefield and in broader contexts) that Xenophon discerned in engaging with the divine.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Similarly Miklason (1983) 11–12.

<sup>4</sup> Flower (2012) 203 remarks similarly on the (somewhat unjustifiably) slight attention paid to religious elements in the *Anabasis*. On religion in Herodotus, see Harrison (2000), Mikalson (2003), Scullion (2006).

<sup>5</sup> For religion in the *Anabasis*, see Zucker (1990), Marincola (1997) 207–8, Parker (2004), Flower (2012) 203–16; for religion in *Hellenica* and other Xenophontic texts, see Dillery (1995) 179–94, cf. Bowden (2005) 77–80, Blaineau (2014). Broader discussions on Xenophon's religious background in Dürrbach (1898), Walzer (1936), Mikalson (1983) 45–6, Bowden (2004).

<sup>6</sup> Parker (2004) *passim* (quotation from p. 153), Flower (2012) esp. 159, 203–4.

<sup>7</sup> Bruit-Zaidman (2013) explores the consistent approach to divine communication in Xenophon's works, and speaks of 'la place centrale qu'il accordée à la divination dans la relation aux dieux, et que cette pratique colore toute son approche ultérieure' (60). Cf. similarly Dillery (1995) 183, Parker (2004) 133, Bowden (2004) *passim*. Grethlein (2012) 85 also remarks on the abundance of divine signs in the *Anabasis*, though the focus there is on the juxtaposition with Herodotus' *Histories*; for, Grethlein argues, while Herodotus frequently creates a discrepancy between the reader's and the character's understanding of a divine sign, Xenophon tends to show that such messages are 'as clear or obscure for the readers as for the characters'. The discussion below on Xenophon's appeal to dreams will show that such a hard-and-fast distinction does not do justice to the complex dynamics at work in the *Anabasis* narrative.

This paper builds on the work of these scholars by offering further analysis of the different types of religious phenomena woven into Xenophon's account, paying special attention to the important narrative rôle of this material. It comprises four sections. First, I examine the famous official introduction in the *Anabasis*, on how Xenophon sought guidance from the oracle at Delphi, as well as other scenes that focus on Xenophon's attitude to divine consultation. Secondly, I turn to two dream narratives in Xenophon's account—episodes that not only blur the boundary between narrator and character,<sup>8</sup> but also reinforce thematic concerns that recur throughout the work. The third section moves on to exploring the myriad instances of sacrifice and dedication in the *Anabasis*, analysing the narrator's punctilious observance of the sacrifices and the positive effect that this has on his story of the Greeks' *nostos*. Fourthly, I consider one of the most famous passages in the Xenophontic corpus: his tender, prophetic account of his future relocation to Sparta-controlled Scillus (5.3). A sophisticated narratorial engagement with the divine emerges from this—an engagement that reveals the significance of the divine in the construction and memorialisation of Xenophon as a successful leader, as well as Xenophon's understanding of history and the place of the divine within that.

For purposes of clarity, all unqualified references to Xenophon in this paper denote the character in the text, and not Xenophon the narrator.<sup>9</sup> Of course, as the discussion below highlights, the distinction between the voice of Xenophon the character and Xenophon the narrator is often elusive in the *Anabasis*.

### I. Xenophon, the Oracle and Divination

The first two books of the *Anabasis* recount the Cyreans' (initially unwitting) support for Cyrus' failed usurpation of the Persian throne, followed by a series of delicate negotiations that lead to a (short-lived) truce with the deceitful Persian satrap Tissaphernes. Throughout this opening narrative Xenophon the soldier is a remarkably unobtrusive figure, appearing infrequently and only as a decidedly minor character.<sup>10</sup> He first appears extemporising with Cyrus on the battlefield. Here, interestingly enough, Cyrus orders Xenophon to tell everybody that 'the sacrifices and the omens are good' (*τὰ ἱερὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ σφάγια καλά*, 1.8.15), and is contented when Xenophon relates that the watchword

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Grethlein (2012) *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Greek passages are taken from the Loeb edition; translations are my own.

<sup>10</sup> References to Xenophon: 1.8.15–16; 2.4.15, 5.37, 40–1.

repeatedly being bandied about by the troops is *Ζεὺς σωτὴρ καὶ νίκη* (1.8.16).<sup>11</sup> In Book Two, Xenophon plays an even less substantive rôle, taking a post-supper stroll with his friend, the general Proxenus, and later joining a delegation to discover the ill fate of the Boeotian.

It is at this crucial point in the narrative—the leaderless Greeks stuck in a deep state of *aporia*—that the narrator chooses to bring Xenophon the Athenian to the fore in the narrative—a move evocatively described by Flower as a ‘magisterial entrance’.<sup>12</sup> The narrator reports that ‘there was a man in the army named Xenophon, an Athenian’ (3.1.4), an introduction that calls to mind Herodotus’ famous introduction of Themistocles: ‘a certain man among the Athenians’ (*τῶν τις Ἀθηναίων ἀνὴρ*, 7.143.1).<sup>13</sup> Xenophon had been invited via epistolary communication by his friend Proxenus to join Cyrus’ expedition. Unsure of how to act, Xenophon consults Socrates the Athenian<sup>14</sup> about the journey (*ἀνακοινοῦται Σωκράτει τῷ Ἀθηναίῳ περὶ τῆς πορείας*). Pre-empting the potential political fallout of Xenophon’s support for a Lacedaemonian-friendly Persian, Socrates cautiously advises Xenophon to go to Delphi ‘and consult the god about the journey’ (*ἀνακοινῶσαι τῷ θεῷ περὶ τῆς πορείας*, 3.1.5).<sup>15</sup> At this point the narrator reports:

ἐλθὼν δ’ ὁ Ξενοφῶν ἐπήρητο τὸν Ἀπόλλω τίνι ἂν θεῶν θύων καὶ εὐχόμενος κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ἔλθοι τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἐπινοεῖ καὶ καλῶς πράξας σωθείη. καὶ ἀνείλεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἀπόλλων θεοῖς οἷς ἔδει θύειν.

<sup>11</sup> Flower (2012) remarks on the not insignificant way that Xenophon functions as a ‘conduit for telling both the reader and his fellow Greeks that the omens from sacrifice have been favorable’ (122). Such a rôle is customarily the preserve of the army leader.

<sup>12</sup> (2012) 121, cf. Dillery (1995) 72, Tsagalis (2009) 45iff., Tuplin (2003) 121. On this episode, see esp. Dillery (1995) 72f., and Rood (2006), who detects several problems with Socrates’ advice in this scene. It will be clear to the reader from the argument that follows that I do not detect such ambiguity in Xenophon’s presentation of Socrates here.

<sup>13</sup> Note too that Themistocles is a particularly successful reader of divine phenomena in Herodotus, correctly interpreting the perplexing ‘wooden wall’ oracle in Book Seven; see further Haywood (2013) 157–60, Hollmann (2011) 110–13. Given the close relationship developed between the leader Xenophon and the gods throughout the *Anabasis*, the intertextual link with Herodotus’ Themistocles—in many ways a successful leader—may well be more than a coincidental one.

<sup>14</sup> The sole appearance of Socrates in the *Anabasis*. On the relationship between Socrates and his pupil Xenophon, see Higgins (1977) 21–43, Gray (2011) esp. 6–24.

<sup>15</sup> Parker (2004) 147 and Flower (2012) 123 both remark on the way that Xenophon ‘consults’ both Socrates and the god, using different forms of the same verb (*ἀνακοινοῦσθαι*). For a more nuanced reading of Delphi and its continued significance beyond the fifth century BCE, see esp. Price (1985), Bowden (2005) *passim*.

