

Καὶ σαφῶς τύραννος ἦν: XENOPHON'S ACCOUNT OF EUPHRON OF SICYON*

Abstract: Xenophon's account of Euphron, tyrant at Sicyon from 368 to 366, appears to present him as a typical fourth-century 'new tyrant', dependent on mercenaries and concerned solely with his own power. But why did Xenophon choose to recount Euphron's actions and fate at such length, and why does he insist so strongly that he was a tyrant? Xenophon's interest in Euphron is part of his general approach to tyranny in the *Hellenica*, which depicts a series of individuals and regimes, all described as tyrannies. The model of tyranny with which Xenophon operates is broader and more inclusive than we would expect, contrasting with the narrow, constitutional idea of tyranny defined by Aristotle. Understanding this has two consequences. It allows us to appreciate Euphron in a new light, giving credit to the positive tradition about his support for the Sicyonian democracy and his posthumous heroization; we can see the debate which existed in his own time about his role and position. It also raises the question of why Xenophon recognized tyranny in so many places, and was so keen to emphasize his construction of these regimes. We need to situate him within the evolution of ideas about tyranny, since the concept of tyranny is largely constructed by historians: Herodotus 'created' tyranny in the aftermath of the Persian Wars, while Thucydides developed the concept from the individual to the general, as this better fitted his Athenocentric model. Xenophon, in contrast, was reflecting contemporary debates over the interpretation of different types of ruler and regime, and developing his own theory of tyranny. Therefore to see a 'new tyranny' movement in the fourth century is misplaced: an examination of Euphron reveals the complexities of self-presentation in fourth-century Greek politics.

THE tyrants of Sicyon are well known: according to Aristotle (*Politics* 1315 b 11), Orthagoras and his sons enjoyed the longest successful reign of any tyranny, ruling for a hundred years between 750 and 650. Less widely known, though well documented, is Euphron, the fourth-century tyrant of Sicyon, who ruled from 368 to 366.¹ We possess two accounts of his reign: a brief paragraph in Diodorus, possibly derived from Ephorus, and a longer account in Xenophon's *Hellenica* (7.1.44-6 and 7.3).² The episode belongs to the period of shifting alliances in the Peloponnese; Xenophon describes how, when Sicyon was in alliance with Sparta, Euphron entered into a conspiracy with the Argives and Arcadians in 368, and made himself tyrant; how he was later opposed by an Arcadian faction and removed from power, but subsequently regained his position with the assistance of a mercenary force from Athens; and finally how he found himself unable to remove a Theban garrison from the Acropolis of Sicyon, and was assassinated while at Thebes in a bid to bribe the Thebans into withdrawing the garrison.

Despite the limited amount known about him, Euphron occupies a regular, and surprisingly large, place in the history of fourth-century tyranny. He is represented in most modern studies as a recognizable type, either the 'demagogue tyrant' who rises to power through appeal to the people, or the mercenary leader whose rule is supported by troops provided from outside. Mossé in particular gave him a place as one of the forerunners of Alexander alongside Jason of Pherae

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¹ On the chronology of Euphron, see R. Meloni, 'La tirannide de Eufrone I in Sicione', *RFIC* 29 (1951) 10-33; A. Griffin, *Sikyon* (Oxford 1982) 71; H.-J. Gehrke, *Stasis* (Munich 1985) 370-2.

² Diod. Sic. 15.70.3:

Ἄμα δὲ τούτοις πραττομένοις Εὐφρων ὁ Σικυώνιος, διαφέρων θράσει καὶ ἀπονοίᾳ, συνεργούς λαβὼν Ἀργείους ἐπέθετο τυραννίδι. κρατήσας δὲ τῆς ἐπιβολῆς τετταράκοντα τοὺς εὐπορωτάτους τῶν Σικυωνίων ἐφυγάδευσε, δημεύσας αὐτῶν τὰς οὐσίας, καὶ πολλῶν χρημάτων κυριεύσας μισθοφόρους ἤθροισε καὶ τῆς πόλεως ἐδυνάστευσεν.

At the same time as these events, Euphron of Sicyon, a man notorious for rashness and folly, made an attempt on tyranny with the assistance of the Argives. After his successful *coup* he exiled forty of the wealthiest Sicyonians and confiscated their property; and now commanding large sums of money, he assembled a mercenary force and ruled over the city.

and Clearchus of Heracleia in her influential study.³ This is quite surprising given the length of his rule: even on the most generous of estimates, he was in power for only four years, most of which was spent in the struggle for supremacy. Nevertheless, for many scholars Euphron displays very neatly many of the expected features of the classical tyrant: he had a long-term ambition to seize power, was forced to guard his position with mercenaries from his hostile subjects, and consequently ruled with greed and harshness, appropriating private and sacred funds. Most modern accounts have two features in common. They tend to echo Xenophon's hostility towards him in seeing him as an opportunist and a turncoat: a man who desired power at all costs, and was willing to side with any great power for personal gain.⁴ More fundamentally, most writers accept Xenophon's implication that Euphron's rise to power was deliberate and planned, assuming that his primary motivation was to establish himself as sole ruler of the polis. Certainly this is the image which Xenophon presents: although initially elected as one of five generals, Euphron is said to have recruited the mercenaries to his cause, and to have removed his fellow strategoi by murder or banishment. The pattern of his actions echoes that of Dionysius I, and because of the similarities, the image of Euphron the tyrant has easily taken root, following the template of Dionysius.⁵ Euphron's role as a 'textbook' tyrant is thus long established, but even so he has remained a minor historical figure, virtually unknown outside the pages of specialist works on tyranny. It may seem that there is little to be gained from a fresh consideration of the limited evidence for his actions. I hope to demonstrate, however, that there is more to Euphron's story than meets the eye, and that it has implications for our understanding of Xenophon's history, and of Euphron's motives and position.

