

A SOCRATIC HISTORY: THEOLOGY IN XENOPHON'S REWRITING OF HERODOTUS' CROESUS *LOGOS*

ANTHONY ELLIS
*Universität Bern**

Abstract: This article examines Xenophon's rewriting of Herodotus' Croesus *logos* (Hdt. 1.6–91) in the *Cyropaedia* (Cyr. 7.2), focusing on the very different role of the divine in the two narratives. Through a comparison with Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and several Platonic dialogues, I argue that Xenophon's retelling attempts to bring Herodotus' Croesus *logos* in line with his own 'Socratic' theology and his pedagogical goals, and in doing so performatively rejects Herodotus' vision of the role of the gods in historical causation. The *Cyropaedia* is, I argue, the first extant text in the Greek historiographical tradition which attempts to present divine justice and philanthropy as the central forces in the historical process, and the first in a long series of critical engagements with Herodotus' theology.

Keywords: Herodotus, Xenophon, theology, religion, didacticism, gods

The pervasive influence of Socratic thought on the theological and narrative aspects of Greek historiography is a fundamental but little noted aspect of the development of the genre during the Classical period. This article aims to contribute to our understanding of this topic by examining how Xenophon – a historian and Socratic philosopher – rewrites a narrative that stands at the beginning of Herodotus' *Histories*: the story of Croesus.

It has been claimed that Xenophon models some of the religious aspects of his historiography on Herodotus.¹ While this is true in the sense that Xenophon, like Herodotus and unlike Thucydides, makes the gods a central part of his account of the past, I shall argue for the opposite conclusion: Xenophon's reworking of Herodotean material bears the traces of a conceptual shift of the late fifth century, associated with Socrates, which self-consciously broke with much of the theological thought of the Greek literary tradition. I argue that Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* challenges the theological underpinnings of Herodotean historiography and that Xenophon intentionally recasts Herodotus' narratives in line with his 'Socratic' theology and his pedagogical goals.² In this, Xenophon paved the way for a long historiographical tradition (both neo-Platonic and Christian) which sought to blend didactic history with an optimistic theology similar, in several respects, to those outlined in surviving accounts of Socrates.³ Since Herodotus' *Histories* remained a paradigm-

* anthony.ellis@kps.unibe.ch. I am grateful to Gabriel Danzig for his perceptive remarks on an earlier draft of this article, which I first presented at the conference *Plato and Xenophon: Comparative Studies*. For numerous valuable comments, I would like to thank Michael Lurie, Tim Rood, Arnd Kerkhecker, Roger Brock and the two anonymous reviewers for *JHS*; for support while completing this article, I thank the Leverhulme Trust.

¹ Pownall (1998) 273, identifying two areas of overlap – Xenophon's 'reluctance to attribute the fates of evildoers to the gods directly' and 'his use of the "divine" as an abstract force' – and pointing to one difference: the absence of ancestral fault from Xenophon's works. The second overlap is probably too general to reflect a specifically Herodotean influence, since this usage is found in

many other fifth-century writers: see τὸ θεῖον in Heraclitus *fr.* 114, Gorgias *Palamedes* 17 (= *fr.* B 11a) and the Sisyphus fragment (DK 88 B 25 v.16); from Homer onwards it was normal in Greek literature to use singular, plural and abstract terms for gods in free alternation (see further François (1957); Parker (2011) 65–67).

² The theological aspects of Croesus' story in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (and their differences from Herodotus) have hardly been discussed, aside from some brief but astute remarks in Due (1989) 127–28, 131. For the relationship between the historical Socrates and Xenophon's Socrates, see n.24.

³ On the importance of Socrates to Xenophon's history writing – and the wider shift towards moralizing and didactic historiography in the fourth century – see Pownall (2004) 5–37, especially 15, 21.

matic text for many subsequent Greek historians, the tensions with which we see Xenophon grapple in this paper would be felt in Greek historiography for some 2,000 years.⁴

The first of the following sections compares the two versions of the Croesus story in broad terms and examines the theological structure of Herodotus' account. The second asks how the theological aspects of Herodotus' Croesus *logos* might have looked to a Socratic readership. The final section examines Xenophon's rewriting of the story in the light of the two previous sections.

I. The Croesus *logoi*

Xenophon's comparatively brief account of the meeting of Cyrus and Croesus condenses much of the basic plot information of Herodotus' Croesus *logos* into one scene,⁵ at the same time echoing Herodotus' language and his thematic concerns.⁶ Xenophon's dialogue revisits the central issues of the Herodotean Croesus *logos*: the nature of human fortune, the dangers of inflated self-conception and, particularly, why Croesus should have suffered such great misfortunes despite his lavish dedications to and extensive consultation of Delphic Apollo. In each of these areas, as we shall see, Xenophon draws on the Herodotean account even as he rewrites it in line with his Socratic concerns.

Recent treatments have tended to view Xenophon's numerous departures from Herodotus as motivated by his didactic goals,⁷ particularly his desire to present Cyrus the Great as an exemplary leader where the Herodotean Cyrus has clear flaws (particularly when judged according to Xenophon's vision of leadership). The desire to characterize Cyrus more positively is indeed fundamental to Xenophon's version although, as we shall see, it is only part of the story.⁸ Thus, where Herodotus' Croesus offers helpful advice to Cyrus on the plundering of Sardis (Hdt. 1.88.2–89.3), on the nature of human fortune (Hdt. 1.207) and on military strategy (Hdt. 1.207.3–7), in Xenophon Cyrus shows himself to be wiser than Croesus (for example in his attitude to wealth: *Cyr.* 7.2.14–23). When Xenophon's Cyrus does ask Croesus for advice – how best to reward the victorious

⁴ For the later reception of some of the issues discussed in this paper, see Ellis (2015b).

⁵ As scholars have long recognized: Keller (1911) 252–54, 256–57; Riemann (1967) 22–27; Due (1989) 117–35; Lefèvre (2010) especially 402, 406–07; Gray (2011) 145–49; (2016). For two possible echoes of Herodotus in the *Hellenica*, see Brown (1990). Similarities include the usurpation of the Lydian throne by Croesus' ancestor Gyges, Croesus' testing of the oracles, the death of Atys, debate over the plundering of Sardis, Cyrus' recognition of his shared humanity with Croesus (Hdt. 1.86.6 with *Cyr.* 7.2.10–14) and Croesus' acceptance of his deliverance into Cyrus' hands (Hdt. 1.207.1, 1.89.1 with *Cyr.* 7.2.9).

⁶ In addition to echoes of Herodotean phraseology in the passages noted above (n.5), see nn.15, 17, 22, 62–65, 70–73, 75, 78 where Xenophon seems to echo (and occasionally to 'correct') Herodotus' account. Note also that Xenophon employs a common Herodotean narrative habit: abandoning the pose of authorial omniscience and offering alternative motivations for a character's actions introduced by εἶτε [...] εἶτε [...] (cf. Hdt. 1.86.2, 1.19.2, 61.1, 191.1, 2.181.1, 6.134.2, 7.205.3, 9.91.1; with Baragwanath (2008) 126). While not unknown in Xenophon's wider oeuvre (cf. *Cyr.* 8.3.14), one of the few examples occurs late in the encounter between Croesus and Cyrus (*Cyr.* 7.2.29).

⁷ To talk of departures assumes that Herodotus' *Histories* was one of the primary accounts of Cyrus' life in Xenophon's mind as he wrote; this seems a reasonable conclusion from the extensive verbal and conceptual crossovers that have been documented (nn.5–6). It is certain, however, that Xenophon had access to many more narratives about Cyrus and Croesus than those which now survive, and some motifs which look particularly Herodotean to our eyes may have been shared by other accounts. For the diversity of paradigms Xenophon might have followed (and the absence of any engagement with Herodotus in much of Xenophon's work), see Gray (2016) 305–07. On Antisthenes' lost *Cyrus*, see Gera (1993) 8–10. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2010) compares the accounts of Cyrus' death in Herodotus, Ctesias and Xenophon, and considers the possible influence of Iranian traditions on Xenophon's account. Although these and other lost sources would no doubt refine the picture, it seems unlikely that they could account for all the 'Herodotean' aspects of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*.

⁸ I refer the reader to Gray (2011) especially 25–29, 54–67 for criticism of 'ironic' or 'dark' readings of Xenophon's presentation of Cyrus; see also Hobden and Tuplin (2012) 31–39.

Persian troops without destroying Sardis? (*Cyr.* 7.2.10) – this is because he notices a problem that Croesus does not.⁹ Xenophon's Cyrus also shows himself spontaneously magnanimous in victory: he is unwilling to allow Sardis to be wasted by wanton plundering (*Cyr.* 7.2.11) and resolves, with little external pressure, to restore Croesus to his kingdom and family (*Cyr.* 7.2.26). The Herodotean Cyrus, by contrast, decides to burn Croesus alive on a pyre with 14 Lydian children (*Hdt.* 1.86.2), does not object to plundering in principle (*Hdt.* 1.88.2–3) and only observes its hazards when Croesus points them out (*Hdt.* 1.88.2–89.3). The end of Cyrus' story contains a more drastic divergence: Xenophon's Cyrus is successful in maintaining exemplary behaviour towards his fellow humans and the gods in spite of his great success and dies a peaceful death (*Cyr.* 8.7.8); Herodotus' Cyrus dies in an expansionist war undertaken in the belief that he was 'more than human' (1.204.2, 209–14).

All this is well known. I shall argue that, alongside Xenophon's widely recognized desire to present Cyrus more positively, his theological outlook leads him to make numerous further changes to the Herodotean story. E. Lefèvre's view that Xenophon presents Croesus 'more positively' so as to provide a 'worthy counterpart to Cyrus' arguably obscures the nature of Xenophon's alterations.¹⁰ As we shall see, rather than being more positively presented, Croesus is personally made to bear all blame for his misfortunes, which were avoidable and no more than his just deserts; the Herodotean version, by contrast, links Croesus' misfortunes to a number of theological views which were unacceptable to a Socratic outlook because they made the gods complicit in causing Croesus' suffering by setting him on a disastrous course of action.

I begin with the Herodotean Croesus *logos*, the complex theological dynamics of which make it one of the most intriguing episodes in Greek literature. The story is characterized by the interplay of several theological principles and has eluded many attempts to reduce it to a simple schema. Interpretations have been profoundly influenced by apologetic treatments of the story in the early modern period which have sought to present Croesus' downfall as 'just punishment' and the underlying theology as amenable to a Christian and/or Platonic outlook.¹¹ The effect of this tradition has been to obscure precisely the theological differences at issue in this article, by seeking positions from which Herodotean theology can be reconciled with a vision of the divine which is similar to the 'Socratic'. Since there is a tendency among many critics to simplify all divine action to a single type,¹² and since those who resist this approach over-complicate the picture,¹³ it will be necessary to summarize briefly the theological aspects of Herodotus' Croesus *logos*.