So Xenophon went and asked Apollo to which of the gods he should sacrifice and pray in order best and most successfully to perform the journey which he had in mind and, after meeting with good fortune, to return home in safety; and Apollo in his response told him to which gods he must sacrifice (3.1.6).<sup>16</sup>

Upon returning to Athens, Xenophon receives short shrift from the philosopher (3.1.8),<sup>17</sup> since he ought to have asked the god whether or not to march in the first place, not how best to undertake the journey.<sup>18</sup> But since the question was asked thus, Socrates affirms that 'it is necessary to do as the god orders' (*χρή ποιεῖν ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐκέλευσεν*).<sup>19</sup>

While sequentially prior to the material reported in the first two books of the narrative, Xenophon artfully places this *analepsis* after his narration of the Cyreans' unconsolidated victory at Cunaxa and the subsequent trickery of Tissaphernes. Just as the Greeks are at their most despondent, Xenophon's expedient divinatory experience proves a clear *tournant* in the narrative, ushering in a new phase of Greek recovery.<sup>20</sup>

A number of scholars have placed considerable emphasis on the significance of this passage within the discourse of the *Anabasis*. Bruit-Zaidman, for instance, remarks on the significance of this moment in terms of the young Athenian's transition into a leader in the subsequent narrative.<sup>21</sup> Others have focused rather on the way that the passage subtly exonerates Xenophon (amongst others) from any charge of intriguing with the pretender Cyrus.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> On the dynamics of belief in this passage, see Parker (2004) 147, who writes of 'the strategies by which believers avoid surrendering their autonomy of action even when consulting gods whose mandates they believe themselves unconditionally willing to obey'. This oracle is referred to intratextually at 6.1.22, a passage which reveals that Zeus Basileus was the god whom Apollo meant Xenophon should sacrifice to, and one that houses a number of additional divinatory experiences (see further §III below).

<sup>17</sup> See too *Mem.* 1.3.9–13, where there is a similar contrast between the naïveté of Xenophon and the wisdom of Socrates. Cf. Dillery (1995) 287 n. 10, on Socrates' use of oracular language in this rebuke.

<sup>18</sup> Bowden (2004) 237 n. 4 reads in this exchange the implication that had Xenophon asked the oracle Socrates' question, he would have been ordered not to go.

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, note *Mem.* 1.1.6, where Xenophon writes that 'on unclear matters [Socrates] sent [his close friends] to consult the oracle about whether something should be done' (*περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀδήλων ὅπως ἀποβήσοιτο μαντευσομένουσ ἔπεμπεν, εἰ ποιητέα*).

<sup>20</sup> So Parker (2004) 148 ('an anticipation of the shape that the story of the *Anabasis* will really have').

<sup>21</sup> Bruit-Zaidman (2013) 62; cf. Grethlein (2012) 25–6, who shows how this and the dream sequence that follows prefigure the presentation of Xenophon's character in the subsequent narrative.

<sup>22</sup> Flower (2012) 124.

What is common to all of these interpretations is that Xenophon is represented as foolish, lacking the sage wisdom espoused by Socrates.<sup>23</sup> According to this reading, Xenophon's story is one of an immature neophyte who will become cognisant of his strategic mistakes, and thereafter ensuring that he correctly consults and listens to the gods.<sup>24</sup> Some readers may feel uncomfortable about the simplicity of this interpretation, particularly given how little is known about the circumstances of Xenophon's exile,<sup>25</sup> but it rightly reinforces the point that the narrator places great emphasis on this episode in the overall construction of Xenophon's character in the narrative. Indeed the divine theme will continue, as the narrator follows this mantic passage by narrating a divinely inspired dream—a scene that I shall return to shortly.

What is especially significant in this passage, beyond Xenophon's less than polished performance at Delphi,<sup>26</sup> is the continued association made between Xenophon the character and the divine. Just as in Xenophon's much briefer inaugural appearance in the narrative, the narrator is at pains to reflect Xenophon's interest in and devotion to divine matters. Although Socrates impugns Xenophon, the narrator neither accentuates the problematic nature of Xenophon's appeal as does, for example, the Herodotean narrator in his account of Croesus' appeals to the Delphic oracle in Book One of the *Histories*, nor does the oracle chastise or punish the Athenian soldier for his loaded request (*contra* Hdt. 1.158–9, 6.86γ).<sup>27</sup> Even if in 401 BCE Xenophon was unable to appreciate the finer nuances of oracular consultation, the reader is already led to detect that such resolute concern about the divine will ultimately work in Xenophon's favour.

<sup>23</sup> Gray (2011) 370 pushes this even further, contending that Xenophon presents himself as the fool, blind to Socrates' wise advice in this scene (a motif familiar to Herodotean readers), only learning much later that he had been exiled for undertaking such an expedition; cf. already Higgins (1977) 23, 83.

<sup>24</sup> So Flower (2012) 124. For a different reading of Socrates in this scene, see Rood (2006) 56ff., who questions the efficacy of Socrates' advice, arguing that the ambiguous nature of Xenophon's later exile in turn complicates any reading of his presentation of Socrates. Rood does admit later (with reservations) that Xenophon's outgoing advice to Seuthes in Book Seven does suggest a broad development in which 'Xenophon grows from the man who needs advice to the man who can advise' (61). I agree that the cause of his exile is much more problematic than some scholars intimate, but the gamut of intratextual and extratextual connections with this scene builds up systematically a picture in which, for both Xenophon and his Greek audience, Socrates dispensed unambiguously sagacious counsel.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Rood (2006) 58.

<sup>26</sup> Similarly Marincola (1997) 207 n. 141, Ferrario (2014) 194. For another early ineffectual moment in Xenophon's *Anabasis* career, see 3.3.6–11.

<sup>27</sup> Gagné (2013) 287–9 offers further interesting discussion on the Herodotean episode involving Glaucus (6.86), who is punished precisely because of his *intention* to commit a crime.

Though oracles do not feature substantively in the remainder of the *Anabasis*,<sup>28</sup> any reading of the later books proves that Xenophon emerges as a spectacularly successful consultant of the divine. For while the encounter at Delphi proves less than exemplary as an instance of paradigmatic divine consultation, it is striking to observe that in later comparable contexts, Xenophon displays precisely the kind of wisdom espoused by Socrates in 3.1.<sup>29</sup> At the point when the Cyreans are profoundly disunited, the narrator records that upon sacrificing to Heracles the Leader (*θυομένω δὲ αὐτῷ τῷ ἡγεμόνι Ἡρακλεῖ*) Xenophon consulted the god as to whether it was more proper and better to march onwards with the remaining soldiers or to depart alone, to which the god *ἔσήμηνεν* ('indicated') by the sacrifices that he should stay with the men (6.2.15).<sup>30</sup> Again in Book Seven, Xenophon relates that he took two victims and sacrificed them to Zeus Basileus,<sup>31</sup> asking 'whether it would be more proper and better to stay with Seuthes on the terms stipulated by Seuthes, or to depart with the army', to which the god indicates that he should depart (7.6.44). In both scenes, Xenophon carefully delineates that the nature of his appeal was not *how best* to undertake a particular, premeditated action, but rather, *ab initio*, what particular action the god might sanction.<sup>32</sup>

Another particularly striking passage in which the narrator manifestly reinforces Xenophon's special relationship with the divine can be found in Book Five. Relations between him and the troops are at a low ebb, Xenophon having been accused of conspiring to settle the troops surreptitiously in Asia Minor. The accusation derives from the Ambraciot *mantis* Silanus, the same individual who was handsomely rewarded by Cyrus for correctly prophesying that Artaxerxes would not attack him for the succeeding ten days (1.7.18). (It is worth observing how this passage reinforces the narrator's presentation of Cyrus' poor judgement in matters concerning the divine. For Silanus' 'correct' prediction is ultimately inconsequential given Cyrus' ensuing death at Cunaxa.)<sup>33</sup> The covetous Silanus is anxious to return home in order to recover his indemnity, and so informs the troops that Xenophon intends 'to found a *polis*

<sup>28</sup> Albeit note 5.3.7: *Ξενοφῶν δὲ λαβὼν χωρίον ὠνεῖται τῇ θεῷ ὅπου ἀνείλεν ὁ θεός*, for which see §IV.