Certain features of the story of Euphron set it apart from those of other contemporary tyrants. First of all, he appears only in Diodorus and the *Hellenica*, and in no other author, contemporary or later. Aristotle does not include him in the *Politics*, nor does he appear in collections of *stragemata*, the most common source of anecdotes about tyrants. This silence is not unusual for figures outside Athens in fourth-century history, but it highlights the fact that Xenophon made the decision to give his story considerable prominence, paying attention to both his accession to power and his actions once there. Euphron's importance to the history of tyranny is therefore created largely by Xenophon's focus on him; had Xenophon not given us such a definite and detailed characterization, Euphron would have survived only as a historical footnote. The format of the presentation in the *Hellenica* is also unusual: it begins with a straightforward narrative of Euphron's rise to prominence and adoption of a democratic constitution, but the larger part of the episode is cast in the form of the defence speech of one of Euphron's assassins, and it is this which includes most of the details of Euphron's actions. The structure thus determines the presentation of the facts; if the purpose of a speech is to justify Euphron's murder, it will hardly present his actions in a favourable light. Consequently we can note the very negative tone of Xenophon's description: there is no opportunity for a balanced presentation here. The attitude is echoed by the dismissive summary of Diodorus, for whom Euphron was διαφέρων θράσει

³ C. Mossé, *La tyrannie dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 1969) Part 2, ch.3 (*Les épigones*); J. Mandel, 'Zur Geschichte des coup d'état von Euphron I in Sikyon', *Euphrosyne* 8 (1977) 93-107; H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen* (Munich 1967) 305-7.

⁴ Griffin (n.1) 68-75; E. Frolov, 'Die späte Tyrannis im Balkanischen Griechenland', in E.C. Welskopf (ed.), *Hellenische Poleis: Krise – Wandlung – Wirkung* 1 (Berlin 1974) 231-400 at 376-88; W.E. Thompson, 'Arcadian factionalism in the 360s', *Historia* 32 (1983) 149-60; J. Roy, 'Arcadia and Boeotia in Peloponnesian affairs, 370-62 BC', *Historia* 20 (1971) 569-99, and 'Problems of democracy in the Arcadian confederacy', in

R. Brock and S. Hodkinson (eds), *Alternatives to Athens. Varieties of Political Organisation and Community in Ancient Greece* (Oxford 2000) 308-26; D. Whitehead, 'Euphron, tyrant of Sicyon', *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 5.8 (1980) 175-8. Only Meloni (n.1) and G.E.M. De Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London 1981) 297, have offered a revisionist view, the former depicting Euphron as a Sicyonian patriot, and the latter placing him as 'a leading political figure taking up the cause of the poor'.

⁵ Dionysius I's ascent to power is recounted in Diod. 13.92-3.

καὶ ἀπονοίᾳ. Thirdly, the feature of Xenophon's account from which this paper takes its title is his assertion that Euphron definitely was a tyrant, a claim which appears first in his own editorial voice, and again in the speech of his murderer. *Hell.* 7.1.45-6 describes the initial assembly, the institution of a democracy and the choosing of generals. Euphron then assembles a mercenary army using public and sacred money, confiscates the property of pro-Spartans, kills some of his fellow-generals and exiles the rest. 'καὶ σαφῶς', says Xenophon, 'τύραννος ἦν.' Later on at 7.3.8 the assassin similarly poses the question, 'καὶ μὴν πῶς οὐκ ἀπροφασίστως τύραννος ἦν;', and goes on to list the evidence: he enslaved the free, and killed or banished his enemies and confiscated their property. The reassertion of Euphron's role as tyrant seems to me to indicate a difficulty with Xenophon's story: was the claim as straightforward as it appears? Why did the assassin have to work so hard to convince the Thebans? Was Euphron accepted by all in his own time as a tyrant? What, in fact, did Xenophon mean by this assertion?

The key to understanding the nature of Euphron's story is to be found in the wider issue of Xenophon's attitude towards tyranny. His concept of tyranny is usually believed to be uncomplicated: in *Mem.* 4.6.12 Socrates defines tyranny as 'government of unwilling subjects, and not according to the law, but rather as the ruler desires', and the concept is examined at length in the *Hieron*. This treatise presents a picture of the tyrant as all-powerful but unhappy, deprived of friendship, security and interest in the wider world, and offers the recommendation via the Wise Man Simonides that a wise ruler should attempt to rule not in his own interests, but in those of his subjects – in other words, as a king, not a tyrant.⁶ The *Hellenica* has also been read as a study on the theme of freedom versus tyranny, demonstrating the inevitable failure of those who rule in tyrannical ways, whether small-scale (the Thirty) or large (Sparta after 404).⁷ But Xenophon's presentation of the figure of the tyrant, and of tyranny itself, is actually more complex than it seems. It is not often noted, for example, that the *Hellenica* is one of our most significant sources for fourth-century tyranny, containing as it does the only extended treatment of Jason of Pherae, as well as the account of Euphron himself, and of several other important figures. Xenophon appears to have a greater interest in tyrants than do most other historians. Furthermore, he does not apply the term 'tyrant' in the sense solely of an individual who has seized power unlawfully in a polis; very few of the figures who are referred to in the language of tyranny in the *Hellenica* are in fact usurpers dependent on military force, and his application of the concept is surprisingly broad.