In Herodotus' hands, Croesus' story is structured around two great misfortunes: the death of his son Atys in a hunting accident and the loss of his empire in his ill-fated campaign against Persia. These misfortunes are associated with two different theological ideas. Before relating Croesus' story, Herodotus looks back five generations to Croesus' ancestor Gyges – spearbearer for the Lydian king Candaules – who killed his king and usurped Candaules' kingdom. The Delphic

⁹ See Gray (2011) 149–50 on the quite different nature of the 'problem' constituted by the plundering in the accounts of Herodotus and Xenophon.

¹⁰ Lefèvre (2010) 412, 416 (*cf.* n.66).

¹¹ For some early attempts by 16th-century Lutheran and Calvinist readers, see Ellis (2015a).

¹² 'Divine justice' in response to human *hybris* (for example Lloyd-Jones (1983) 63–64, 67–68, 69–70; Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 54–72), cosmic balance/*δίκη* (for example Lloyd (2007) 233) or the 'ethically rational' divine punishment of gratuitous human crimes (for example Munson (2001) 35).

¹³ For example Gould (1989) 79–82 and Versnel (2011) 181–88, 197, 528–29, 534, who set out in

different ways to challenge the notion that Herodotus had a coherent theory of history or a consistent theology. These discussions are valuable but obscure the theological structure of the relevant episodes. Arguments advanced by J. Gould and/or H.S. Versnel include: that divine *phthonos* (1.32.1) is exclusive of divine *nemesis* (1.34), that if the divine is *phthoneros* it cannot also be *tarakhōdēs* (1.32.1) and that the phrase 'man is *sumphorē*' (1.32.4) is incompatible with both 'divine *phthonos*' and 'the circle of human affairs' (1.207). C.B.R. Pelling largely accepts these views in his rich study of the Croesus *logos* (2006). See discussion in Ellis (2015c).

Oracle proclaimed that Gyges' crime, despite being committed under compulsion, would be atoned for by his descendant in the fifth generation: Croesus (Hdt. 1.12). After Croesus' downfall, the Delphic Oracle explains the fall of his empire as the predestined atonement for this ancestral crime which the Fates (*Moirai*) had determined and which Apollo's entreaties could not avert (1.91.1).¹⁴

Nestled inside this tale of ancestral guilt and atonement is a subplot driven by a different theological motif, introduced in the famous dialogue between Solon and Croesus, which ensues after Croesus asks Solon to name the most *olbios* ('blessed', 'happy', 'prosperous') man he has ever seen. Solon begins his speech on the instability and unpredictability of human fortune (Hdt. 1.32) by stating that the divinity is *phthoneron* ('grudging', 'resentful') and *tarakhōdes* ('troubling', 'meddlesome'), a leitmotif of the speeches of Herodotus' 'warners' (cf. 3.40, 7.10ε, 7.46). For Solon, 'man is entirely chance' (*sumphorē*, 1.32.4)¹⁵ and a moderately wealthy man is often more *olbios* than one who is extraordinarily wealthy (*zaploutos*). Before a man dies, Solon concludes, he must be considered not *olbios* but 'lucky' (*eutukhēs*), 'for god, having shown a glimpse of happiness/prosperity to many, then destroys them root and branch' (πολλοῖσι γὰρ δὴ ὑποδέξας ὄλβον ὁ θεὸς προορίζους ἀνέτρεψε, 1.32.9).

Solon's cautious and pessimistic vision of human fortune is disregarded by Croesus, who dismisses Solon from Sardis thinking him thoroughly foolish (*ἀμαθέα*, 1.33). After Solon's departure 'a great *nemesis* from god took Croesus, presumably', the narrator says, 'because he thought himself the most *olbios* of all' (ὅτι ἐνόμισε ἑωτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ὀλβιώτατον, 1.34.1). This '*nemesis* from god' takes the form of a dream which reveals that Croesus' son Atys will die from the blow of an iron spear. Croesus tries, vainly, to avert the events revealed in this vision by, among other things, appointing a guardian for Atys during a hunt. But the guardian accidentally kills his ward, fulfilling the prophecy in a manner familiar from Sophoclean tragedy. The story of Solon and Croesus and the death of Atys, then, represent a largely self-contained story of the dangers of incurring divine *phthonos* and *nemesis*¹⁶ through inflated self-regard.

But these two theological ideas are not kept wholly separate, so that the fall of Sardis is *tisis* ('repayment', 1.13.2) for Gyges' crime and Atys' death the response of a *phthoneros* divinity to Croesus' belief that he was ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ὀλβιώτατος. It is only at the moment of Croesus' second misfortune, the fall of Sardis, that Solon's warnings are explicitly recalled, when Croesus, thinking he is about to die, recognizes the truth of Solon's statement that 'no living being is *olbios*' (τὸ μηδένα εἶναι τῶν ζώντων ὄλβιον, 1.86.3). Croesus' misfortunes thus jointly confirm the validity of Solon's views on the instability of human fortune.

These, then, represent the overarching theological motifs. A third major issue arises from Croesus' interactions with the Delphic Oracle, the major proximate cause of his disastrous campaign against Cyrus (where repayment/*tisis* for Gyges' crime is an underlying theological explanation). After Atys' death, Croesus is alarmed by the waxing might of the Persians and seeks

¹⁴ For ancestral fault in the Croesus *logos*, see Gagné (2013) 326–43.

¹⁵ *Sumphorē* is the watchword of the story of Atys and Adrastus (cf. 1.32.4, 35.1, 35.4, 41.1, 42.1, 44.2, 45.1), climaxing with the superlative βαρυσυμφορώτατος (45.3); on which, see Chiasson (2003) 15. Xenophon seemingly echoes this in referring to 'his misfortunes concerning his children' (ταῖς περὶ τοὺς παῖδας συμφοραῖς, *Cyr.* 7.2.20): that one son is κωφός (the same word used at Hdt. 1.34.2) and that the other should die 'in the prime of his life'. For the view that the word διετέλει (7.2.20) rejects a Herodotean detail, see Keller (1911) 254.

¹⁶ On divine *phthonos* and divine *nemesis*, see Ellis (2015c) 93–96, where I argue (following Brown (1992))

that Herodotus, like Pindar (*P.* 10.20–22, 42–44), considered divine *phthonos* and divine *nemesis* to refer to the same set of ideas: namely that the gods resent and automatically overturn any prosperity that is exceptional or excessive (depending on the speaker's point of view) and mercilessly destroy all who 'think big' (μέγα φρονεῖν). The topic has been the subject of disagreement for two and a half millennia – see further Ellis (2017) – and cannot be addressed here. The relationship between *tisis* ('vengeance', 'repayment') and *nemesis* is similarly vexed; the two have often been assimilated by scholars who take *nemesis* as a synonym for divine justice (for example Macan (1895) cxiv, n.4), though the equation is questionable (cf. Munson (2001) 33).

divine advice about whether he should lead a campaign against Persia. Before posing his question, Croesus tests several oracles to discern whether they are capable of telling the 'truth' (1.46.3).¹⁷ He sends envoys to seven oracles with orders to ask what he, Croesus, was doing at the moment of consultation. Answers from Delphi and the oracle of Amphiaraos correctly describing Croesus' unpredictable actions (1.48) convince Croesus that these oracles have access to the truth (ἀληθίη, 55.1) and are not-deceptive (ἀψευδά, 1.49). Croesus then propitiates these oracular shrines with lavish offerings (1.50–52), before asking whether he should campaign against Persia and (if so) whether he should do so with allies. Both oracles advise him that 'if he campaigns against the Persians he will destroy a great empire', and that he should campaign with the help of 'the strongest of the Greeks' (1.53.3). In Herodotus' account this answer is presented as the decisive factor in Croesus' decision to fight Cyrus; his dealings with Delphi are described at great length (1.46–56) and the oracles are repeatedly stressed in Herodotus' assessments of Croesus' motives (1.50–53, 1.73.1, 1.75.2).

The nature and importance of this oracle has been a matter of debate. Croesus does, of course, destroy a great empire – his own – and many consider the blame to lie with Croesus for interpreting the ambiguous oracle in line with his own desires. But a little-noted feature of Herodotus' presentation is that Croesus is said to go to war 'trusting in the oracle' (μάλιστα τῷ χρηστηρίῳ πίσυνος ἐὼν, 1.73.1), just as his Spartan allies had embarked on a disastrous campaign against the Tegeans, 'trusting in a deceitful oracle' from Delphi (χρησιμῶι κιβδήλῳι πίσυνοι, 1.66.3). Both these oracles are described as *kibdēlos*.¹⁸ Attempts to ignore this word or to translate it neutrally (for example as 'ambiguous') to allow room for Croesus' 'self-deception' remain unconvincing.¹⁹ The word occurs only three times in the *Histories*: once of a bribed oracle (5.91.2, cf. 5.63.1, 66.1, 90.1) and twice of oracles which lead the Spartans and Croesus into disaster, both of which are formally ambiguous (i.e. open to more than one interpretation) but actively misleading in their context.²⁰ The wholly negative metaphorical sense of the term in Classical Greek is clear: Theognis suggests that *kibdēlos* money finds its human analogue in friends who have a 'lying mind' (νόος [...] ψυδρός) and 'deceitful heart' (δόλιον [...] ἤτορ)²¹ and Plato uses *kibdēlos* in opposition to 'true' (*Laws* 728d1: τίνες ἀληθεῖς καὶ ὄσαι κιβδηλοί).

Cyrus' question to Croesus – what man persuaded him to undertake his campaign?²² – is the first stage in a debate about the responsibility for the disaster. When Cyrus offers Croesus whatever he wishes, Croesus decides to rebuke Apollo, whom he considers the cause (αἴτιος 1.87.3) of his

¹⁷ This element is explicitly evoked at *Cyr.* 7.2.17: ἀμελήσας ἐρωτᾶν τὸν θεόν, εἴ τι ἐδεόμην, ἀπειρώμην αὐτοῦ εἰ δύναίτο ἀληθεύειν.

¹⁸ Cf. Hdt. 1.75.2: ἀπικομένου χρησιμοῦ κιβδήλου.

¹⁹ Most of those who consider Croesus solely responsible for the misunderstanding pass quickly over the narrator's comments at 1.75.2. H. Meuss denies that *kibdēlos* poses problems for his remarkably Socratic vision of the role of oracles in Herodotus – that all divine communication is intended to help the consultant and only the foolish or arrogant misinterpret it – and translates *kibdēlos* with *mehrdeutig*, thereby establishing the benevolence (*das Wohlwollen*) of Herodotus' gods ((1888) 9–10). This view has dominated the critical scene: for example Kirchberg (1965) 18, 23; Kindt (2006) 40–41. More recently, Pelling (2006) 154 n.49, citing Kroll (2000) 89, argues that *kibdēlos* indicates that the oracle is of 'mixed' quality rather than 'false' (by analogy with debased coinage, composed of more and less valuable metals). The etymological approach is

ingenious, but this non-judgemental nuance is not borne out by attested usage.