<sup>29</sup> Rood (2006) 57, *pace* Tuplin (2003) 149.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the much-cited fragment of Heraclitus: *ὁ ἀναξ οὐ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει* (Heraclitus, B 93 D–K). The god similarly *semainei* in the *Anabasis* at 6.1.24, 31, 2.15.

<sup>31</sup> On Xenophon's especial interest in Zeus Basileus, see Parker (2004) 151.

<sup>32</sup> Similarly, at the close of *Poroi*, Xenophon advises the Athenians to 'send to Dodona and Delphi, and inquire of the gods whether such a plan is more proper and better for the *polis*—both forthwith and in time thereafter' (6.2).

<sup>33</sup> Buzzetti (2014) 10–13 offers some intriguing, if rather speculative, discussion on Xenophon's purposefully esoteric portrayal of a less than pious Cyrus.



[here] and establish a name and power for himself (5.6.18).<sup>34</sup> Then, after a series of seditious remarks by his fellow Cyreans, Xenophon rises and retorts that he had only sacrificed in order to determine whether or not to consult with the troops about the possibility of settling in Asia Minor. He continues:

Σιλανὸς δέ μοι ὁ μάντις ἀπεκρίνατο τὸ μὲν μέγιστον, τὰ ἱερὰ καλὰ εἶναι· ἦδει γὰρ καὶ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἄπειρον ὄντα διὰ τὸ ἀεὶ παρέλναι τοῖς ἱεροῖς· ἔλεξε δὲ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς φαίνοιτό τις δόλος καὶ ἐπιβουλὴ ἐμοί, ὡς ἄρα γιγνώσκων ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐπεβούλευε διαβάλλειν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς. ἐξήνεγκε γὰρ τὸν λόγον ὡς ἐγὼ πράττειν ταῦτα διανοοίμην ἦδη οὐ πείσας ὑμᾶς.

Now Silanus the *mantis* answered to me on the greatest issue, that the omens were positive. For he knew that I was not without experience on these matters, present as I always am at the sacrifices; but he said that there appeared in the omens treachery and a plot against me, clearly because he knew that he was himself contriving to denigrate me before you. For he disseminated the report that I was intending to do these things immediately, without having persuaded you (5.6.29).<sup>35</sup>

Following some conclusive remarks, Xenophon reunites all of the Greeks to march onwards to Greece, while the soldiers silence Silanus and castigate him.

Xenophon's defence is characteristically robust in this passage; he demonstrates the deceitful nature of Silanus' report whilst simultaneously reasserting himself as a transparent and loyal commander, and a superior controller of divine communication. Part of his reproof is the bold declaration that 'I was not without experience on these matters, present as I always am at the sacrifices'—experience that he immediately puts into practice when he deduces that the ill omens foreseen by Silanus were indubitably the seer's contemptible claims against Xenophon. It is not enough merely to comment on his acquaintance with divination; Xenophon the character amply demonstrates the substance of this knowledge. And notably, Xenophon the narrator authenticates Xenophon the character's portrayal of Silanus later in the *Anabasis*, reporting somewhat elliptically on the inglorious flight of Silanus at Heracleia (6.4.13).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Xenophon faces further accusations concerning his potential colonial plans at 6.4.7, 12–16; 6.6.3–4. The case against Xenophon's sincerity over his colonial ambitions has been put most forcefully by Dürrbach (1892) 379–80. On Xenophon as apologist throughout the *Anabasis*, see Erbse's essay in Gray (2010) and Flower (2012) esp. 141–67.

<sup>35</sup> For untrustworthy *manteis* elsewhere in other Xenophontic works, cf. *Cyrop.* 1.6.2. On the suspicious or corruptible *mantis*, see Bowden (2004) 234.

<sup>36</sup> Flower (2012) 148.

Just as the soldiers are persuaded by Xenophon's rejoinder, that he is well informed on divine matters, so too the reader of the *Anabasis* will not fail to connect this *logos* with the many comparable instances in which Xenophon proves to play a decisive rôle in the interpretation of divine signs. To note just one more instance, take the coincidental moment when a man sneezes, just as Xenophon argues in front of the troops that 'with the support of the gods, we have many positive hopes of safety' (3.2.8). Of their own accord, the soldiers immediately pay obeisance to the god Zeus Soter, and Xenophon argues that the men should make a vow to sacrifice to this god as soon as they are duly delivered to a place of safety. The men, wholly united, vote in favour of Xenophon's plan, thereafter making the vow and singing the paean (3.2.9).<sup>37</sup>

The point has been developed at length, but this is by no means accidental. The rhetoric of Xenophon the narrator and Xenophon the character are closely aligned—both in this episode and in the one involving Silanus. This close alignment between character and narrator is an important narrative theme that resurfaces below.

## II. Dreams in/and the Past

Thus far I have examined the commanding formal entrance of Xenophon in the *Anabasis* narrative, a scene that incorporates his entreaty to an oracle (or should that be to *the* oracle?), and one that patently informs Xenophon the character's future actions and their subsequent narration in the *Anabasis*. This scene, working in tandem with other scenes that refer to the divine, inflects readerly responses, as readers are increasingly attuned to the complex web of associations being developed between Xenophon and the divine. The present section will elaborate further on this point, looking more closely at Xenophon's engagement with dreams—divine apparitions that both disrupt the temporal perspective of the narrative, and reveal further aspects concerning Xenophon's relationship with the divine.<sup>38</sup>

Returning to the beginning of Book Three, having absolved Xenophon of any knowledge concerning Cyrus' attempted *coup d'état* (3.1.3–11), the narrator

<sup>37</sup> Parker (2004) 141 on this and other military vows in the *Anabasis*.