This claim may seem unlikely, given that the first two references to tyranny in the *Hellenica*, at 2.2.24 and 2.3.5, both name Dionysius I of Syracuse. But these are interpolated chronographic paragraphs, and unlikely to have been written by Xenophon himself.⁸ The treatment of Dionysius elsewhere in the *Hellenica* offers a strong contrast: he is mentioned at 6.2.4 in the context of the Spartan appeal for his assistance in their expedition against Corcyra, and here Xenophon refers to him only as 'Dionysius', with no designation of his role. Similar references are made later in the same chapter and in Book 7.⁹ The succession of Dionysius II is noted at 7.4.12, but the question of the position to which he succeeded is ignored; Xenophon has no comment to make about the Dionysii as tyrants, treating them instead as a fixed point of Mediterranean power. That this is not simply reluctance to name their role is demonstrated by the contemporary Athenian inscriptions indicating the title preferred by Dionysius himself – ἄρχων of Sicily – which could have been used by a historian who did not wish to make an

⁶ The influence of Dionysius I on the figure of Hieron is clear: see V. Gray, 'Xenophon's Hiero and the meeting of the wise man and the tyrant in Greek literature', *CQ* 36 (1986) 115-23; M. Sordi, 'Lo Hierone di Senofonte, Dionigi e Filisto', *Athenaeum* 58 (1980) 3-13.

⁷ E.g. C. Tuplin, *The Failings of Empire. A Reading of Xenophon Hellenica 2.3.11-7.5.27* (*Historia Einzelschrift* 76, Stuttgart 1993).

⁸ See P. Krentz, *Xenophon Hellenica I-II.3.10* (Warminster 1989) 108-9 on *Hell.* 1.1.37.

⁹ *Hell.* 6.2.33, 7.1.20, 22.

explicit judgement on his position.¹⁰ It seems that because Dionysius' actions reported here are neutral or even positive, his role as tyrant was irrelevant outside the context of his own city.

What is more notable is the individuals or groups to whom Xenophon does attach the term 'tyrant', many of whom are not at first sight tyrants in the constitutional sense at all. Very famously, Xenophon uses the term in his discussion of the rule of the Thirty at Athens. He was not the first to raise the concept of tyranny in relation to the oligarchs – Aristotle's *Rhetorica* preserves a comment of Polycrates referring to Thrasybulus as having deposed thirty tyrannies, and Lysias also used the term in a general sense about those who wished to rule the polis in his speech *Against Eratosthenes*.¹¹ Nevertheless, Xenophon is aware of the apparent incongruity of applying the term 'tyrants' to a group, and makes his characters discuss its applicability at the same time as they employ it. At 2.3.16 he has Critias liken the rule of the Thirty to a tyranny, making explicit the underlying truth of the apparently inappropriate comparison – εἰ δὲ, ὅτι τριάκοντά ἐσμεν καὶ οὐχ εἷς, ἥττόν τι οἶει ὥσπερ τυραννίδος ταύτης τῆς ἀρχῆς χρῆναι ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, εὐήθης εἶ. Later in the episode Theramenes speaks of the situation where a few men hold a tyranny over the city, and contrasts the idea of absolute democracy (rule by οἱ δημοσικοί) with strict oligarchy (rule by οἱ τυραννικοί) as the two unwelcome extremes of the political spectrum. Although it is paradoxical to claim that rule by the few is a tyranny, it is the nature of the Thirty's rule which makes the comparison valid: they rule in a lawless fashion, doing whatever they wish, and protect their power with violence. Evidently the experience of Athens allowed Xenophon to see tyranny as a phenomenon which went beyond the individual.

The next ruler to appear as tyrant in the *Hellenica* is unusual in a number of ways: Mania, satrap of Aeolis under Pharnabazus, is female, an Easterner, and in a constitutional sense a governor, not a tyrant. *Hell.* 3.1.10-28 relates the story of Mania and her son-in-law Meidias at Scepsis, as part of the campaigns of Derkyllidas in Asia Minor. Mania was satrap of Aeolis, a position she took over after the death of her husband Zenis, with the agreement of Pharnabazus. She paid tribute to the Persians, lent forces to Pharnabazus' military ventures, and acted as adviser to him. At 3.1.14 she is said to have guarded her rule against outsiders ὥσπερ ἐν τυραννίδι προσῆκεν, although she trusted Meidias, who later murdered her. There is no sign that Mania ruled an unwilling populace – indeed, her characterization is a favourable one – but the implication is clear: it is the nature of rule, not the constitutional position, which identifies a tyrant.¹²