²⁰ The Spartan oracle (1.66.2) is embedded in Croesus' story within the excursus on Sparta (1.65–70), providing a proleptic paradigm for the oracle's deception of Croesus.

²¹ Theognis 119–23, cf. 975. See also Democritus 68 B 82 (DK): κιβδηλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοφανέες οἱ λόγοι μὲν ἅπαντα, ἐργῶι δὲ οὐδὲν ἔρδοντες ('Those who in conversation do everything, but in action do nothing, are *kibdēlos* and hypocrites'); B 93 (DK): χαρίζομενος προσκέπτεο τὸν λαμβάνοντα, μὴ κακὸν ἀντ' ἀγαθοῦ κιβδηλος ἐὼν ἀποδοῖ ('If you bestow a *kharis*, check in advance that the recipient is not *kibdēlos* and will not give you bad things in return for good'). This last is particularly relevant given Croesus' charge that Apollo failed to respect the relationship of *kharis* established by his costly dedications (see below).

²² Hdt. 1.87.3. Xenophon's Cyrus also inquires about the origins of the campaign at *Cyr.* 7.2.15.

misfortunes because he exhorted him to campaign (ἐπαίειρας ἐμὲ στρατεύεσθαι),²³ thus proving himself ‘ungrateful’ (ἀχάριστος, 1.90.4) by neglecting the relationship of *kharis* initiated by Croesus’ generous dedications. In response to Croesus’ complaints, Apollo refutes the charges point by point: unbeknownst to Croesus, the fall of Sardis was fated (due to Gyges’ crime) and provisionally scheduled to occur three years earlier than it eventually did. Apollo’s services to Croesus were two: the greatest possible delay to the fall of Sardis which the Fates (Μοῖραι) would permit and the rainstorm which saved him from burning (cf. 1.87.2). Apollo also rejects Croesus’ charge that the oracle exhorted him to undertake a disastrous campaign: Croesus should have consulted a second time to ask *which* empire would be destroyed. Since he did not, he should recognize that he himself is αἴτιος (‘the cause’, ‘responsible’ or ‘to blame’, 1.91.4). Importantly, Apollo does not argue that his oracle was not misleading or deceptive – he simply argues that it was not wholly false. The onus lay on Croesus to interrogate his words in a cautious fashion; since he did not, he must consider himself αἴτιος.

After this brief analysis of the theological dynamics of the Herodotean Croesus *logos*, it will be useful to consider how all this would have looked to Socratic eyes, to imagine, in so far as the sources allow, how the theological notions cultivated by Socrates and his pupils would have influenced their views of the bravura literary display with which Herodotus’ *Histories* opens.

II. Herodotus’ Croesus *logos* through Socratic eyes

Nor, I said, can god, since he is good, be responsible for everything, as most people say; rather he is the cause of few of the things that happen to men, and not responsible for the majority. For the good things that happen to us are far fewer than the bad; for good things we need seek no other cause – but for bad things we must seek other causes, not god. (Plato *Resp.* 2.379c)

How would Herodotus’ Socratic readers – particularly Plato and Xenophon – have responded to the theological ideas discussed thus far?²⁴ I shall divide my discussion into three parts: divine *phthonos*; ancestral fault (or ‘inherited guilt’); and divine deception.

Solon’s monologue in Herodotus draws on a view of the divine which Socrates, in both Plato’s and Xenophon’s portrayal, strongly opposes: that god is stinting in distributing good things to mortals and that the divine is responsible for causing arbitrary human misfortune and unhappiness. One of the earliest passages to identify divinely caused suffering as the hallmark of the human condition is Achilles’ speech to Priam about the jars of Zeus (*Il.* 24.519–51, cf. 24.49).²⁵ Achilles illustrates the universality of human suffering with two examples. The first, his father Peleus, is a mortal whom the gods blessed with great gifts and surpassing wealth and happiness (ὄλβωι τε πλούτωι τε, 535–36); but ‘upon him, too, god bestowed some ill’: to bear only one ill-fated child, Achilles (παναώριον, 540). Achilles’ second example, Priam himself, was likewise *olbios* (543), a ruler of great lands (544–45) who surpassed all their inhabitants in progeny and wealth (546),

²³ On Herodotus’ repeated use of ἐπαίειρας of the incitements that push Croesus (1.87.3, 90.3, 90.4), the Aeginetans (5.81.2) and Xerxes (7.9γ, 10η1, 18.4) into war, see Chiasson (2003) 28 (with bibliography); who follows Avery (1979) in viewing this as a tragic borrowing. Xenophon’s Cambyses uses the word similarly in cautioning Cyrus: εἰ δὲ ἡ σὺ, ὦ Κῦρε, ἐπαρθεῖς ταῖς παρούσαις τύχαις ἐπιχειρήσεις καὶ Περσῶν ἄρχειν ἐπὶ πλεονεξίαι ὡσπερ τῶν ἄλλων ... (*Cyr.* 8.5.24). Compare Archidamus’ warning speech to the Spartan assembly at *Thuc.* 1.81.6; cf. 42.2, 83.3, 84.2, 120.3.

²⁴ In the following section I make no assumptions about the relationship between the Platonic and

Xenophonic Socrates or the relationship of either to the historical Socrates, issues considered in, for example, Lacy (1980); Vlastos (1991) 45–106 especially 99–106; McPherran (1996) 12–19; Bordt (2006) 21–42. My main aim here is to show that Socrates, as presented by Xenophon, would have taken issue with much of the theology of Herodotus’ Croesus *logos*; where, as often, there are relevant Platonic parallels, I also discuss these. As we shall see, both authors’ Socrates would have objected stridently to much of the theology of Herodotus’ Croesus *logos*, though often for different reasons.

²⁵ *Il.* 24.526–27: ὡς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι / ζῶειν ἀχνυμένοις· αὐτοὶ δὲ τ’ ἀκηδέες εἰσὶ.

yet even he could not escape the mortal lot. In Herodotus, Solon's emphasis on children, *olbos* and *ploutos*,²⁶ and on the necessity of suffering draws on the motifs of Achilles' speech.²⁷ The classic Herodotean expression of this pessimistic view is Artabanus' speech to Xerxes at Abydos, which outlines the misfortunes that every human must suffer and concludes that god 'having given [humans] a taste of the sweet life, has been found to be grudging in his giving' (φθονερός ἐν αὐτῶν εὐρίσκειται ἐόν).²⁸

Such ideas about the nature of the divine and the human condition had long been disputed (see Zeus' words at *Od.* 1.32–43 and Xenophanes *fr.* 11 DK) and in the fifth century they were criticized directly and indirectly by Socratic thinkers like Plato and Xenophon. In Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, Timaeus and Socrates insist that god cannot feel *phthonos*. The thinking behind this point of theological dogma (such, at least, it would become)²⁹ is laid out in the *Timaeus*: god is good (ἀγαθός) and no one good ever feels any *phthonos* about anything.³⁰ The assumption that *phthonos* is incompatible with a good nature is representative of contemporary assessments of the emotion: whenever it is the subject of discourse, classical authors condemn *phthonos* as disreputable and (self-)destructive.³¹ To believe that god is moved by such a base motive would be wholly at odds with the moral vision of god laid out in the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*.³² Indeed, Plutarch's *De Herodoti malignitate*, the only surviving critique of Herodotus by an ancient Platonist, accuses Herodotus of 'blasphemy' for making Solon talk of divine *phthonos* (βλασφημία, *DHm* 857f–858a).

Although Xenophon's extant writings never refer to divine *phthonos*, the views he does express on *phthonos* and on the nature of the gods indicate that he would have rejected it as categorically as Plato, if for different reasons. Important here are the radical ideas concerning the nature of the divine voiced by Socrates in *Memorabilia* 1.4 and 4.3.³³ In conversation with Aristodemus and then Euthydemus, Socrates establishes that love of mankind (φιλανθρωπία)³⁴ and care for humanity (τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιμέλεια) are central features of god's nature.³⁵ This is deduced from the blessings

²⁶ For example Hdt. 1.30.2: the narrator comments after Solon has been shown Croesus' treasury that 'everything was great and wealthy' (πάντα ἐόντα μεγάλη τε καὶ ὄλβια); *ploutos* and *olbos* are stressed by Solon at 1.32.4–6. Children come into focus in the description of Tellus (1.30.4), the comparison of the lucky and unlucky man (1.32.6), and the story of Atys' death (1.34–46).

²⁷ Note particularly Achilles' and Solon's insouciance towards establishing any sort of 'guilt' or 'crime' to which the divinely imposed suffering corresponds (*Il.* 538: ἀλλ' ἐπὶ καὶ τῶι θῆκε θεὸς κακόν; 547: αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τοι πῆμα τόδ' ἤγαγον Οὐρανίονες; Hdt. 1.32.9: πολλοῖσι γὰρ δὴ ὑποδέξας ὄλβιον ὁ θεὸς προρρίζους ἀνέτρεψε).

²⁸ Hdt. 7.46. For a general treatment of Greek pessimism, see Lurie (forthcoming); I am grateful to him for sharing this paper with me, revisiting topics treated in his 2010 lecture of the same title (Edinburgh).

²⁹ For denials of divine *phthonos* in Platonist and Christian authors, see Ellis (2015b) 19–21.

³⁰ *Tim.* 29e: ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῶι δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος; cf. *Phaedr.* 247a7: φθόνος γὰρ ἔξω θεῖου χοροῦ ἴσταται. M. Bordt observes the conflict between these passages and the conception of the divinity current in Socrates' day, including that of Herodotus ((2006) 121–22).

³¹ Democ. B 88 (DK); Isoc. 15.142; Dem. 20.139–40; Arist. 1386b17–20; Plut. *Mor.* 518c. For a fuller picture of *phthonos* (which does, occasionally, overlap with 'indignation'), see Konstan (2006) 111–27; Sanders (2014).

³² Vlastos (1991) chapter 6 considers these the views of the historical Socrates; Bordt considers this moral vision of god to be the innovation of Plato ((2006) 118–20, cf. 135).

³³ For brief discussion and bibliography on whether these views accurately represent those of the historical Socrates or whether they represent a Xenophonic creation (arguing from Socrates' eschewal of cosmogony at *Mem.* 1.1.11), see Dillery (1995) 186; Vlastos (1991) 162 n.26 follows the views of Jaeger (1947) 167 and Theiler (1925) 18–21, 31, 168 that these ideas were in part derived from Diogenes of Apollonia; recently McPherran (1996) 272–91 has presented cogent arguments for their authenticity. For similarities and differences between the dialogues at *Mem.* 1.4 and 4.3, see Dorion (2000–2011) 3.237–42.