<sup>38</sup> I do not have the space here to offer a systematic assessment of intellectual approaches to dreams in ancient Greece, but the association between dreaming and the divine, already a long-established one in other (e.g. Near Eastern) cultures, extends in Greek literary culture at least as far back as Agamemnon's famous dream in *Iliad* 2; cf. Rinner (1978) on connections between Xenophon's dream in 3.1 and *Iliad* 2. For dreams (and other types of divination) in Homer, see Morrison (1981) 89–95. For the relationship between the divine and dreams in the ancient Near East, see the contributions of Noegel and Lloyd in Szpakowska (2006); for the Roman period, Harrison (2013); and for the modern period, see the interesting discussion in Richter (2014), with further bibliography there.

continues by relating a detailed reconstruction of his thoughts at this moment of deep perplexity. Xenophon, we are told, ‘catching just a little sleep saw a dream’ (μικρὸν δ’ ὕπνου λαχὼν εἶδεν ὄναρ).<sup>39</sup>

ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ βροντῆς γενομένης σκηπτὸς πεσεῖν εἰς τὴν πατρίαν οἰκίαν, καὶ ἐκ τούτου λάμπεσθαι πᾶσα. περίφοβος δ’ εὐθὺς ἀνηγέρθη, καὶ τὸ ὄναρ τῇ μὲν ἔκρινεν ἀγαθόν, ὅτι ἐν πόνοις ὦν καὶ κινδύνοις φῶς μέγα ἐκ Διὸς ἰδεῖν ἔδοξε· τῇ δὲ καὶ ἐφοβείτο, ὅτι ἀπὸ Διὸς μὲν βασιλέως τὸ ὄναρ ἐδόκει αὐτῷ εἶναι, κύκλω δὲ ἐδόκει λάμπεσθαι τὸ πῦρ, μὴ οὐ δύναίτο ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἐξελθεῖν τῆς βασιλείας, ἀλλ’ εἴργοιτο πάντοθεν ὑπὸ τινων ἀποριῶν. ὁποῖόν τι μὲν δὴ ἐστὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ὄναρ ἰδεῖν ἔξεστι σκοπεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβάντων μετὰ τὸ ὄναρ.

It seemed to him that there was a clap of thunder and a bolt struck his ancestral house, setting aflame the whole house. He awoke at once in great fear, and judged the dream in one way auspicious, since in a time of troubles and dangers he appeared to observe a great light from Zeus; but in another way he was fearful, since it appeared to him that the dream came from Zeus Basileus, and the fire appeared to glow all around, suggesting that he might not be able to depart from the King’s land, but might be shut in from every side by certain perplexities. *Now what it really means to have seen a dream of such a kind it is possible to observe from the events that occurred after the dream* (3.1.11–13).<sup>40</sup>

The narrator continues this passage by recounting Xenophon’s distress over this most lugubrious state of affairs. (‘If we fall into the King’s hands, we will inevitably die, after witnessing all the most appalling scenes, suffering the most cruel things and subjected to torture ... For I will not become any older if I should hand over myself to the enemy today’ (3.1.13–14).)<sup>41</sup> At the point of utter despair, Xenophon decides to act straightaway,<sup>42</sup> calling together Proxenus’

<sup>39</sup> Ocular language was typically applied to dreams in the Greek idiom; see further Hollmann (2011) 79 n. 64. For ὕπνου λαχὼν, cf. *Hiero* 6.9.

<sup>40</sup> For other interpretations of dreams (e.g. Artemidorus) in antiquity concerning places that are struck by lightning, see Parker (2004) 148 n. 48.

<sup>41</sup> On this scene as one of many in the *Anabasis* that attempt to recover the presentness of the past, see Grethlein (2014) 53–91, 59–60 for 3.1.13–14.

<sup>42</sup> The narrator doubly reinforces the excitatory and immediate effects of the dream: Xenophon the character ‘immediately’ awakens from his obscure dream in fear (3.1.12) and he ‘immediately’ considers the implications of the dream (3.1.13), before at once setting out his designs to the captains.

captains, delivering rousing speeches and ultimately setting in motion the beginning of Greek resistance.<sup>43</sup> The chapter closes with a miniature catalogue of commanders, men who would replace those slain by the treacherous Tissaphernes in Book Two. Xenophon, unsurprisingly enough, completes the list, in place of his friend Proxenus.<sup>44</sup>

This passage, together with the preceding appeal to the oracle at Delphi, clearly serves to bolster Xenophon as a significant character in the story,<sup>45</sup> and signals a decisive turning-point in the fortunes of the Cyreans. It also invites the reader into the inner dreamworld of Xenophon the character,<sup>46</sup> and to forge connections between divine and human behaviour. But beyond this, the passage opens up various (largely unresolved) interpretative complexities: did Xenophon report his dream to the troops? Why does he fail to mention whether he did? If he did not, why does he, as narrator, disclose his dream to the reader? And what are the implications of this discrepancy between the internal and external audience's understanding of Xenophon's steadfast emergence amongst the élite of the Greek contingents? Clearly it is not possible to affirm with certainty whether or not Xenophon made the men privy to his dream, but it is noteworthy that only once in the *Anabasis* does he recount explicitly in a speech the substance of a divine consultation with his soldiers. At the outset of Book Six, resisting the soldiers' petitions for him to assume the position of sole commander, the panic-stricken Xenophon insists that 'the gods indicated to me such signs in the sacrifices that even a lay person would reason that it is necessary for me to keep away from sole command' (καί μοι οἱ θεοὶ οὕτως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐσήμηναν ὥστε καὶ ἰδιώτην ἂν γνῶναι ὅτι τῆς μοναρχίας ἀπέχεσθαι με δεῖ, 6.1.31).<sup>47</sup> The troops generally stand apart from the external audience, since they are mostly left in the shade about any divine entreaties in the *Anabasis*.

<sup>43</sup> Dillery (1995) 73. Like the oracular consultation at the opening of Book Three, Xenophon refers back to the dream at 6.1.22—a passage rich with sacrificial behaviour. Cf. Harisson (2013) 181, whose view that Xenophon turned to 'another, more reliable form of divination' in order to authenticate the dream does not fit especially well here, since Xenophon seeks no such additional signs to vindicate his actions following the dream.

<sup>44</sup> Tsagalis (2009) 458–60 considers this brief catalogue in light of the two earlier catalogues in Book One, demonstrating that the various differences hint to the reader that the new commanders will not suffer the fate of their predecessors.

<sup>45</sup> Grethlein (2012) 25.

<sup>46</sup> Purves (2010) 194, cf. Parker (2004) 148.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Parker (2004) 152. Tuplin (2014) comments on the exceptional nature of this divine reference ('le lecteur (qui a toujours été au courant de la consultation des dieux) remarque que Xénophon n'a recours à cette approche qu'en dernier ressort', 97).

I would like to draw four points from this passage. First, the dream as presented in the narrative reflects the complexity of establishing historical causation at any one moment, and the dramatic impact that new and challenging data can have on our understanding of a past event. It reminds the reader that had the narrator decided to narrate Xenophon's emergence in a more (for example) Thucydidean fashion, his account might well have been bereft of the dream and the way in which it mobilised Xenophon into action. The dream would have existed (or not) merely as an evanescent, undocumented moment in human history. So by writing his dream into the narrative, the dream becomes part of the fabric of history, unlike any other dreams that either Xenophon or his men had, but are not included in the text.

The second point, related to this, is that Xenophon's dream *logos* points towards several futures, without ever really pointing to any one particular future. It could point towards the not entirely satisfying closure of the *Anabasis*, in which, having led the remaining Ten Thousand to safety, Xenophon ransacks the property of a Persian dignitary (7.8, see §III below). But equally, as Ma and others have argued, it could be a reference to Xenophon's exile from his homeland, Athens, a 'future past' that is alluded to explicitly in his detailed account of his bucolic retreat at Scillus (see §IV below).<sup>48</sup> The narrator leaves the reader to ponder these various possibilities rather than assert a 'correct' interpretation.