Just as with the Thirty at Athens, the *Hellenica* ascribes the title of tyrants to the oligarchic faction who took power at Thebes after the seizure of the Cadmeia, and this is an episode which brings us closer to Euphron again. At the point where Euphron's role as tyrant is being asserted, the assassin compares his situation with that of Archias and Hypates at Thebes, as individuals 'trying to make themselves tyrants', a striking comparison.¹³ On the face of it, events at Thebes and at Sicyon are dissimilar, if Euphron was an individual claiming unconstitutional power, whereas at Thebes an oligarchy took power, backed by a Spartan garrison, but within the existing constitution. Yet Xenophon refers to the party of Archias and Hypates as tyrants both here and in his narrative in Book 5, even though the regime was nothing like a tyranny in the technical sense: after the Spartan seizure of the Cadmeia in 382, the Theban oligarchic group made no change to the constitution, merely installing themselves as polemarchs, holding the office in turn and controlling affairs.¹⁴ It was thus difficult to cast the regime as a tyranny; it was not even, as in Athens, a suspension of normal government, allowing for the idea of seizure of

¹⁰ *IG* II² 18 (393 BC); *IG* II² 103 (368); *IG* II² 105 and 523 (368/7).

¹¹ Arist. *Rhet.* 1401a34, cf. Quint. 3.6.26, 7.4.44; Lysias 12.35. See Tuplin (n.7) 44 n.7.

¹² Interpretations of the Mania episode vary: P. Krentz, *Xenophon Hellenica II.3.11-IV.2.8* (Warminster 1995) 163; V. Gray, *The Character of Xenophon's*

Hellenica (London 1989) 29-32; see also Tuplin (n.7) 49 (on Meidias).

¹³ *Hell.* 7.3.7.

¹⁴ *Hell.* 5.2.32; see J. Buckler, 'The re-establishment of the Boiotarchia (378 BC)', *AJAH* 4.2 (1979) 50-64 at 50-1.

unlawful power. At the time of the liberation, Archias and Philippos were polemarchs, with Phillidas their secretary; other members of the group, most notably Leontiades and Hypates, held no office but retained great influence.¹⁵ Xenophon, notwithstanding, describes Phillidas' dissatisfaction with τὴν περὶ Φιλίππου τυραννίδα (5.4.2), and represents the democrats announcing to the citizens after their victory that the tyrants were dead (5.4.9). Even the Spartans are credited with recognizing the rule as a tyranny; at 5.4.13 Xenophon explains that Agesilaos declined to lead a force to restore the party of Archias to power, ostensibly on the grounds that he was too old, but actually because he was afraid that he would be accused of disturbing the city in order to lend aid to tyrants.¹⁶

The final episode to be considered is of course that dealing with the rulers of Pherae. The name of Jason, tyrant of Pherae, is so well known that it is easy to be misled: Xenophon never in fact refers to Jason as a tyrant. He is introduced as a man of great power whose name is known across Greece, with a desire to become *Tagos* of Thessaly, a position which he duly achieved in 375 BC.¹⁷ Jason's precise constitutional position is something on which ancient writers disagree, some referring to him as tyrant of Pherae, some as tyrant of Thessaly, and others simply as tyrant, without specifying a city or region.¹⁸ Xenophon in fact mentions tyranny only at the end of Jason's career, where we find the claim that the Greeks feared that Jason, at the height of his success, would use his power to 'become tyrant'.¹⁹ Most have assumed that Xenophon means 'tyrant of Greece', consistent with Jason's reported desire in Polydamas' speech of wishing to be μέγιστος τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι, but this is not what is said, nor is it immediately meaningful as a term. Clearly his unusual situation stretches the boundaries of the terminology. The subsequent discussion of Jason's successors expands on the distinction which Xenophon has introduced: when Polyphron killed his brother Polydorus and took sole power, we find the notorious comment that he 'turned the *tageia* into a tyranny'.²⁰ This is also a novel mode of expression, drawing a distinction between the elected position of *Tageia*, despite the power which a *Tagos* held, and the application of that power for immoral ends: Polyphron as *Tagos* was not a tyrant, but as an individual who carried out executions and banishments of citizens, he was. Alexander, nephew of Polyphron, subsequently murdered him, with the claim that he was putting an end to the tyranny, even though he too assumed the position of *Tagos*, and if true, this presupposes that the distinction was understood by Alexander's Thessalian subjects.²¹ The concept of tyranny once again has a moral cast, depicting the way in which power is exploited, not its constitutional form.

The model of tyranny with which Xenophon operates is thus different from that of Aristotle in the *Politics*, which tends to dominate modern thought. Aristotle's aim in writing his treatise was to systematize political structures and to generalize from examples, and in pursuit of his system he draws a sharp distinction between tyranny and oligarchy, assimilating tyranny to monarchy as variant types of one-man rule. It was not in the interests of his work to blur distinctions. The effect of this is quite striking. Most of the rulers discussed in his section on tyrannical regimes are either Archaic tyrants – the Cypselids, Deinomenids, Pisistratids and Orthagorids – or figures whom we would understand as traditional monarchs, and only a very few from the fourth century appear.²² Jason of Pherae, for instance, is not mentioned in the tales of tyrants, even though he might well have made a good example of a tyrant overthrown by conspiracy. It

¹⁵ *Hell.* 5.4.2, 7; *Plut. Pel.* 7, 11, *De gen. Soc.* 598.