³⁴ Sandridge (2012) 42–44 stresses the close analogy and conceptual similarity between human and divine *philanthropia* in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and outside it.

³⁵ *Mem.* 1.4.7 (σοφοῦ τινος δημιουργοῦ καὶ φιλοζώιου), 1.4.14 (οὐκ οἶε σοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ... σοῦ φροντίζειν;), 4.3.6 (φιλάνθρωπα), 4.3.7 (Υπερβάλλει ... φιλανθρωπία), 4.3.12 (πολλὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιμέλειαν). Cf. *Cyrus* at *Cyr.* 7.5.79 (γιγνώσκοντας ὅτι ἐλευθερίας ταῦτα ὄργανα καὶ εὐδαιμονίας οἱ θεοὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀπέδειξαν). Compare Plato's Socrates in the *Apology* (41c9–d2: καὶ ἐν τῷ τούτῳ διανοεῖσθαι ἀληθές, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῶι κακὸν οὐδὲν οὔτε ζῶντι οὔτε τελευτήσαντι, οὐδὲ ἀμελεῖται ὑπὸ θεῶν τὰ τούτου πράγ-

god has bestowed upon humans: the ability to walk upright, hands which make humans more prosperous/happy (εὐδαιμονέστεροι) than animals, a tongue capable of speech, perennial sexual appetites and a soul that can appreciate the gods and learn (1.4.11–14). Socrates' characterization of the human condition focuses insistently on the blessings the gods *have* lavished upon man (with no mention of the inevitability of suffering) and insists that the gods care for and love humanity.³⁶ In this it contrasts with the theological notions found in Herodotus' warner speeches (especially 1.32, 7.46) and much of the Greek poetic tradition.

Phthonos plays a prominent part in Xenophon's theory of leadership and friendship,³⁷ and emerges as a wholly negative attribute. Cyrus opines that soldiers should not feel *phthonos* of their commander (*Cyr.* 2.4.10, *cf.* 8.5.24) and strives to avoid *phthonos* between his soldiers (3.3.19). It is an equally destructive emotion in leaders; it drives the Armenian king to kill his son's philosophical tutor (3.1.39) and the son of the Assyrian king to kill his friend, Gobryas' son, when he bests him in the hunt (4.6.4: ἐν τούτῳ δὴ οὐκέτι κατίσχει ὁ ἀνόσιος τὸν φθόνον).³⁸ In the *Memorabilia* Socrates condemns *phthonos* as a self-destructive emotion felt by a fool (ἡλίθιος) vexed by his friends' success; a wise man (φρόνιμος ἀνὴρ), by contrast, feels no *phthonos* (*Mem.* 3.9.8).

The character of Cyrus, Xenophon's ideal leader, is devoid of *phthonos* and characterized instead by *philanthrōpia*: as a youth he praises his companions unstintingly, even when they surpass him (1.4.15: οὐδ' ὀπωστιοῦν φθονερῶς),³⁹ the opposite of the Assyrian king who kills any friends or companions who outshine him,⁴⁰ whether in skill (4.6.4) or beauty (5.2.28).⁴¹ Cyrus is also remembered by the Persians to have been *philanthrōpotatos*, *philomathestatos* and *philotimotatos* (1.2.1).⁴² In Xenophon's account, Cyrus is characterized by *philanthrōpia* and *aphthonia* and, much like the god of *Republic* book 2, he is 'a source of pleasure for all people, jointly responsible for good things and not for bad' (1.4.15: πᾶσιν ἡδονῆς μὲν καὶ ἀγαθοῦ τινος συναίτιος ὢν, κακοῦ δὲ οὐδενός).⁴³ To pursue the analogy between god and the ideal ruler (implicit in much

ματα) and *Euthyphro* (14e10–15a2: φράσον δέ μοι, τίς ἢ ὠφελία τοῖς θεοῖς τυγχάνει οὐσα ἀπὸ τῶν δώρων ὧν παρ' ἡμῶν λαμβάνουσιν; ἃ μὲν γὰρ διδόνασιν παντὶ δήλον· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἂν μὴ ἐκείνοι δῶσιν).

³⁶ Here I differ from Hugh Bowden, who thinks that Xenophon does not share Socrates' view 'that the gods cared for mankind in general' ((2004) 231–32) on the basis of Cambyses' statement that the gods 'are under no compulsion to care for anyone unless they wish' (*Cyr.* 1.6.46). Bowden conflates a general divine *philanthrōpia* for mortals with the idea that the gods are *bound* to help *all* mortals irrespective of their behaviour or piety, but these are importantly different ideas. Xenophon's Socrates outlines the theory of divine *philanthrōpia* (*Mem.* 1.4.4.3) but himself notes that the gods help those 'to whom they are propitious/well disposed' (οἷς ἂν ὤσιν ἴλεωι, *Mem.* 1.1.9) and stresses the importance of divine reciprocity (*Mem.* 1.4.18); in Xenophon's mind the principle of divine *philanthrōpia* seems to have presented no contradiction with the idea that the gods favour the pious and just, and do not favour the impious; *cf.* Dillery (1995) 225–57.

³⁷ See Gray (2011) 28 for the intimate relationship between Socratic friendship and leadership, one which holds good, too, for Cyrus' own relationship with the gods (see further below).

³⁸ Sandridge (2012) 80 argues that Cyrus takes 'a morally relativistic stance on the emotion of envy' since he tells Tigranes to forgive his father for the tutor's execution, but pursues the Assyrian king for vengeance. These different responses certainly reflect Cyrus'

differing needs and obligations, but a pragmatic approach to punishment need not imply a relativistic view of *phthonos* in moral terms.

³⁹ Commentators point to Cyrus' 'envy' of Sacas as a very young boy at *Cyr.* 1.3.9 (Sandridge (2012) 8; Gray (2016)), but Xenophon does not label this *phthonos*; eventually, of course, Cyrus establishes the opposite relationship with Sacas.

⁴⁰ A contrast noted by Sandridge (2012) 24.

⁴¹ Xenophon's encomium of Cyrus the Younger in the *Anabasis* stresses the similarities between the two Cyruses (1.9.1) and notes the younger Cyrus' unstinting generosity (*aphthonia*) towards any troops who show bravery (1.9.15); contrast, however, Flower (2012) 190–94.

⁴² See Sandridge (2012) 15.

⁴³ Compare Plato's description of god in *Resp.* 379c (cited in translation at the start of this section): Οὐδ' ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὁ θεός, ἐπειδὴ ἀγαθός, πάντων ἂν εἴη αἴτιος, ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ ὀλίγων μὲν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις αἴτιος, πολλῶν δὲ ἀναίτιος· πολὺ γὰρ ἐλάττω τάγαθὰ τῶν κακῶν ἡμῖν, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀγαθῶν οὐδένα ἄλλον αἰτιατέον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἄλλ' ἅτα δεῖ ζητεῖν τὰ αἴτια, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν θεόν. *Cf.* Xen. *Mem.* 4.3.13 on the gods giving humans 'good things': οἷ τε γὰρ ἄλλοι ἡμῖν τάγαθὰ διδόντες [...] ὁ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον συντάττων τε καὶ συνέχων, ἐν ᾧ πάντα καλὰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἐστί [...]. McPherran (1996) 277–78 explores the 'analogical relationship' between Socrates' 'cosmic Maker-god' and the human soul at *Mem.* 1.4 and 4.3. See Bordt (2006) 95–135 for the novelty of Plato's conception of divine goodness.

of Xenophon's writing) it is clear that the *philanthrōpos* disposition of god, as established by Xenophon's Socrates, would have precluded him from being described as *phthoneros*. Indeed, the mutually beneficial leader/follower relationships Xenophon depicts – characterized by successful leadership, on the one hand, and 'willing obedience', on the other, with no room for *phthonos* in either party – seem to be found not only between humans, but also between humans and the gods (cf. *Cyr.* 1.6.4 and discussion below). We can conclude, then, that the views of Xenophon's Socrates on *phthonos* and divine *philanthrōpia* entail a total rejection of divine *phthonos*.

I turn now briefly to the view of ancestral fault among Socrates' pupils. As we have seen, the Herodotean story of Croesus is structured round the concept of inherited and collectivized responsibility of different types: the wrong Gyges did his master Candaules, for which his descendant Croesus atones by the loss of his empire; the arrogance of Croesus for which he is immediately punished by the death of his son.⁴⁴ As Renaud Gagné has shown, ancestral fault was a fundamental and varied theme in the literature of the Archaic and Classical periods,⁴⁵ but played no role in the systems of Xenophon, Plato or Aristotle.⁴⁶ Although commentators frequently subsume Croesus' atonement for his ancestor's crimes under the rubric of 'divine justice', it seems clear that to a Socratic readership such a theological explanation would have raised as many issues as it solved.

A final topic is divine communication through dreams, oracles and prodigies. In Socrates' conversations with Aristodemus one of the proofs Socrates offers for the gods' care for (*epimeleia*) and love of mankind (*philanthrōpia*) is the advice they give to humans via portents (*Mem.* 1.4.15: τέρατα πέμποντες προσημαίνωσιν). To Euthydemus, likewise, Socrates stresses the aid provided by divine communication (*Mem.* 4.3.12: φράζοντας τὰ ἀποβησόμενα καὶ διδάσκοντας ἢ ἂν ἄριστα γίγνοιτο; cf. *Mem.* 1.1.6–9).⁴⁷

It is clear from much of Xenophon's writing, not least his account of his own consultations with the Delphic Oracle (*An.* 3.1.5–7), that the helpfulness of divine communication was a cornerstone of his theological beliefs (cf. *Oec.* 5.19–20; *Eq. Mag.* 9.7–9). The view that man's relationship with god is characterized by mutual benefaction emerges from a conversation between Cyrus and Cambyses, where human behaviour towards the gods is described in the same terms as divine behaviour: people should show respect for the gods by their care (*epimeleia*) and should never neglect them (οὐπόποτ' ἀμελήσας). By following these policies, Cyrus is able to consider the gods as his friends (*Cyr.* 1.6.4: πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, ὃ πάτερ, ὡς πρὸς φίλους μοι ὄντας τοὺς θεοὺς οὕτω διάκειμαι). With this relationship established, Cyrus can rely on prophecy, as Cambyses had explained, and Xenophon is careful to make consultation with the divine central to Cyrus' *modus operandi*.⁴⁸ While human wisdom (ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία) is severely limited – little better than

⁴⁴ For this distinction, see Gagné (2013) 177–78, who discusses the different ways in which punishment can be passed down the generations. The immediate destruction of the guilty-party's children involves no delay, it merely substitutes the descendant(s) for the man himself, 'striking where it hurts the most'. Often, however, ancestral fault stretches over generations, allowing the guilty party to die content and inflicting misery on his descendants alone.