Thirdly, it is noteworthy that while Xenophon's ancestral home is set on fire within this dream landscape, later in Book Five the houses of the Drilae ('the most warlike group of people on the Pontic Coast', 5.2.2) will also be set on fire, an occurrence this time firmly placed in the continuum of historical events (5.2.24ff.). And just as the god Zeus Basileus is connected to Xenophon's dream about his father's blazing home, so too the narrator interprets the suddenly burning homes of the Drilae as an act of god. 'For in the midst of their fighting and perplexity some god gave the Greeks the means of salvation' (*μαχομένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ἀπορουμένων θεῶν τις αὐτοῖς μηχανὴν σωτηρίας δίδωσιν*, 5.2.24). In turn, the god's signal inspires Xenophon, ever the sensitive reader of divine phenomena, to burn down the remaining houses and effect the soldiers' escape from this now desolate territory. In both a symbolical and a physical space, Xenophon continues to read into and learn from divine conflagrations.

In addition to these points, there is a further noteworthy feature of this passage, which suggests that Xenophon the narrator uses the dream in order to reflect on the instability of the historical process. After weighing up the potential meaning of his dream, the narrator asserts unequivocally that 'what it really means to have seen a dream of such a kind it is possible to observe from

<sup>48</sup> Ma (2004), cf. Purves (2010).

the events that occurred after the dream' (3.1.13). This is a surprising statement: Xenophon suggests that subsequent events can serve to clarify the meaning of his dream—a not uncommon postulation in Greek thinking. Yet as author, Xenophon is surely aware that this hardly chimes with the average reader's experience of the subsequent narrative, which never confirms at any point what such a dream 'really means'. It is possible, then, to detect here an attempt by the narrator to stir his audience into engaging with the difficulties of writing a linear, sequential past that firmly affixes cause and effect—and particularly in relation to divine phenomena. Such an approach aligns Xenophon the narrator rather closely with Herodotus, who repeatedly reflects on the challenging (and potentially lethal) business of interpreting divine phenomena.<sup>49</sup> Whatever Xenophon the historical agent personally made of his dream, its inclusion in the *Anabasis* demonstrates the importance that Xenophon the narrator attaches to it.<sup>50</sup> It contributes variously to the audience's understanding of Xenophon's development as a leader, the potentially divine origins and causes of the march, and the unstable basis of any one historical past.

The narrator returns to Xenophon's world of dreams in Book Four, in a passage that reinforces a number of the ideas expressed above. Similarly to his previous dream *logos*, the dream comes at a time of great consternation and dread among the troops. At a moment in which the troops were experiencing 'much perplexity' (4.3.8), Xenophon once again sees a dream.

ἔδοξεν ἐν πέδαις δεδέσθαι, αὐταὶ δὲ αὐτῷ αὐτόματα περιρρυῆναι, ὥστε λυθῆναι καὶ διαβαίνειν ὅποσον ἐβούλετο. ἐπεὶ δὲ ὄρθρος ἦν, ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν Χειρίσοφον καὶ λέγει ὅτι ἐλπίδας ἔχει καλῶς ἔσεσθαι, καὶ διηγεῖται αὐτῷ τὸ ὄναρ. ὁ δὲ ἤδεδότε καὶ ὡς τάχιστα ἕως ὑπέφαινον ἐθύοντο πάντες παρόντες οἱ στρατηγοί. καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ καλὰ ἦν εὐθύς ἐπὶ τοῦ πρώτου, καὶ ἀπιόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν οἱ στρατηγοὶ καὶ λοχαγοὶ παρήγγελλον τῇ στρατιᾷ ἀριστοποιεῖσθαι.

[Xenophon] thought that he was bound in fetters, but that the fetters fell off from him of their own accord, so that he was released and could take as long steps (*διαβαίνειν*)<sup>51</sup> as he pleased. When dawn came, he

<sup>49</sup> See esp. Kindt (2006), Haywood (2013) 149–77.

<sup>50</sup> Similarly Ferrario (2012) 361, noting the way that Xenophon the historian appeals to sacrifices and other signs in order to establish significant moments in the narrative, and to 'privilege their inclusion in the historical record'.

<sup>51</sup> The very same verb as used in the previous section to denote the army's inability to cross the river: ἐνταῦθα δὴ πολλὴ ἀθυμία ἦν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ὀρώσι μὲν τοῦ ποταμοῦ τὴν δυσπορίαν, ὀρώσι δὲ τοὺς διαβαίνειν κωλύσοντας, ὀρώσι δὲ τοῖς διαβαίνουσιν ἐπικεισομένους τοὺς Καρδούχους ὀπισθεν (4.3.7). For an altogether different take on this, see Purves (2010) 176: '[the dream] registers, if only obliquely, that Xenophon's triumph in finding a way to

went to Cheirisophus, told him he had hopes that all would be well, and related to him his dream. Cheirisophus was pleased, and as soon as day began to break, all the generals started offering sacrifices in person.<sup>52</sup> And the sacrifices of the first victim were immediately favourable. Then the generals and captains withdrew from the sacrifices and gave orders to the army to get their breakfast (4.3.8–9).

At the very same time, two young men approach Xenophon and reveal that they have descried a ford in the river that will lead to a safe crossing. In characteristic fashion, ‘Xenophon immediately poured a libation and ordered the young men to join in it and pray to the gods who had shown the dream and the ford, and that they bring to happy completion that which remained’ (4.3.13). The remainder of the chapter then recounts the army’s successful negotiation of the river crossing at the divinely ordained spot.

This second dream reveals both similarities to and differences from the dream reported in Book Three. Both convey a series of symbols, as opposed to any straightforward message,<sup>53</sup> evoking the kind of complex symbolism that a number of Herodotean dreamers must decode (e.g. Hdt. 1.107.1–108.1, 209.1; 7.19.1).<sup>54</sup> Both dreams alike compel Xenophon to act and constitute an important component of the overall causal framework in which the soldiers, *led* by Xenophon, manage to overcome moments of great perplexity. But unlike his earlier dream, which ostensibly went unreported amongst the troops, Xenophon here discloses the content of the dream to Cheirisophus and the young men.<sup>55</sup>

There is an additional feature of this passage, however, that rather curiously appears to have gone unrecognised, namely the way in which the interpretations of Xenophon the author and Xenophon the character are closely aligned. While in Xenophon’s earlier imposing *début* it is solely the narrator who is in the business of narrating the dream to his audience, this time Xenophon the narrator and Xenophon the character take it in turns to recount the dream to their audience—the reader and Cheirisophus respectively. This contributes to a broader pattern in the *Anabasis*, which Jonas Grethlein has recently explored to good effect, wherein the distinctions between Xenophon the narrator and Xenophon the protagonist are increasingly blurred over the

move forward through this inland space is muted by the danger that he could go on walking forever’.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Xen. *Sym.* 4.33, where Callias inquires of Charmides whether or not he sacrifices to the gods after seeing an auspicious dream.

<sup>53</sup> For dream reports, see Harrisson (2013) 23–73.

<sup>54</sup> See further Hollmann (2011) 75–93.

<sup>55</sup> Parker (2004) 149 interprets this in light of Xenophon’s ‘enhanced prestige’ at this point in the march, noting wryly that ‘Important dreams only come to important people’.

course of the text. Grethlein demonstrates how, as the narrative unfolds, the narrator frequently privileges the character's voice and perceptions, whilst simultaneously the character 'appropriates narratorial functions'.<sup>56</sup> These observations are pertinent to our reading of this *logos*, then, as the character Xenophon reinforces the narrator's report of this divine intervention through his reported conversation with the Spartan general.