¹⁶ *Hell.* 5.4.13; cf. *Plut. Ages.* 24.2; of course the language of tyranny was widely applied to the Theban regime: see *Plut. Pel.* 6.1, 7.2 and R.J. Buck, *A History of Boeotia* (Edmonton 1976) 70-1.

¹⁷ *Hell.* 6.1.4, 8.

¹⁸ S. Sprawski, *Jason of Pherai. A Study of the History of Thessaly in the Years 431-370 BC* (Crakow 1999) 58-62, presents a detailed discussion of the topic.

¹⁹ *Hell.* 6.4.32.

²⁰ *Hell.* 6.4.34.

²¹ *Hell.* 6.4.35.

²² *Arist. Pol.* 1310 a 39-1313 a 17, 1313 a 34-1315 b 10.

was not that Aristotle had no knowledge of him – he appears earlier, in a discussion of the virtue of the citizen.²³ At this point he is described as *tyrannos*, but it seems that he was not clearly enough a tyrant to be included alongside Pisistratus and Dionysius in the general section on tyranny. Aristotle also neglects to mention tyrants now famous to us from the fourth century, such as Clearchus at Heracleia, and indeed Euphron himself, as well as Easterners like Mausolus, suggesting that he was operating with a view of the tyrant as a usurper in a polis, who held power outside the law.²⁴ The attitude is most marked in the problematic passage discussing the length of tyrannies, in which Aristotle states that tyrannies are generally short-lived, and that the three tyrannical dynasties with the longest duration were the Orthagorids at Sicyon (as noted above), the Cypselids at Corinth, and the Pisistratids at Athens.²⁵ He also mentions the eighteen-year rule of the Deinomenids at Syracuse. The omission of the Dionysii, who ruled as father and son for forty-nine years, has long attracted comment, but Sprawski notes in his study of Jason of Pherae that Jason and his successors Polydorus and Alexander should in fact qualify as the third longest dynasty, with a combined rule of about thirty years, even if Lycophron is discounted as part of the same family.²⁶ He suggests that they are omitted because the nature of the Thessalian tyranny prevents its acceptance by Aristotle as a ‘true’ tyranny, and certainly Aristotle’s preference for Archaic examples seems to stem from the smaller room for doubt over figures like Cypselos and Pisistratus, who follow the pattern which he has developed. Xenophon’s approach is, as I said, noticeably different: he presents us with ‘tyrants’ defined by their actions, regardless of their numbers (at Athens and Thebes), their roles in government (as in Thebes and Thessaly) or their geographical origin (in Aeolis). Aristotle asserts that a tyrant may rule well and moderately, in contrast to Xenophon’s contention that a tyrant is by definition an unjust and absolute ruler. The difficulty in understanding figures like Euphron arises from an attempt to reconcile these very variant positions, or rather, from a failure to recognize that they are different.

Euphron, then, is a figure around whom this debate crystallizes. It is a feature of Xenophon’s account that he insists explicitly on Euphron’s identification as a tyrant, in both his own voice and that of the assassin. Modern scholars, as I said, have tended to follow Xenophon’s account, and on certain topics assumptions are regularly made beyond what is in the histories. For example, Xenophon states that Euphron won the loyalty of a mercenary force by offering them special treatment, and that he placed his son Adeas in command of this force. The mercenaries, we are told, were used by Euphron to aid his Arcadian and Argive allies on their expeditions, in order to secure their commitment to him, and they duly appear at *Hell.* 7.2.11. What Xenophon does not say is that Euphron used the mercenaries against his own citizens, to enforce an unpopular rule, nor that he brought the force into being: he clearly took it over from the previous regime. Yet this assumption appears in most modern accounts of Euphron, and has led to his being characterized as a tyrant reliant on mercenaries, in the mould of Dionysius I at Syracuse or Clearchus at Heracleia.²⁷ Xenophon also says that Euphron paid his mercenaries by appropriating temple treasures, an accusation repeated with strong moral disapproval later in the account: ‘he took over our temples when they were full of offerings in silver and gold, and he left them empty’. On the basis of these comments, Euphron has been credited with minting his own coinage as an expression of his power; there are three fourth-century examples of gold hemidrachmas minted at Sicyon, showing the head of Apollo and a wreath, which have been

²³ *Pol.* 1277 a 24-5.

²⁴ V. Parker, ‘TYRANNOS: the semantics of a political concept from Archilochus to Aristotle’, *Hermes* 126 (1998) 145-72 at 167-8, rightly points out that Aristotle’s concern with the moment of constitutional change leads him to disregard the method by which most tyrants came to power: by inheritance.

²⁵ *Pol.* 1315 b 11-40.

²⁶ Sprawski (n.18) 59; see also D. Keyt, *Aristotle Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford 1999), who comments that Clearchus and his sons at Heracleia should also be included, given the length of their reign, and on the authenticity of the passage in general.