⁴⁵ Gagné (2013) 275–343.

⁴⁶ For the absence of the notion of ancestral guilt from Xenophon, see Pownall (1998) 273–76, who notes *Hell.* 7.4.34 as the only instance of 'the "sins of the fathers" doctrine' in Xenophon (where it represents the characters' unsubstantiated motivation for not misusing temple treasures). On Plato and Aristotle, see Gagné (2013) 468: 'Perfectly at odds with the cosmic view of

individual responsibility and justice defended in the *Timaeus* and elsewhere in Plato, [ancestral fault] has no place in the philosophical structures of the dialogues. [...] Ancestral fault is not an element of Platonic justice'. Cf. attacks on ancestral fault by Bion of Borysthenes, Aristotle's pupil (cited by Plutarch *De sera numinis vindicta* 19 = 561c), with Gagné (2013) 53.

⁴⁷ Socrates' *daimonion*, in Xenophon, acts similarly to other forms of divination (indicating both what to do and what not to do), while in Plato it merely indicates to Socrates what not to do. Cf. Dorion (2000–2011) 1.54–55 n.13 (*ad Mem.* 1.1.4).

⁴⁸ For the many divinities to whom Cyrus sacrifices, see Bowden (2004) 238–39. For the importance of piety in Xenophon's concept of the ideal leader, see Flower (2012) 190.

drawing lots – the gods know all that is, all that will be and all that has happened. They advise those to whom they are favourable (ἰλέωι) by indicating in advance what they ought to do and what they ought not (*Cyr.* 1.6.46: προσημαίνουσιν ἅ τε χρὴ ποιεῖν καὶ ἅ οὐ χρὴ).⁴⁹

Such a vision of divine/human interaction was anything but new to Greek religion, and indeed one of the central assumptions of Herodotus' Croesus is that his dedications to the oracles of Apollo and Amphiaraus would lead the gods to give him helpful prophecy that would guide him to success. This is precisely Croesus' reproach to Apollo, and Apollo's answer is primarily concerned to demonstrate that the principle of reciprocal divine-mortal *kharis* was in fact upheld.⁵⁰

Herodotus substantially shares Xenophon's view of portents as forewarnings of future evil (6.27: Φιλέει δέ κως προσημαίνειν, εἴτ' ἂν μέλλῃ μεγάλα κακὰ ἢ πόλις ἢ ἔθνεϊ ἔσεσθαι),⁵¹ and, like prophecies, they frequently empower men to act so as to help themselves. Ignoring divine warnings, as the Euboeans ignored a prophecy from Bacis, can lead to disaster (8.20.1–2), and consultation of the divine (most frequently through envoys to oracular shrines) is a frequent λύσις κακῶν, often eliciting helpful and unambiguous responses from the gods.⁵² However, divine communication does not only operate in this comforting and helpful fashion in Herodotus,⁵³ and can be much more oblique, particularly in dreams. The most memorable prophecies of the *Histories* are either deceptive or ambiguous (as with the oracle which precedes Croesus' campaign against Cyrus, 1.53), push men against their better nature into disastrous action (as with the dreams that force Xerxes and Artabanus to go to war against their will, 7.12–18) or reveal an inevitable fate which the character strives unsuccessfully to evade (for example Astyages' dreams about Mandane and Cyrus, 1.107–08).

The two prominent divine communications in Herodotus' Croesus *logos* are the dream which prophesies Atys' death at the point of a spear (1.34.1) and the oracle which induces Croesus to campaign against Cyrus (1.53). After the former, Croesus attempts vainly to save his son's life by various means including appointing Adrastus as a guardian. After killing Atys, Adrastus begs Croesus to kill him in turn, but Croesus takes pity on him on the grounds that Adrastus is not truly responsible: 'You are not the cause of this evil [τοῦδε τοῦ κακοῦ αἴτιος]', he says, 'except in as much as you did it unintentionally; rather [it was] some god, who long ago showed me what would happen' (1.44.2). Although critics often judge Croesus' words harshly on the basis that Croesus himself is responsible for thinking the arrogant thoughts which incurred divine *nemesis*, it is clear that Croesus is correct to identify that a divine force is somehow αἴτιος ('responsible') for the accident, even as he fails to recognize that Atys' death represents violent divine redress for his own conceit.

⁴⁹ See further Dillery (1995) 225–27. For the close conceptual and linguistic parallels between *Cyr.* 1.6 and *Mem.* 1.1.6–9, see Dorion (2000–2011) 1.58 n.25 (ad *Mem.* 1.1.9).

⁵⁰ On *kharis* in Greek religion, see Parker (1998) and the references in Gagné (2013) 329 n.192.

⁵¹ While Herodotus makes no divine agency explicit here, he does so in a similar passage at 6.98 (specifying ὁ θεός).

⁵² See, for example, the case of the Agyllans who consult about cursed ground and are told by the Pythia to institute sacrifices and athletic and equestrian games (1.167.1–2) or that of the Aegeidae who set up a temple to the Furies of Oedipus and Laius to avoid infant mortality (4.149.2), cf. 5.82.1, 6.118, 6.139.1–2, 7.187.1, 9.93.1. On this model of prophecy, see Parker (1985).

⁵³ A failure to distinguish between the different 'prophetic logics' operative in the *Histories* has been a

major source of misunderstanding: while the λύσις κακῶν empowers the consultant to improve his circumstances (see examples cited in n.52), a number of prophecies in the *Histories* and throughout Greek literature do not deliver advice on how to avoid a disaster but rather announce an inevitable disaster, often using a formula such as δεῖ or χρὴ γενέσθαι (cf. Hdt. 1.34 with 1.91, 7.17.2). Such prophecies are typically unelicited (generally delivered through dreams rather than oracles) and are usually given to those of high status or good fortune. Those keen to establish the benevolence and justice of Herodotus' gods have tended to interpret the latter type of prophecy as if it contained empowering advice rather than an inevitable misfortune (see n.19), but these different forms of prophecy offer fundamentally different perspectives on man's ability to alter future events. For further discussion, see Ellis (2013) 345–59.

Misleading, distressing and self-fulfilling oracles and dreams were an important part of the Greek literary tradition, from the οὔλον ὄνειρον of the *Iliad*, sent by Zeus to deceive Agamemnon (2.5–6, with the lie itself at 2.12–15). If the 'theological' purpose of such prophecies is often obscure, their purpose in narratological terms is clear: they make excellent stories, with tragic plot lines, in which we can feel sympathy for a character who not only suffers, but experiences fear, confusion, dread and a sense of entrapment as the events unfold. There is, however, little room for this type of prophecy within 'Socratic' theologies – either that offered by Xenophon or by Plato – and the one dream which Xenophon's and Herodotus' accounts of Cyrus share is presented quite differently.⁵⁴ The Platonic Socrates would insist that god, being good, could not be the cause of bad things (*Resp.* 2.379c). For Xenophon's Socrates the point of divine communication is always to *empower* man to act – never merely as a distressing and self-fulfilling harbinger of doom. In Herodotus, as in many Archaic and Classical authors, impotent foreknowledge granted by the gods is the greatest of mortal sufferings, a view voiced by a wise Persian before the Battle of Plataea ('the most hateful pain among humans to know much but have power over nothing').⁵⁵

Equally problematic – to Xenophon or Plato – would have been the 'deceptive' oracle given to Herodotus' Croesus which pushes him to campaign against Cyrus (1.53). The oracle itself is cited by Aristotle, in hexameter form, as an example of the ambiguous oracles given by those who have nothing to say (Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.5 = 1407a32–b5). The theological apologetics offered by the Delphic Oracle at the end of Herodotus' Croesus *logos* would have done little to make the story more amenable to Xenophon's (or Plato's) theological views; here Apollo acknowledges that Croesus had entered into a relationship of reciprocal *kharis* with him (not dissimilar to that idealized in Xenophon's dialogue between Cyrus and Cambyses) but that (firstly) he was incapable of altering the predestined course of events due to the limitation of his power by other divine agencies⁵⁶ and that (secondly) he did not actually lie – it was Croesus' responsibility to consider the oracle's meaning more closely (1.91.4–5). Furthermore, the idea that a god would give a *kibdēlos* ('deceptive/counterfeit') oracular response would clearly have been rejected by both Xenophon and Plato, if for different reasons.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Cyrus' premonition of his death: Herodotus' Cyrus sees a dream vision of Hystaspes' eldest son, Darius, with wings which cast Europe and Asia into shade. He concludes (wrongly) that Darius is plotting a coup against him and prepares to take action (Hdt. 1.209.1). In Xenophon's account Cyrus is told outright by a dream-figure to prepare himself for his imminent departure to the gods, which enables him peacefully to set his affairs in order (*Cyr.* 8.7.2). For parallels between the deaths of Socrates and Cyrus, see Due (1989) 144–55.

⁵⁵ 9.16.4: ἐχθίστη δὲ ὀδύνη ἐστὶ τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι αὕτη, πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδενὸς κρατέειν. Cf. Solon 13 W 54–56; Tiresias in Soph. *OT* 316–18; Aesch. *Ag.* 1211–13 (illustrated by the exchanges between Cassandra and the chorus, for example 1107–13; cf. 250–53).

⁵⁶ The conventional division of the divine realm into discrete elements (fates, gods, etc.) with competing obligations, desires and hierarchies runs contrary to much of the theological thought attributed to Socrates. Plato's Socrates suggests that the gods, as well as being perfectly good and just, do not war against another (*Resp.* 378b–c; *Euthphr.* 9e–11b); cf. McPherran (1996) 72–72 and Bordt (2006) 79–95 on Plato's 'monotheism'. Xenophon's Socrates also often assumes the unity of the divine realm, for example by moving fluidly between talking of the gods (θεοί) and of the demiurge (ὁ τὸν ὅλον

κόσμον συντάπτων τε καὶ συνέχων, ἐν ᾧ πάντα καλὰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἐστὶ), and ascribing the same characteristics to both (*Mem.* 4.3.13; note the similarity between this demiurgic discussion and that of *Tim.* 29e, cited in n.30). The latter usage was scarcely a novelty (see further n.1), but appears to be Xenophon's dominant mode of theological expression – to my knowledge he never describes strife in the divine realm. Cf. McPherran (2011) 116–18, 129–30.

⁵⁷ With respect to divine/mortal *kharis* we can point to a clear difference between Xenophon's and Plato's Socrates. Plato's Socrates argues that god, being good, can never do harm or evil, even in return for another evil (*Resp.* 2.379b; cf. *Cr.* 48b4–d5; Vlastos (1991) 162–66; McPherran (1996) 110; (2011) 119), and Plato's Socrates does not consider it right (θέμις) for a god to lie (cf. *Apol.* 21b). Xenophon's Socrates, however, does represent the gods as conforming to the principle of *kharis* – extended to include evil deeds – which entails the gods inflicting *κακά* on humans (as Gabriel Danzig has pointed out to me, *Mem.* 1.4.16 explicitly states that the gods do both good and bad to humans; cf. Bordt (2006) 132). Yet neither author's Socrates could have approved of the *kibdēlos* oracle ascribed to Apollo, since (for Xenophon) it violated the principle of *kharis* and (for Plato) it violated the principle of god's goodness.