Dreams are thus a striking component of Xenophon's character development in the *Anabasis*.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, Xenophon refers to a historical dream only once outside of this text. In the *Cyropaedia*, he reports that as Cyrus slept in his palace he saw a dream in which a more than human figure told him 'prepare yourself, Cyrus; for you will soon depart to the gods' (*Cyrop.* 8.7.2)—a message that Cyrus rightly interpreted as portending his imminent death. As the discussion above has shown, dreams in the *Anabasis* are considerably more complex than this. They incorporate no such verbal statements, but rather challenge the historical agent, narrator and reader alike into making sense of ambiguous signs. And, as related by the narrator, these dreams reveal a considerable amount of information regarding Xenophon's state of mind during the campaign, while opening up a number of intriguing questions concerning the shape of the past. To quote from the cultural historian Isabel Richter, Xenophon's account of the *Anabasis* reflects 'the deep influence that dreams have on dreamers' views and spaces of the self'.<sup>58</sup>

### III. Xenophon and Sacrificial Omens

One of the most enduring features of the *Anabasis* is its presentation of an intrepid leader, overcoming all manner of enervating forces: external and internal dissent; uncharted and hostile topographies; meteorological chaos; and

<sup>56</sup> Grethlein (2012) *passim*, quotation from p. 24; see differently Dorati (2007), arguing that the frequent references to Xenophon's inner consciousness demonstrate that *de facto* Xenophon is a homodiegetic narrator in the *Anabasis*. On Xenophon's objectivity, see e.g. Marincola (1997) 10, Bradley (2001), Grethlein (2014) esp. 66, 68; cf. Plutarch's remarks on Xenophon's decision to attribute the *Anabasis* to one Themistogenes of Syracuse, *ἵνα πιστότερος ᾗ διηγούμενος ἑαυτὸν ὡς ἄλλον* (*De. glor. Ath.* 1.345E). On Themistogenes of Syracuse (*Hell.* 3.1.2), see variously Bradley (2001) 62–4, Tsagalis (2009) 452–4, Gray (2003) 111 n. 2, (2011) 39 n. 40, Flower (2012) 47, 53–5, Buzzetti (2014) 301–12. For most scholars, this reference to Themistogenes contributes to Xenophon's wider attempts at objectification, and his avoidance of self-promotion for authorial purposes.

<sup>57</sup> So Purves (2010) 194: 'Xenophon confounds the boundaries of external detachment normally upheld by the ancient historian by twice taking us into his inner dreamworld in Books 3 and 4.'

<sup>58</sup> Richter (2014) 127.



regular interventions by capricious gods, to name but a few.<sup>59</sup> And it is this last theme concerning the unpredictable divine to which this paper now turns.

The discussion thus far has centred on individual *logoi* that play a significant rôle in the overall shape of the *Anabasis*, illustrating the significance that both narrator and character place upon the divine, as well as the importance of individual divine episodes in the aetiological architecture of Xenophon's rise to prominence. To note just one more example of this centrality of the divine for Xenophon: when countering the libellous accusations of Silanus (see §I above), he exhorts:

Ἐγώ, ὦ ἄνδρες, θύομαι μὲν ὡς ὁρᾶτε ὅποσα δύναμαι καὶ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμαυτοῦ ὅπως ταῦτα τυγχάνω καὶ λέγων καὶ νοῶν καὶ πράττων ὅποια μέλλει ὑμῖν τε κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ἔσεσθαι καὶ ἐμοί.

As you see, gentlemen, I sacrifice as often as I can both on your behalf and on mine, in order that I might say, think, or do those things which turn out to be best for you and most honourable for me (5.6.28).<sup>60</sup>

The divine, however, by no means visits and/or is the concern of Xenophon alone. In Book Two, the Spartan general Clearchus is called over by one of his officers in order to inspect the innards taken out of a sacrificial victim (2.1.9). Similar acts of extispicy occur repeatedly in the narrative: for instance, in Book Six the *mantis* Arexion catches sight of the enemy and immediately begins to sacrifice; from the start the sacrificial victims prove to be favourable (6.5.8).<sup>61</sup> Even in the closing pages of the *Anabasis*, wherein Xenophon and his men ransack the estate of the Persian grandee Asidates, Basias the Elean *mantis* is on call to reveal that the omens from the sacrifice are most favourable and that the Persian will be easy to capture (7.8.10). After what can only be described as a botched attempt to raid Asidates' property, Xenophon and his men eventually capture Asidates and his family, who in fear had encamped in villages

<sup>59</sup> On the significance of leadership in the *Anabasis*, see Anderson (1974) 120–33, Higgins (1977) 88–98, Gray (2011) esp. 37–43, and *passim* (for leadership in Xenophon more broadly), Flower (2012) 118–20. As Gray notes, the *Anabasis* contains the 'first sustained study of an author's own achievements that we have from the ancient world' (39).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. 6.3.13: [Xenophon:] 'καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἴσως ἄγει οὕτως, ὅς τοὺς μεγαληγορήσαντας ὡς πλέον φρονοῦντας ταπεινώσαι βούλεται, ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν ἀρχομένους ἐντιμότερους ἐκείνων καταστήσει.'

<sup>61</sup> Other episodes involving Arexion the *mantis*: 6.4.13, 5.8.

below the town of Parthenium (7.8.21–2). Thus, Xenophon concludes, ‘the earlier omens proved true’ (καὶ οὕτω τὰ πρότερα ἱερά ἀπέβη),<sup>62</sup> and ‘like Agamemnon at Troy’,<sup>63</sup> he is offered first dibs on the spoils.

There are also occasions in which various types of divine signs are grouped together, so as to galvanise the troops. At yet another moment of soldierly doubt, Xenophon gives a climax to a stirring speech by referring to a bevy of divine signs—all deemed propitious.

ἄνδρες, τὰ τε ἱερά ἡμῖν καλὰ οἷ τε οἰωνοὶ αἰσιοὶ τὰ τε σφάγια κάλλιστα:  
ἴωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας.

Men, our sacrificial victims are positive, and the bird-omens auspicious, and the omens from the sacrifices most favourable; let us go against the men (6.5.21).

An even more spectacular example occurs earlier in Book Six. Xenophon is profoundly doubtful as to whether he should assume supreme command of the troops. His concerns are further calcified by the narrator in the following ekphrastic passage—an elaboration on the different textures of Xenophon’s interaction with the divine:

Ἀπορουμένω δὲ αὐτῷ διακρίναι ἔδοξε κράτιστον εἶναι τοῖς θεοῖς ἀνακοινῶσαι· καὶ παραστησάμενος δύο ἱερεῖα ἐθύετο τῷ Διὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ, ὅσπερ αὐτῷ μαντευτὸς ἦν ἐκ Δελφῶν· καὶ τὸ ὄναρ δὴ ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνόμιζεν ἑορακένας ὃ εἶδεν ὅτε ἤρχετο ἐπὶ τὸ συνεπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς στρατιᾶς καθίστασθαι. καὶ ὅτε ἐξ Ἐφέσου δὲ ὤρματο Κύρω συσταθησόμενος, ἀετὸν ἀνεμιμνήσκετο αὐτῷ δεξιὸν φθεγγόμενον, καθήμενον μέντοι, ὃνπερ ὁ μάντις <ὁ> προπέμπων αὐτὸν ἔλεγεν ὅτι μέγας μὲν οἰωνὸς εἶη καὶ οὐκ ἰδιωτικός, καὶ ἔνδοξος, ἐπίπονος μέντοι· τὰ γὰρ ὄρνεα μάλιστα ἐπιτίθεσθαι τῷ ἀετῷ καθημένω· οὐ μέντοι χρηματιστικὸν εἶναι τὸν οἰωνόν· τὸν γὰρ ἀετὸν περιπετόμενον μᾶλλον λαμβάνειν τὰ ἐπιτήδεια. οὕτω δὴ θυομένω αὐτῷ διαφανῶς ὁ θεὸς σημαίνει μήτε προσδεῖσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς μήτε εἰ αἰροῦντο ἀποδέχεσθαι. τοῦτο μὲν δὴ οὕτως ἐγένετο.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Flower (2012) 215: ‘The interjection that “the omens turned out in this way” excuses Xenophon’s miscalculations as a commander while at the same time signifying that all had turned out in accordance with the will of the gods. Today’s leaders ... cannot so easily use [religion] to whitewash their mistakes.’