²⁷ E.g. Mossé (n.3) 126; Roy (1971, n.4) 580.

linked to Euphron because he 'is reported to have confiscated private and temple property on a generous scale', and 'on literary and other evidence'.²⁸ Xenophon also leans hard on Euphron's appropriation of temple treasures as a clearly tyrannical aspect of his rule, but the truth of the account is impossible to judge. It may be that Euphron did appropriate sacred treasures, but if the mercenaries were used solely for military ventures outside the city, it makes the use of valuables from Sicyonian temples less heinous: after all, the Athenians proposed the use of their temple treasures in the course of the Peloponnesian War, with a promise to repay at a later date.²⁹

Yet to set against the image of Euphron the uncomplicated tyrant, there is an underlying positive tradition also contained in Xenophon's account. It is plain, for instance, that Euphron was popular with the Sicyonian demos: he established a democracy at the outset of events, and consistently supported that democracy against the aristocratic faction. The conflict at Sicyon, despite being presented as that of liberator versus tyrant, was clearly a *stasis* between democrats and aristocrats; the opponents of Euphron are described at various junctures as the *beltistoi*, the *kratistoi* and the *plousiotatoi*, indicating a division along class lines.³⁰ We are told that at the initial assembly meeting, a democracy was established 'ἐπὶ τοῖς ἴσοις καὶ ὁμοίοις', replacing the pre-existing oligarchy.³¹ After this, Xenophon says, Euphron took power into his own hands; we are told nothing of any further constitutional organization. There is nevertheless a hint of reorganization in the measures towards slaves which are mentioned later. In the assassin's speech, one of the clinching accusations made to demonstrate that Euphron was undoubtedly a tyrant is that he was a man who δούλους μὲν οὐ μόνον ἐλευθέρους ἀλλὰ καὶ πολίτας ἐποίει. This is a well-known crux in Xenophon's text; it can be read to mean either that he enslaved free men, or, more plausibly, that he freed slaves and enfranchised them. Whitehead suggested that these slaves were a class of *penestai* who were freed and given rights in the state.³² We may see here a widening of the citizen body with a large number of newly enfranchised slaves, again very like the actions of Dionysius I.

Moreover, after his death the citizens of Sicyon, we hear, brought Euphron's body back to the city, buried it in the agora and paid him honours as founder of the city, an event which merits more attention than it has hitherto received (οἱ πολῖται ... ἔθαψάν τε ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ καὶ ὡς ἀρχηγέτην τῆς πόλεως σέβονται).³³ The meaning and extent of honouring someone as a founder are very significant. We have no information on the nature of the posthumous cult for Euphron, but can compare the establishment rather later of a hero cult at Sicyon for Aratus in 213:

Κομισθείσης δὲ τῆς μαντείας οἱ τε Ἀχαιοὶ σύμπαντες ἤσθησαν, καὶ διαφερόντως οἱ Σικυώνιοι μεταβαλόντες εἰς ἑορτὴν τὸ πένθος εὐθύς ἐκ τοῦ Αἰγίου τὸν νεκρὸν ἐστεφανωμένοι καὶ λευχειμονοῦντες ὑπὸ παιάνων καὶ χορῶν εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀνήγον, καὶ τόπον ἐξελόμενοι περίοπτον ὡσπερ οἰκιστὴν καὶ σωτῆρα τῆς πόλεως ἐκήδευσαν. καὶ καλεῖται μέχρι νῦν Ἀράτειον, καὶ θύουσιν αὐτῷ θυσίαν ...

²⁸ Coins described in R. Weil, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* 7 (1879) 371ff.; C.M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London 1976) 100; J.A.W. Cargill-Thompson, 'The autonomous coinage of Sicyon', summarized at *Num. Chron.* 8 (1968) x.

²⁹ Thuc. 2.13.4-5. The same accusation, though more vaguely couched, is levelled at Jason of Pherae at *Hell.* 6.4.30.

³⁰ De Ste Croix (n.4) 297.

³¹ A later Athenian inscription honouring Euphron II, grandson of the tyrant, also hints at a possible longstand-

ing link with Athens, whence Euphron I's mercenary assistance in 366/5 was drawn: *JG* II² 448; see C.J. Schwenk, *Athens in the Age of Alexander. The Dated Laws and Decrees of 'the Lykourgan Era' 338-322 BC* (Chicago 1985) no. 83, Griffin (n.1) 75-7 and Meloni (n.1).

³² Whitehead (n.4), further discussed in P.A. Cartledge, 'Euphron and the douloi again', *LCM* 5.9 (1980) 209-11.

³³ Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.12.

Once they received the oracle the Achaeans were all delighted, and especially the Sicyonians, who immediately changed their sorrow for joy, put on crowns and white garments, and brought the body back from Aegium into their city to the accompaniment of hymns and dancing; and choosing a conspicuous place they buried him as founder and saviour of the polis. The place is still referred to as the Arateion, and there they make sacrifices to him ...³⁴