Having seen the conflict between the beliefs about the gods attributed to Socrates by Xenophon and Plato, and the theological elements of Herodotus' Croesus *logos*, we are closer to understanding why Xenophon rewrote the episode as he did, and the implicit repudiation of Herodotus' theology that this represents.

III. Xenophon's Croesus *logos*

In this section I explore how Xenophon rewrites Herodotus in the light of his own theological views. In the *Cyropaedia* – the ‘most perfectly Socratic of non-Socratic works’⁵⁸ – Croesus' account of his own history to Cyrus returns to many of the same events (see n.5), but with many differences of greater or lesser significance. Numerous echoes suggest that Xenophon follows and alters the Herodotean account.

To begin at a general level, the theological complexity of the Herodotean story is gone, along with many of the ideas discussed in the last section that were – from a ‘Socratic’ viewpoint – problematic. A striking difference is Xenophon's total omission of the dialogue between Solon and Croesus, the scene which has most consistently captured the eye of Herodotus' imitators and interpreters.⁵⁹ The usual explanation is that the presence of another ‘wise adviser’ might threaten Cyrus' privileged status,⁶⁰ but it is equally important that the central theological motifs of Solon's speech are entirely unacceptable to Xenophon's world view: divine *phthonos* and god's propensity to reverse the fortunes of the wealthy and the (apparently) blessed. The dialogue's role in the structure of the Herodotean narrative was equally problematic. The immediate consequence of Croesus' encounter with Solon is the *nemesis* which takes Croesus (1.34) in the form of the prophecy of Atys' death. In Xenophon's much briefer account, no explanation is given for Atys' death – he simply dies ‘in the prime of his life’ and no longer, as in Herodotus, as divine punishment for his father's arrogance. As we shall see, Xenophon does take the motif of Croesus' arrogance from Herodotus, but it is Croesus himself who suffers as a result. Xenophon's story thus omits the crushing divine response described by the narrator of the *Histories* (Hdt. 1.34–46).

Likewise, the theological motif of crime and *tisis* which, in the Herodotean version, arches across the five generations of Heraclid kings disappears from Xenophon's account. In comparing himself unfavourably with Cyrus, Croesus certainly points to Gyges' usurpation of the Lydian throne as a sign of the inferiority of his own birth, but this is just one of several aspects which makes Cyrus superior and emphasizes Croesus' lack of ‘self-knowledge’ in believing himself to be Cyrus' equal (*Cyr.* 7.2.25). The motif of ancestral guilt followed by divinely ordained punishment of the descendant, then, is absent from Xenophon's telling, and the errors of Xenophon's Croesus are entirely his own. This fits closely with the intellectual developments of the late fifth century BC, especially those in Socratic circles, as well as Xenophon's didactic goals. As F.S. Pownall points out, an important aspect of Xenophon's world view is that man should bear responsibility for his own actions.⁶¹

Just as Croesus' first misfortune (Atys' death) is stripped of its divine causation, his second misfortune (conquest by Persia) is given a purely human cause. In Xenophon's hands Croesus is persuaded to go to war by the Assyrian king (*Cyr.* 7.2.22), where in Herodotus' he campaigned due to a complex series of motivations, the most important of which was the ‘deceptive’ oracle given by Apollo. The central oracle in Xenophon's account has a decidedly Socratic tone, since it exhorts Croesus to humility, and Croesus' failure to understand it has no directly negative consequences.⁶²

⁵⁸ Hobden and Tuplin (2012) 37, *cf.* 26–27, 37–39.

⁵⁹ See rewritten versions in Plut. *Sol.* 27; Lucian *Charon* 10; *cf.* Diod. Sic. 9.26–27.

⁶⁰ As argued by Lefèvre (2010) 416, *cf.* 408–09.

⁶¹ Pownall (1998) 274.

⁶² An apparent echo of Herodotus' account comes in Croesus' ‘pleased’ response to the oracle: ἐγὼ δ' ἀκούσας τὴν μαντείαν ἤσθην (*Cyr.* 7.2.21); *cf.* Hdt. 1.54.1: ὁ Κροῖσος, ὑπερήσθη τε τοῖσι χρηστηρίοισι; 56.1: ὁ Κροῖσος πολλὸν τι μάλιστα πάντων ἤσθη.

Standing back from the smaller changes, there is a marked difference in tone between the two Croesus *logoi*. While, in the Herodotean narrative, Croesus suffers two great misfortunes, and on each occasion identifies a god as responsible (αἴτιος, 1.45.2, 87.3–4), Xenophon's Croesus presents his own story as a penitent catalogue of his own errors and failings. Xenophon not only omits Croesus' double rebuke of the gods but explicitly and repeatedly rejects such a position; his Croesus says 'even for [the fall of Sardis] I do not hold the god responsible' (οὐκ αἰτιῶμαι δὲ οὐδὲ τάδε τὸν θεόν, 7.2.22).⁶³ As we have seen, neither Plato's nor Xenophon's Socrates would permit fault-finding with the divine. Throughout his account, Xenophon's Croesus stresses that he has been well-handled by the god, and that his misfortunes represent his just deserts (*Cyr.* 7.2.24: δικαίως, ἔφη, ἔχω τὴν δίκην). This idea is developed at the close of the dialogue: delighted by Cyrus' offer of luxury without responsibility, Croesus states that he will owe even more thank offerings to Apollo (*Cyr.* 7.2.28: ὥστε τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι ἄλλα μοι δοκῶ χαριστήρια ὀφειλήσειν).⁶⁴ It seems clear that Xenophon is characterizing his Croesus against a tradition in which Croesus objects to the unfairness of Apollo's oracles, a lack of divine mortal *kharis* and the injustice of his fate.

In the *Cyropaedia* Cyrus prompts Croesus' self-critical account of his encounter with Apollo by saying that 'it is said' that Croesus had rendered many services to Apollo and that everything he had done was 'in obedience to him' (*Cyr.* 7.2.15: λέγεται [...] πάνυ γε τεθεραπεῦσθαι ὁ Ἀπόλλων καὶ σε πάντα ἐκείνῳ πειθόμενον πράττειν). Xenophon's Cyrus has heard an account similar to Herodotus'.⁶⁵ Xenophon's Croesus then proceeds to overturn what Cyrus has heard: 'from the very beginning', he says 'I dealt with Apollo by doing everything in quite the opposite way' (*Cyr.* 7.2.16). The act which inaugurates Croesus' contrarian attitude is his testing of the oracles, described at length by Herodotus (1.46–49) but never condemned in the *Histories*; this is presented by Xenophon as Croesus' first serious faux pas: the kind of action which would alienate a gentleman, never mind a god (*Cyr.* 7.2.17). As such, it is hard to agree with the view that Xenophon moves the testing of the oracles 'into the background' in order to present Croesus 'more positively'.⁶⁶ Like every other aspect of the Herodotean story of Croesus, this episode is telescopically reduced, but it is the emphatic beginning of Croesus' self-critical speech which elaborates his shameful conduct towards Apollo. If Xenophon presents Croesus more positively than Herodotus, this is not because he presents Croesus' dealings with the oracle in a better light; it is rather because he presents the defeated Croesus as more willing to stress the flaws in his former conduct and as reconciled to the fact that his fate is entirely just and appropriate. While Herodotus never encourages his audience to disapprove of Croesus' testing of the oracles,⁶⁷ Xenophon clearly does so. The Xenophonic Socrates also holds strong views on what questions should be posed to oracles: one can consult on topics which are unclear (περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀδήλων ὅπως ἀποβήσοιτο, *Mem.* 1.1.6–9; cf. *An.* 3.1.5–8, *Cyr.* 1.6.23: ὅσα δὲ ἀνθρώποις οὔτε μαθητὰ οὔτε προορατὰ ἀνθρωπίνῃ προνοίᾳ). Needless to say, instructing one's servants to ask a god what one is actually doing does not conform with Socratic norms.⁶⁸

⁶³ Lefèvre derives the opposite interpretation from Croesus' words: that Xenophon's Croesus seriously considers and narrowly rejects blaming the oracle, thereby resembling the Herodotean Croesus ((2010) 410). I find this counter-intuitive. If Xenophon's text is indeed in dialogue with the Herodotean account (as Lefèvre also thinks), these words are most naturally read as a departure from the earlier text.

⁶⁴ Note also that Xenophon's Croesus emphatically states Apollo 'did not lie' (7.2.20: οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἐψεύσατο), implicitly rejecting the *kibdēlos* oracle of Herodotus' account (cf. Croesus' initial evaluation of the Delphic Oracle after the test of the oracles as 'truthful' or 'not-lying', *apseudēs*, Hdt. 1.49).

⁶⁵ Cf. Hdt. 1.73.1: Croesus is μάλιστα τῷ χρηστηρίῳ πίσυνος.

⁶⁶ Lefèvre (2010) 414–15.

⁶⁷ On this point, see especially Christ (1994) 190–93.

⁶⁸ The first question posed by Croesus to the Delphic Oracle in Xenophon's account, otherwise unattested, is worth a brief note. In Herodotus' account, Croesus tests the oracles in order to determine which oracles he can trust to advise him on whether to campaign against Persia. In the *Cyropaedia* Xenophon omits the infamously ambiguous and deceptive oracle of the Herodotean account (also known to Aristotle), but preserves the famous testing of the oracle; as we have seen, the testing of the oracle serves an important role as

Another important issue is Croesus' arrogance – here again Xenophon appropriates a Herodotean motif but handles it in a fashion suited to his own theological views. In the encounter between Croesus and Cyrus, Croesus' conceit is presented as one of the personal qualities which leads directly to his defeat. Before turning to the theme of Croesus' arrogance, however, we must first examine Xenophon's handling of the themes of 'thinking big' and divine *phthonos*.