<sup>63</sup> Grote (1856) 239.

Unable as he was to decide the question, it seemed best to him to consult the gods; and he accordingly brought forth two victims and proceeded to offer sacrifice to Zeus Basileus, the god that the oracle at Delphi had prescribed for him; and he believed that it was likewise from this same god that the dream came that he saw at the time when he took the first steps towards being appointed a share in the charge of the army. Moreover, he recalled that when he was setting out from Ephesus to be introduced to Cyrus an eagle screamed upon his right; however it was sitting, and the *mantis* who was leading him said that on the one hand the omen was a great one rather than one for an ordinary person, and that it betokened glory, yet it portended suffering, for birds are especially apt to attack the eagle when it is sitting; still there will be no material gain from this omen, for it is rather while the eagle is on the wing that it gets its food. Thus it was, then, that Xenophon made sacrifice, and the god signified [*σημαίνει*] to him quite clearly that he should neither strive for the command nor accept it in case he should be chosen. Such was the issue of this matter (6.1.22).

This rich, compact concentration of divine communications constitutes an exceptional and unparalleled moment in *Anabasis*. In just two chapters, Xenophon refers to four types of divination: extispicy, chresmomancy, ornithomancy, and oneiromancy. This comprises (1) the sacrifice of two victims to Zeus Basileus, which Xenophon interprets as signifying that he should neither strive to be leader nor accept the position should he be selected; (2) the earlier oracle that instructed him to honour Zeus Basileus; (3) Xenophon's thunderbolt dream (sent by Zeus Basileus, according to Xenophon); and (4) a previously un-narrated reference to an occasion when an eagle landed on him whilst he was setting out from Ephesus to meet Cyrus. The accompanying *mantis* reads this sign as a clear omen, betokening glory, grief, and lack of profit. What is noticeable here is that the story concerning the eagle omen and the reference to Xenophon's earlier dream are less than an ideal fit in the narrative; neither of these divine markers is especially relevant or helpful for the pressing decision of whether or not to accept the command.<sup>64</sup> Yet these different modes of divination, temporally and spatially inconsonant, and not entirely essential within the present context, are all deemed by Xenophon to interconnect, each serving to reinforce his ultimate decision not to assume the rôle of sole commander.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> As pointed out to me in correspondence with Christopher Tuplin.

<sup>65</sup> Bowden (2004) 236; cf. Flower (2012) 149–50 on how Xenophon is later vindicated in the *Anabasis* for his decision not to assume the command.

Alongside the sheer density of references to divine communication in this *logos*, an equally striking feature is the rich use of intratextual markers and narrative anachronies.<sup>66</sup> The narrator refers back to three earlier divinatory incidents, two of which are reported previously in the *Anabasis* (i.e. the oracle and the dream, see §§I–II above). These *analepseis* serve to enrich the audience's understanding of those earlier episodes, clarifying for the attentive reader which god it was that Apollo had instructed Xenophon to honour, as well as providing further nuance to Xenophon's personal trajectory, with the addition of a third divine portent occurring between the time of Xenophon's consultation at Delphi and his auspicious dream. In turn, Xenophon the character is recontextualised within an ever-widening schema of exceptional divine behaviours; he forms the nexus of interactions between human and divine in the *Anabasis*. Just as at the start of Book Three, a crucial moment in the survival of the Ten Thousand, Xenophon the character is marked as important by his acting under divine auspice, so at the start of Book Six (when the command structure established at the start of Book Three is about to be changed—another watershed moment) the same theme recurs: Xenophon's retreat from power (like his advance to it in Book Three) is presented as part of a divine order. In contrast, Cheirisophus' ensuing acquisition of the overall command is not so marked (it emerges from entirely pragmatic considerations, articulated by Xenophon the character in 6.1.26–9). Hence the characterisation of Xenophon at the outset of Book Six reinforces the significant part that the divine plays in the vicissitudes of Xenophon's status in the Ten Thousand and anticipates his later accomplishments in the narrative.<sup>67</sup>

This *logos* thus emerges as a veritable *tour-de-force* in the *Anabasis*. The narrator displays a masterly, panoramic view of his narrative, (i) refining the audience's appreciation of Xenophon's transformative rise amongst the Cyreans earlier in Book Three, (ii) bolstering his account of why he was not able to accept the sole command at the start of Book Six, and (iii) anticipating readers' expectations regarding his subsequent material and military triumphs in Book Seven, having led the troops to safety. And once again, the interests and concerns of narrator and character are mutually reinforced, particularly in relation to appeasing the divine. As the character Xenophon temporarily turns into a narrator (to himself) of past events (the eagle omen), the distance between these two personae of Xenophon temporarily becomes insignificant, almost imperceptible.

<sup>66</sup> On anachronies, see Genette (1980) 16.

<sup>67</sup> I thank Christopher Tuplin for alerting my attention to this important point.

#### IV. The Divine *Anabasis*

Finally, I turn from the past towards the future; that is, to be more precise, the future of Xenophon the character, not Xenophon the narrator. The passage concerned is one that depicts Xenophon's life post-*Anabasis*. Having been exiled by the Athenian state for some undisclosed reason,<sup>68</sup> he managed to set up a sacred estate for Artemis of Ephesus at Scillus near Olympia.<sup>69</sup> The estate, along with a votive offering to Apollo at Delphi, was funded by Xenophon's share of the tithe from the sale of plunder at Cerasus in 400 BCE (5.3.4–5).

In what follows, Xenophon narrates various details concerning the sacred *temenos*, including the temple which he erects for the goddess, modelled on the more elaborate structure for the goddess at Ephesus. He continues with an intricate picture of the annual public festivals held at the site, along with sacrifices made to the goddess, based on 'the tithe of the products of the land in their season' (5.3.9). Near the end of this extended *ekphrasis*, the ever-pious Athenian is careful to note that 'the temple is like the one at Ephesus, although small as compared with great, and the image of the goddess, although carved from cypress wood as compared with gold, is like the Ephesian image' (5.3.12). This statement simultaneously captures in miniature both the meticulous reverence paid by Xenophon towards the goddess, and also the kind of humility that, as the various sections of this paper have shown, is central to Xenophon's understanding of divine-human interactions. In the closing section, the narrator quotes verbatim an inscription set up on the estate. This, the sole epigraphic item recited in the *Anabasis*, details the sacred nature of the site and the expectation placed on future owners to honour the goddess duly through the sacrifices and the upkeep of the temple.<sup>70</sup>

It is not within the scope of this paper to explore fully the wider social and political ramifications of this most singular passage. But it is especially worthwhile to note the manner in which the narrator offers such a detailed glimpse of Xenophon's idyllic future life,<sup>71</sup> and in particular the significance he attaches to the divine in this utopic setting. Indeed, he attempts to extend this association beyond the temporal constraints of his own life by setting up an inscribed record for posterity—a noble, if flawed attempt to establish a permanent marker of the piety that he exhibited towards the syncretised goddess. This

<sup>68</sup> Cf. 7.7.57. On Xenophon's exile, see esp. Tuplin (1987), Badian (2004).

<sup>69</sup> On Xenophon's life at Scillus, see esp. Tuplin (2004c), Rood (2012); cf. Dillery (1995) 90, 94, Ma (2004) 340–1, Grethlein (2012) 30, all remarking on the instability of this *prolepsis*, since Xenophon implies his future absence from the idyllic estate at Scillus.

<sup>70</sup> Note *IG* 9.1.654, in which a second/third century CE resident of Ithaca reproduces the *hieros choros* of Artemis established by Xenophon at Scillus.

<sup>71</sup> See Tuplin (2004c) 251–2 on the pointed contrast between this narrative and the 'unidyllic adjacent narratives about the Drilae and Mossynoeci'. On the Drilae, see §II.

strengthens the indissoluble relationship between Xenophon and the divine, so carefully developed over the course of the *Anabasis*, and further contributes to the authority of Xenophon the narrator and Xenophon the ideal leader. For while Cyrus might appear as the *Anabasis*' ideal leader in Xenophon's generous obituary at 1.9,<sup>72</sup> it is significant that Cyrus does not prove to be an astute reader of divine phenomena. As noted above, he mistakenly surmises that τὰ ἱερὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ σφάγια καλὰ (1.8.15) on the eve of his death—a statement that functions retrospectively as a somewhat ironic indicator of Cyrus' limitations as a well-rounded leader. A further ironic marker comes earlier in Book One, during the march to Cunaxa. Cyrus and his men successfully traverse a river, confounding the people of Thapascus, since the river had never been crossed by foot before. Xenophon concludes that 'it seemed to be divine (ἐδόκει δὴ θεῖον εἶναι), and that the river had clearly opened before Cyrus because he would be king' (1.4.18). While the event 'seemed' (*edokei*) to portend Cyrus' status as *basileus*, his premature death at Cunaxa and failure to seize the throne wholly undercuts this interpretation. The implication is that even if the divine played some rôle, this was not the propitious *theion* event that it initially appeared to be.

It is striking, too, that none of the generals who are put to death at the end of Book Two are singled out for having developed a positive relationship with the gods. In fact, Menon the Thessalian is said to disregard those who are pious and practise truth (2.6.25), priding his deceptive qualities, in clear contrast to the man who is pious, true, and just (2.6.26). Accordingly, none of these leaders meet an important criterion of great leadership as laid out in Xenophon's didactic work *Oeconomicus*: the brave and knowledgeable leader is 'not altogether human, but divine (θεῖον), manifestly a gift from the gods' (21.12). By contrast, the constituent parts of this paper have illustrated how Xenophon is depicted as a conscientious and perceptive reader of divine communications once he sets out for Asia Minor. So the Scillus *ekphrasis* in Book Five not only supports the narrator's broader characterisation of Xenophon's successful relationship with the divine in the *Anabasis*, but also simultaneously hints at the character's subsequent triumph as the Cyreans' leader in Books Six and Seven.

A further aspect concerning the temporal perspective of this passage is particularly significant here: the Scillus *logos* provides the furthest proleptic glance in the *Anabasis*. We may recall that the longest analeptic glance in the text is when Xenophon went to speak with Socrates and made his foolish appeal to Apollo. The difference between these two scenes could not be more overt. The

<sup>72</sup> On this obituary, see esp. Gray (2011) 71–4 and Flower (2012) 191ff.

*Anabasis* reveals an underlying evolutionary narrative in which Xenophon the impetuous youth is fully transformed into Xenophon the pious.<sup>73</sup>

Xenophon's Scillus *logos* is thus an integral feature of his *Anabasis*, and not just for what it purports to reveal about his subsequent biography. It reinforces the close association that the narrator develops throughout the text between the prototypically successful leader and the divine. At the same time, his assiduous and precise devotion to Ephesian Artemis, subtly vindicates the narrator's portrait of Xenophon the character, who persistently maintains a conscientious and profitable relationship with the divine—both figuratively and, in the case of Scillus, literally.<sup>74</sup>

## V. Conclusions

It is clear that the events that unfolded between 401 and 399 BCE are inextricably bound up with the divine. For Xenophon, the numinous is the very fabric of the *Anabasis*; it was, after all, a supra- and super-human consultation with Apollo and Socrates respectively that Xenophon records as the basis of his subsequent rôle in this now iconic voyage. Indeed, the fact that Xenophon listened to Socrates' initial advice—both (i) to seek the oracle's advice, and subsequently (ii) to do all that the god instructed—is crucial in terms of explaining his subsequent journey to Asia, and in turn the future publication of his march up-country.

It has also become clear that different narrative engagements with the divine in the *Anabasis* all serve both to inform and to reinforce wider narrative concerns, such as the pursuit of good leadership, delayed and/or indeterminate *telê*, and the prevalence of the divine in the discourse and pragmatics of war. Xenophon's *Anabasis* suggests that both narrator and character, an increasingly narrow distinction as the narrative unfolds,<sup>75</sup> are necessarily engaged with the process of communicating and interpreting various divine signs. Divine messages may yet serve to explain a past event, such as Xenophon's *true* motivation for marching up-country, and may even form the crux of an entire narrative, as is vividly exemplified by Xenophon's dream that compelled him to act at the very moment when the Greeks were experiencing profound perplexity.

I do not have the space here to develop the full historiographical implications of this interaction between the divine and the past, but a few preliminary

<sup>73</sup> Similarly Parker (1996) 78 n. 41: 'it would be hard to find a passage more instinct with Greek religious feeling than Xenophon's warm and graceful description' of his life at Scillus.

<sup>74</sup> Xenophon appears to profit substantially from this estate, see further Parker (2004) 138, Tuplin (2004c) *passim*, Rood (2012) 112–13.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Purves (2010) 195, Grethlein (2012), Ferrario (2012) 361f.

observations can be made. First, Xenophon's literary project is inconceivable without reference to the various manifestations of divine activity and/or interaction that are at the heart of his understanding of his highly controversial past. Secondly, and particularly interesting from the perspective of an early twenty-first-century historian, divine episodes play a crucial narrative rôle in the *Anabasis*. The enduring relationship between Xenophon the character and the divine signals the dominant rôle that he will play as leader in the events that follow. That is to say, the divine skein that sustains Xenophon the character sustains (and in turn creates) Xenophon the narrator—both in the very moments of history itself, and in the subsequent collation and narration of those moments. Finally, religious elements contribute significantly to the distinct texture of Xenophon's account. It is the way that readers feel the *Anabasis*—an account that is so acutely attentive to the historical significance of dreams, omens, extispicy, and all manner of religious phenomena—that is what lends Xenophon's account of his successful commandship of the Ten Thousand such persuasive force.

The parameters of our investigations clearly should not be limited to erroneous attempts to discern simplistic versus sophisticated attitudes towards the divine (i.e. a credulous Xenophon vs. a rational Thucydides), but instead should encompass a careful reading of the subtle interplay between religion and narrative. It is perhaps the case that Xenophon would wish us to end at the outermost past future in his account: the inscribed tablet at Scillus, which sings euphoniously to the full and proper propitiation of the goddess Artemis. For, 'if anyone should not do these things, the goddess will be mindful of it' (ΑΝ ΔΕ ΤΙΣ ΜΗ ΠΟΙΗΙ ΤΑΥΤΑ ΘΕΩΙ ΜΕΛΗΣΕΙ, 5.3.13).

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