The process which is being suggested for Euphron involved the return of the body to the city, the burial in a public place and the creation of an annual civic cult, an act which carries with it several implications. First, according to Xenophon it was the citizens, οἱ πολῖται, who returned Euphron's body for burial; if Euphron was honoured as founder because of his establishment of democracy, it is certainly appropriate that he was brought home for burial by the *politai*, since these *politai* would include those newly enfranchised, who would have particular reason to think of Euphron as liberator. But as well as the political meaning of the act, we should also dwell on its religious aspect, since the institution of a founder cult would have created a permanent memorial to Euphron in the agora as well as a cult of Euphron the hero.³⁵ Can one reconcile a tyrannical and unconstitutional reign with such honours? Why should Euphron have been paid a founder's honours, if his rule had been lawless and damaging? The establishment of a foundation cult has a well-known precedent in the treatment afforded to Brasidas by the Amphipolitans in 424; Brasidas saved the city from Athenian domination, and in recognition the people displaced their original founder, the Athenian Hagnon, and installed Brasidas in his place, awarding him an annual festival and games.³⁶ Central to the honour is the idea of the liberation of the city and the adoption of Brasidas as 'true' founder. A similar episode is hinted at in the fourth century at Ephesus: Arrian notes that during a stasis at Ephesus, the oligarchs had dug up the tomb of Heropythes, the liberator of the city, from the agora, implying that Heropythes represented the leadership of the defeated democrats and had been interred in the agora by his supporters.³⁷ The interesting feature here is that the oligarchs chose to remove the tomb, and hence the cult, to symbolize their accession to power, which suggests a recognition that honours were paid to Heropythes to commemorate the establishment of democracy. Euphron's honours seem to parallel those of Heropythes, since he too brought about democracy: his role as founder is very direct, since he was the architect of a new constitution and hence a 'second foundation' at Sicyon. This interpretation of Euphron's acts has always been accepted more readily by scholars of religion than by those writing on tyranny: Euphron often makes an appearance in discussions of the heroization of historical figures as an uncontroversial figure, or even an outstanding benefactor to the citizens of Sicyon.³⁸

It is at Ephesus in the 320s that we find the clearest parallel with Euphron, during the Macedonian domination of Asia Minor. As noted above, the democrats, with Heropythes among their leaders, had triumphed in a stasis at some time before 334, but were subsequently ousted by the oligarchic faction, who dug up Heropythes' tomb. After Alexander conquered Ephesus, the democracy was restored under a Macedonian garrison. Polyaeus refers to an occasion some time afterwards when three young men murdered a tyrant named Hegesias, leading to Macedonian intervention.³⁹ Bosworth proposes that we should understand Hegesias not as a

³⁴ Plut. *Aratus* 53.3-4.

³⁵ I. Malkin, *Religion and Colonisation in Ancient Greece* (Leiden 1987) 232-3; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. J. Raffan (Oxford 1998) 203-8.

³⁶ Thucydides 5.11.

³⁷ Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.17.11; see A.B. Bosworth, *A Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* (Oxford 1980) 131-3, and perhaps Polyaeus 7.23.2.

³⁸ Malkin (n.35) 232; S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides 2: Books IV-V.24* (Oxford 1996) 451; W. Leschhorn, 'Gründer der Stadt'. *Studien zu einem politisch-religiösen Phänomen der griechischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart 1984) 175-80.

³⁹ Polyaeus 6.49: Ἀναξαγόρας, Κόδρος, Διόδωρος, παῖδες Ἐχεάνακτος, Ἡγησίαν τύραννον Ἐφεσίων ἀπέκτειναν.

'genuine' tyrant, but as one of the leaders of the democratic faction whose pre-eminent position, bolstered by the Macedonian garrison, laid him open to accusations of tyranny.⁴⁰ This is an almost exact description of the position occupied by Euphron, and it is easy to see how the effect of stasis would be to polarize public response to a leader, leading to heroization on the one hand, and accusations of tyranny on the other. This is precisely what we find in Sicyon: Euphron was a liberator of the polis and at the same time a criminal and a temple-robber.⁴¹

This dual identity of Euphron helps to answer Xenophon's question: whether or not Euphron was a tyrant depends on your political standpoint. It suggests that rather than trying to make every individual referred to as a tyrant fit an Aristotelian model of the power-hungry usurper, we will get further by looking at exactly what the individual was able to offer to the community in which he acted. It does, however, raise the additional question of why Euphron is represented as he is in Xenophon, as one of a series of rulers who may not 'really' have been tyrants, but who are drawn into a single category of tyranny, and this requires an answer about the purpose of the history as a whole.⁴²

Xenophon stands at an interesting point in the development of the concept of tyranny. The first work to present it as a concept is Herodotus' *Histories*, which relates the war between Greece and Persia while imposing an ideological structure on the material. It is well known that the *Histories* contain references to over fifty tyrants, Ionian and Greek, and that the defeat of tyranny by democracy is one of the guiding principles of the work. Herodotus is keen to demonstrate that tyranny does not flourish, and that only the democratic state, where *Nomos* is respected, can ultimately succeed.⁴³ His interpretation of the events of the sixth and early fifth centuries in terms of a polarity between tyranny and democracy was very influential on both thinkers of his own times and modern historians; the idea of an 'age of tyranny', superseded by a more successful 'age of democracy', has become almost unquestioned, even though it ignores the predominance of oligarchic regimes in most Greek states. The texts which follow, being Athenian, tended to maintain and emphasize the contrast between tyranny and democracy, although as the century progressed the term 'tyranny' was adopted into the rhetoric of political struggle, taking in not only the autocratic ruler, but groups and indeed institutions (the tyranny of empire).⁴⁴ But concentration on Athens inevitably produces a narrow perspective, since tyranny, which may have seemed distant in Attica once oligarchy had emerged as the main threat, was not absent from the Peloponnese or the North in the same way: Miltiades held a tyranny in the Chersonnese until the late 490s, Thucydides gives us a tantalising glimpse of the tyrant Euarchus at Astacus in 431, and Diodorus recounts a succession of attempts to seize power in Sicily.⁴⁵ If tyranny is absent from fifth-century Greece, it is as much a function of the sources we favour for the

⁴⁰ The presence of a tyrant at this point seems anomalous, and Badian ('Alexander the Great and the Greeks of Asia', in E. Badian (ed.), *Ancient Society and Institutions. Studies presented to V. Ehrenberg* (Oxford 1966) 37-69) saw Hegesias as rather an ex-tyrant, that is, a member of the oligarchy who had been recalled. Bosworth (n.37) 132 suggests that the Macedonian reaction to the murder is stronger than the killing of an ex-oligarch would seem to warrant, and it is therefore more likely that he was the incumbent democratic leader.

⁴¹ Responses to Theramenes in Athens offer another illustration of such polarization; see P. Harding, 'The Theramenes myth', *Phoenix* 28 (1974) 101-11, and J. Engels, 'Der Michigan-Papyrus über Theramenes und die Ausbildung des "Theramenes-Mythos"', *ZPE* 99 (1993) 125-55.

⁴² For alternative theories about the inclusion of the Euphron episode, see J. Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of his Times* (London 1995) 130-8; Tuplin (n.7) 124; also W.E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian. The Problem of the Individual and the Society of the Polis* (Albany, NY 1977) 109-10, 115.

⁴³ Expressed most clearly at 5.78; also at 3.80-3 and 7.102-4. The most recent treatment of the theme is C. Dewald, 'Form and content: the question of tyranny in Herodotus', in K.A. Morgan (ed.), *Popular Tyranny. Sovereignty and its Discontents in Ancient Greece* (Austin 2003) 25-58.

⁴⁴ R.G. Osborne, 'Changing the discourse', in Morgan (n.43).

⁴⁵ Hdt. 6.104; Thuc. 2.30 and 33; Diod. Sic. 11.86.4-5 (Tyndarides), 11.88.6, 12.8.1-2, 12.29.1 (Duketios), 13.75.2-9 (Hermocrates); also Diog. Laert. 8.63 (Empedocles). See Berve (n.3) 171-89, 207-16.

period: tyranny seems to return in the fourth century because Xenophon shows us the wider debate over how rulers or ruling groups should be interpreted, which had never gone away. Several scholars have suggested that the struggle over the label of ‘tyrant’ was just as strong in the Archaic period, and certainly this is what we see played out in some of Xenophon’s episodes too – one side using the label of tyrant, the other denying it.⁴⁶ Aristotle’s system required him to close down debate about individuals’ status, to decide definitively who was a tyrant and who not; Xenophon shows us the much greater room for manoeuvre in the fourth century, focusing on the struggle for definitions, exemplified by the rulers of Pherae, Dionysius I’s concern to avoid the title *tyrannos* in favour of the more neutral ἄρχων, and indeed by Mausolus’ concern over titles.⁴⁷

Tyranny, therefore, becomes more difficult to see the more closely one examines it, not only in the fourth century, but in the Archaic period too: scholars are beginning to suspect that if we had more contemporary sources on Cleisthenes of Sicyon or Cypselus of Corinth, it would become more difficult to impose a single model of ‘tyranny’ on them too.⁴⁸ Viewed from the right perspective, almost any ruler or regime could be claimed as a tyranny, and the judgement we make on any given regime depends to a large extent on the ideology of the historian who described it. It is thus mistaken to see a ‘new tyranny’ movement in the fourth century, with Euphron representing a departure from previous types of government: to be able to say that an absolute ruler could be a generous leader, or that a constitutional government could be a tyranny, affords us a much better understanding of the ways in which individuals might define themselves or be defined by others, and the workings of the fourth-century polis.

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⁴⁶ Parker (n.24); S.I. Oost, ‘The tyrant kings of Syracuse’, *CP* 71 (1976) 224-36; G.J. Wheeler, ‘Tyrants?’, paper given at Classical Association Conference, University of Warwick, April 2003.

⁴⁷ On the personal propaganda of Dionysius, see S. Lewis, ‘The tyrant’s myth’, in C.J. Smith and J. Serrati (eds), *Sicily from Aeneas to Augustus* (Edinburgh 2000) 97-106; on Mausolus (*dynastes*, *basileus* and *tyrannos*), see S. Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford 1982) 55-62, 70-1,

and S. Ruzicka, *Politics of a Persian Dynasty. The Hecatomnids in the Fourth Century BC* (Norman, OK and London 1992) 43-4.

⁴⁸ Some early tyrants were, of course, subsumed into the tradition of ‘Wise Men’: Pittacus of Mytilene and Periander of Corinth both figure in lists of the ‘Seven Sages’, remembered for their lawgiving and wise advice: Diog. Laert. 1.41-2. Pl. *Prt.* 343a, Plut. *Conv. sept. sap.* and Paus. 10.24.1 include Pittacus but not Periander.