IV. 'Thinking big' in Xenophon

Plato and Xenophon respectively denounce and omit all mention of divine *phthonos*. This does not, however, mean that they deny the existence of everything to which the term conventionally referred. Fifth-century writers associated divine *phthonos* with a range of theological ideas, some of which Xenophon wholeheartedly endorsed. In Herodotus and other authors, divine *phthonos* is sometimes presented as a response to mortals who 'think big',⁶⁹ a point which comes out most clearly in Artabanus' speech to Xerxes in the Persian War Council, where Artabanus cautions his nephew against boastful words and great ambition:

God loves to cut down what rises above the rest. And in this way a great army is destroyed by a small one, whenever god, feeling *phthonos*, casts down fear or thunder, by which they are destroyed in a manner unworthy of themselves. For god does not allow anyone but himself to think big (φρονέειν μέγα). (Hdt. 7.10ε)

Although Socrates, Plato and Xenophon might have recoiled from Herodotus' phraseology, the idea that 'thinking big' was not only foolish but also likely to incur divine censure was one to which Xenophon also subscribed.⁷⁰ It plays a central role in the *Cyropaedia*, as it does in Herodotus' story of Croesus. In his deathbed speech, Cyrus says 'never in my good fortunes did I think greater than befits a human' (*Cyr.* 8.7.3: οὐδεπώποτε ἐπὶ ταῖς εὐτυχίαις ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον ἐφρόνησα) and he goes on to reveal a long-standing fear that he might suffer a reversal of fortune:

During the past I have fared just as prayed: but a fear accompanied me that in the time yet to come I might either see, or hear, or suffer something unpleasant and, in sum, I never allowed myself to think big or to be extravagantly happy (μέγα φρονεῖν οὐδ' εὐφραίνεσθαι ἐκπεπταμένως). (*Cyr.* 8.7.8)

Cyrus' fear of 'seeing, hearing or suffering' (ἢ ἴδοιμι ἢ ἀκούσοιμι ἢ πάθοιμι) some adversity seems to echo Solon's phraseology in Herodotus (*cf.* 1.32.2: ἐν γὰρ τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ πολλὰ μὲν ἐστὶ ἰδεῖν τὰ μὴ τις ἐθέλει, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παθεῖν), while reflecting similar thematic concerns.⁷¹ Solon too had warned that success is often followed by a reversal of fortune, famously exhorting Croesus to 'look to the end of every affair' (1.32.8), and it emerges at the end of the *Cyropaedia* that Cyrus has lived by a rule similar to that advocated by the Athenian sage. 'Now that I die' (or 'come to an end', τελευτήσω), Cyrus says, leaving behind sons granted by the gods, and a father-

the introduction to Croesus' litany of self-criticism. Yet since one tests an oracle as a preparation to an important consultation, Xenophon's account required that Croesus follow his test with another question, and that is Croesus' enquiry about whether he should have male issue, which leads neatly into the unhappy story of Croesus' children. Although this element may well derive from another source, Xenophon's need to include or invent an oracle different from the famous one recorded by Herodotus clearly derives from his desire to include the testing of the oracle but to exclude the oracle that lays Apollo open to the charge of deception.

⁶⁹ See Cairns (1996) especially 22, who views divine *phthonos* as the gods' response to the 'transgression of limits' by mortals. Divine *phthonos* can, however, also refer to different ideas about the divine which Xenophon would certainly have condemned; the clearest example is Artabanus' speech at Hdt. 7.46.4, on which, see Ellis (2015c) 91.

⁷⁰ On the negative implications of *mega phronein* in Xenophon, see Hau (2012) 593–94, 606–09, who stresses the Herodotean resonances of the phrase at Cyrus' death in *Cyr.* 8.7.7. She discusses the apparently positive use of the expression in the *Symposium* at (2012) 602–09.

⁷¹ The point is made by Keller (1911) 256.

land and friends who are happy (εὐδαιμονοῦντας, 8.7.8), 'why should I not be justly considered as blessed and be remembered for all time?' (ὥστε πῶς οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ δικάίως μακαρίζομενος τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον μνήμης τυγχάνοιμι);⁷² Like Herodotus' Solon, Xenophon's Cyrus treats death as a security against suffering when he invites his mourners to rejoice with him and consider him a 'happy man' (*Cyr.* 8.7.27: συνησθησομένουσ [...] ὡς μηδὲν ἂν ἔτι κακὸν παθεῖν [...] ἀνδρὶ εὐδαιμόνι). Cyrus' words echo with Solonian reflections on the insecurity of a man's fortune until after his death.⁷³

Xenophon's presentation of Cyrus comes as a striking correction to the Herodotean Cyrus, who seems to be (or thought he was) 'something more than human' (1.204.2),⁷⁴ and had to be reminded by Croesus that he was not immortal (1.207.2). By emphasizing that Cyrus always maintained a humble outlook, Xenophon alters the Herodotean portrait,⁷⁵ but works within the same conceptual framework, in which 'thinking big' invites disaster – an idea that Herodotus associates with divine *phthonos*. This conceptual framework, common to Herodotus and much tragedy and epinician, is important in the rest of Xenophon's historical and biographical works, but is given a subtly different theological complexion and never appears under the label of divine *phthonos*. When, for example, Xenophon rallies his men to aid the Arcadians in the *Anabasis* he states:

Perhaps god is guiding events in this way, wishing to humble these proud boasters (τοὺς μεγαληγορήσαντας ὡς πλέον φρονοῦντας ταπεινῶσαι βούλεται), with their presumed superior wisdom, and to make us, who begin with the gods, more honored than them. (6.3.18, tr. Flower, adapted)

Here, notions of size, piety and humbleness are closely intertwined, so that the mightier force is boastful and arrogant, while the smaller force is pious and (implicitly) humble. Xenophon's words recall Nicias' speech to the Athenians in a similarly desperate situation in Thucydides which also touches on divine *phthonos* (7.77.4), but the Herodotean notion that god destroys the best, greatest, most prosperous or most blessed/happy is absent from the Xenophontic passage (*cf.* Hdt. 3.40 and 5.92ζ.2 with 7.10ε).

Xenophon does on several occasions stress that the gods are capable of destroying a greater force and supporting a smaller if they wish, but this idea is linked explicitly with the impiety of the greater force; moreover, the principle is invariably invoked when the speaker is convinced of his own superior piety – for why would the gods (as imagined by a Socratic thinker like Xenophon) *wish* to destroy successful people who are pious, just and humble? In the *Anabasis*, for example, Xenophon compares the Greeks' care to abide by their oaths with the perfidy of the enemy and concludes:

This being the case, it is reasonable that the gods should oppose the enemy and be our allies, since they are powerful enough (ικανοὶ εἰσι) to make the great swiftly small and to save the small with ease whenever they wish (ὅταν βούλωνται), even from dire straits. (3.2.10)

⁷² *Cf.* especially Hdt. 1.32.7: πρὶν δ' ἂν τελευτήσῃ, ἐπισηεῖν μηδὲ καλέειν κω ὄλβιον, ἀλλ' εὐτυχέα. D.L. Gera argues that, in describing Cyrus' death, Xenophon draws on 'Herodotean themes of the mutability of fortune and the meaning of true happiness' ((1993) 121); also the view of Keller (1911) 256–57 and Riemann (1967) 26–27.

⁷³ We might see a similar echo in the phrasing of Croesus' question to Delphi: τί ἂν ποιῶν τὸν λοιπὸν βίον εὐδαιμονέστατα διατελέσαιμι (7.2.20). The themes of Solon's speech in the *Histories* were scarcely confined

to Herodotus – they can be found, with close verbal resemblances, in, for example, Soph. *OT.* 1524–30; *Aj.* 127–33; Eur. *Phoen.* 1687–89; *Andr.* 100–02. For similarities with Solon's poetry, see Harrison (2000) 32–45.

⁷⁴ On the double sense of δοκέειν, see Pelling (2006) 164 n.85.

⁷⁵ Sandridge (2012) 56: 'It is as if Xenophon's Cyrus "remembers" what happened to himself in Herodotus.'

Note here the crucial riders: the gods do not automatically reverse the fortunes of the weaker and the stronger – rather, they are ‘powerful enough’ to do so ‘whenever they wish’, phrases which involve a range of other ideas about the principles of divine action. In this context it is worth considering a remark by Jason of Pherae, an outlier among the passages just considered, which talks of god’s ‘delight’ in making the big small and the small big, without linking this to more empowering theological ideas (for example that the impious are humbled and the pious granted good fortune):

‘Do you not see’, he said, ‘that in your own case it was when you found yourselves in straits that you won the victory? Therefore one must suppose that the Lacedaemonians also, if they were in like straits, would fight it out regardless of their lives. And it would seem that god often delights in making the small great and the great small’ (καὶ ὁ θεὸς δέ, ὡς ἔοικε, πολλάκις χαίρει τοὺς μὲν μικροὺς μεγάλους ποιῶν, τοὺς δὲ μεγάλους μικροὺς). (*Hell.* 6.4.23, tr. Brownson, adapted)

Jason’s words stand out in the Xenophonic corpus in not linking a divinely caused reversal of fortune with impiety or neglect of the gods. By suggesting that the gods take pleasure in spinning the wheel of fortune and overturning established powers (without further qualification), Jason elaborates a principle that recalls Herodotean musings on the nature of human fortune, but clashes with that pronounced by Socrates in his conversation with Aristodemus (*Mem.* 1.4.16):⁷⁶

οὐχ ὄραϊς ὅτι τὰ πολυχροنیωτάτα καὶ σοφώτατα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη, θεοσεβέστατά ἐστι [...];

Do you not see that the most long-lasting and wisest of men, cities and peoples are the most reverent towards the gods [...]?

It is perhaps no accident that Jason of Pherae, whose arrival had given the Delphians cause to fear for the safety of Apollo’s treasures in Delphi, dies soon after this self-serving speech.⁷⁷

Returning to the *Cyropaedia* and Croesus, the theme of ‘thinking big’ is again foregrounded in Xenophon, as in Herodotus: Croesus is ‘puffed up’ (ἀναφυσώμενος) by the flattery of the other generals and accepts command in the belief that he could be ‘the greatest of men’ (μέγιστος ἂν εἴην ἀνθρώπων, 7.2.23).⁷⁸ In conversation with Cyrus, he links this directly to his failure to know himself (as the oracle has enjoined) and his inferiority to Cyrus. In this respect, we cannot say, with Lefèvre, that Xenophon’s Croesus is wholly exonerated of the arrogance that characterizes his Herodotean model.⁷⁹ The critical difference between the two presentations is that, where the arrogance of Herodotus’ Croesus results in the death of his son Atys, Xenophon’s Croesus suffers directly (rather than via the death of innocents) and by a human mechanism. Although the gods are implicitly involved in every aspect of Cyrus’ fortunes, it is not direct divine intervention, but the inferiority of Croesus (as chief Assyrian general) in comparison with Cyrus that leads to his defeat.

⁷⁶ On the importance of this idea to Xenophon’s conception of history, see Dillery (1995) 187–92.

⁷⁷ See further Bowden (2004) 243, noting parallels with Hdt. 8.36. For Jason’s impious designs on Delphi (neither dispelled nor confirmed), see Dillery (1995) 173–74. As Tim Rood has pointed out to me, Jason’s words must be treated with particular caution: he is portrayed as cynically playing off the Thebans and Spartans against one another and the theological idea is deployed as part of this deceptive rhetoric (*Hell.* 6.4.22–24).

⁷⁸ This superlatively arrogant self-conception seems to echo Herodotus’ Croesus who thought himself ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ὀλβιώτατος (1.34); on parallels between Xenophon’s Croesus and Critias and Alcibiades in Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.24, see Gray (2011) 156–57. Note that Xenophon also refers to Jason as ‘the greatest [man] of his time’ (*Hell.* 6.4.28).

⁷⁹ Lefèvre (2010) 408.

V. Conclusion

This article has argued that the Herodotean version of Croesus' story underwent theological revision and simplification for the *Cyropaedia*. I have sought to show that this was done in accordance with theological principles expressed by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, which are, in some areas, similar to views voiced by the Platonic Socrates.

In Xenophon, as in Herodotus, theology and the historical process are intricately linked. In Xenophon's case the didactic goals of the *Cyropaedia* cannot be separated from the way the gods behave: to reward the pious and humble and to help them by divination and prophecy.⁸⁰ Where Herodotean characters, even the wisest, remain perplexed and troubled by the grudging nature of god and the dominant role of chance in human affairs, Xenophon's wisest characters (and the narrative itself) present piety and divination as a reliable guide to those areas in which human wisdom fails.⁸¹ Likewise, while in Herodotus oracles and prophecy play an active role in luring or bullying cautious or reluctant monarchs into disastrous campaigns,⁸² in Xenophon disastrous overreaching results from the ambitions and persuasions of human characters alone, working without or against the communications of the divine. From the point of view of a Herodotean model, Xenophon fundamentally alters the role of the gods in human history. While Xenophon's theology and characterization clearly work alongside his didactic goals, Herodotus includes much material that teaches a pessimistic lesson that disempowers humanity: people must guess, do their limited best and eventually, in all probability, they must suffer. In the more optimistic vision of the *Cyropaedia* humans are empowered by piety and prophecy to alter the historical process and influence the future for their benefit. Just as Socrates, as represented by Xenophon and Plato, rejects much of the theology of the Greek literary tradition, Xenophon himself rejects the historical principles of Herodotus, even as he draws on his *Histories* as a source of narrative material.

Bibliography

- Avery, H.C. (1979) 'A poetic word in Herodotus', *Hermes* 107, 1–9
 Baragwanath, E. (2008) *Motivation and Narrative in Herodotus* (Oxford)
 Bordt, M. (2006) *Platons Theologie* (Freiburg and Munich)
 Bowden, H. (2004) 'Xenophon and the scientific study of religion', in C. Tuplin (ed.), *Xenophon and his World* (Stuttgart) 229–46
 Brown, C. (1992) 'The Hyperboreans and *nemesis* in Pindar's Tenth *Pythian*', *Phoenix* 46, 95–107
 Brown, T.S. (1990) 'Echoes from Herodotus in Xenophon's *Hellenica*', *AncW* 21, 97–101
 Cairns, D.L. (1996) 'Hybris, dishonour, and thinking big', *JHS* 116, 1–32
 Chiasson, C. (2003) 'Herodotus' use of Attic tragedy in the Lydian *Logos*', *ClAnt* 22, 5–35
 Christ, M.R. (1994) 'Herodotean kings and historical inquiry', *ClAnt* 13, 167–202
 Darbo-Peschanski, C. (1987) *Le Discours du particulier: Essai sur l'enquête Hérodotéenne* (Paris)
 Dillery, J. (1995) *Xenophon and the History of His Time* (London)
 Dorion, L.-A. (2000–2011) *Xénophon Mémorables* (3 vols) (Paris)

⁸⁰ For the story of Xenophon's attempt to capture Asidates at the end of the *Anabasis* (7.8.8–23), where omens play a more complicated and troubling role, see Flower (2012) 214–15. It is noteworthy that in the story of Cyrus, where Xenophon clearly had much more creative licence, prophecy and divination never give Cyrus any similarly problematic messages.

⁸¹ Contrast, for example, the discussion of Xerxes and Artabanus at 7.45–52 (especially Xerxes' statement: εἰδέναι δὲ ἀνθρωπῶν ἔόντα κῶς χρὴ τὸ βέβαιον; δοκέω μὲν οὐδαμῶς) with Cambyses' advice to Cyrus on how to overcome the limits of ἡ ἀνθρωπίνῃ σοφία: consult the

omniscient gods who will help those to whom they are propitious (*Cyr.* 1.6.46), which is to say, those who observe piety consistently, particularly in good fortune (cf. *Cyr.* 1.6.3–4). Needless to say, no Herodotean warner urges pious consultation of the gods and divination as an answer to the problems of human ignorance and the ephemeral nature of human happiness and prosperity.

⁸² In addition to the story of Croesus, cf. Xerxes' dreams (7.12–18), on which see Roettig (2010). Between them, these represent the origin of two of the most important wars of the *Histories*. I hope to address this largely neglected Herodotean theme more fully elsewhere.

- Due, B. (1989) *The Cyropaedia. Xenophon's Aims and Methods* (Aarhus)
- Ellis, B.A. (2013) *Grudging Gods: Theology and Characterization in Herodotus' Histories and Interpretation from Plutarch to the Present* (Ph.D. Diss. Edinburgh)
- (2015a) 'Herodotus and god in the protestant reformation', in B.A. Ellis (ed.), *God in History: Reading and Rewriting Herodotean Theology from Plutarch to the Renaissance* (Histos Supplement 4) (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) 173–245
- (2015b) 'Mortal misfortunes, θεὸς ἀναίτιος, and τὸ θεῖον φθονερόν: the Socratic seeds of later debate on Herodotus' theology', in B.A. Ellis (ed.), *God in History: Reading and Rewriting Herodotean Theology from Plutarch to the Renaissance* (Histos Supplement 4) (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) 17–40
- (2015c) 'Proverbs in Herodotus' dialogue between Solon and Croesus: methodology and "making sense" in the study of Greek religion', *BICS* 58.2, 83–106
- (2017) 'The jealous god of ancient Greece: interpreting the Classical Greek notion of φθόνος θεῶν between Renaissance humanism and Altertumswissenschaft', *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 2, 1–55
- Flower, M.A. (2012) *Xenophon's Anabasis or The Expedition of Cyrus* (Oxford)
- François, G. (1957) *Le Polythéisme et l'emploi au singulier des mots ΘΕΟΣ, ΔΑΙΜΩΝ* (Paris)
- Gagné, R. (2013) *Ancestral Fault in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge)
- Gera, D.L. (1993) *Xenophon's Cyropaedia: Style, Genre, and Literary Technique* (Oxford)
- Gould, J. (1989) *Herodotus* (Bristol)
- Gray, V.J. (2011) *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes* (Oxford)
- (2016) 'Herodotus (and Ctesias) re-enacted: leadership in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*', in V. Zali and J. Priestley (eds), *The Reception of Herodotus in Antiquity and Beyond* (Leiden) 301–21
- Harrison, T. (2000) *Divinity and History* (Oxford)
- Hau, L.I. (2012) 'Does pride go before a fall? Xenophon on arrogant pride', in F. Hobden and C. Tuplin (eds), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry* (Leiden) 591–610
- Hobden, F. and Tuplin, C. (2012) 'Introduction', in F. Hobden and C. Tuplin (eds), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry* (Leiden) 1–41
- Jaeger, W. (1947) *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford)
- Keller, W.J. (1911) 'Xenophon's acquaintance with the history of Herodotus', *Classical Journal* 6: 252–59
- Kindt, J. (2006) 'Delphic Oracle stories and the beginning of historiography: Herodotus' Croesus logos', *CPh* 101, 34–51
- Kirchberg, J. (1965) *Die Funktion der Orakel im Werke Herodots* (Göttingen)
- Konstan, D. (2006) *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks* (Toronto)
- Kroll, J. (2000) Review of L. Kurke, *Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold: The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece* (1999), *CJ* 96, 85–90
- Lacy, A.R. (1980) 'Our knowledge of Socrates', in G. Vlastos (ed.), *The Philosophy of Socrates* (Notre Dame IN) 22–49
- Lefèvre, E. (2010) 'The question of the ΒΙΟΣ ΕΥΔΑΪΜΩΝ: the encounter between Cyrus and Croesus in Xenophon', in V.J. Gray (ed.), *Xenophon* (Oxford) 401–17; originally published as (1971) 'Die Frage nach dem βίος εὐδαίμων. Die Begegnung zwischen Kyros und Kroisos bei Xenophon', *Hermes* 99, 283–96
- Lloyd, A.B. (2007) 'Herodotus, book 2', in D. Asheri, A.B. Lloyd and A. Corcella (eds), *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV* (Oxford)
- Lloyd-Jones, H. (1983) *The Justice of Zeus* (2nd edition) (Berkeley)
- Lurie, M. (forthcoming) 'Not to be born is best. Greek pessimism revisited or: were Burckhardt and Nietzsche right?'
- Macan, R.W. (1895) *Herodotus, the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books* (2 vols) (London and New York)
- McPherran, M.L. (1996) *The Religion of Socrates* (University Park PA)
- (2011) 'Socratic religion', in D.R. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (Cambridge) 111–37
- Meuss, H. (1888) *Der sogenannte Neid der Götter bei Herodot* (Liegnitz)
- Munson, R.V. (2001) 'Ananke in Herodotus', *JHS* 121, 30–50
- Parker, R. (1985) 'Greek states and Greek oracles', in P. Cartledge and F.D. Harvey (eds), *Crux: Essays Presented to G.E.M. de Ste Croix on his 75th Birthday* (London) 298–326
- (1998) 'Pleasing thighs: reciprocity in Greek religion', in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite and R. Seaford (eds), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford) 105–25

- (2011) *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca and London)
- Pelling, C.B.R. (2006) 'Educating Croesus', *ClAnt* 25, 141–77
- Pownall, F.S. (1998) 'Condemnation of the impious in Xenophon's *Hellenica*', *Harvard Theological Review* 91.3, 251–77
- (2004) *Lessons from the Past: The Moral Use of History in Fourth-Century Prose* (Ann Arbor)
- Riemann, K.A. (1967) *Das herodoteische Geschichtswerk in der Antike* (Munich)
- Roettig, K. (2010) *Die Träume des Xerxes: zum Handeln der Götter bei Herodot* (Nordhausen)
- Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. (2010) 'The death of Cyrus: Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*', in V.J. Gray (ed.) *Xenophon* (Oxford) 439–53
- Sanders, E. (2014) *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens: A Socio-Psychological Approach* (Oxford)
- Sandridge, N.B. (2012) *Loving Humanity, Learning, and Being Honoured: The Foundations of Leadership in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus* (Ann Arbor)
- Theiler, W. (1925) *Zur Geschichte der teleologischen Naturbetrachtung bis auf Aristoteles* (Zurich)
- Versnel, H.S. (2011) *Coping with the Gods* (Leiden)
- Vlastos, G. (1991) *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge)