

war. Finally, the earlier point that completion of the *ephēbeia* was never a precondition for citizen status (since ephebes were already citizens when they joined) allows Henderson to reject the notion that participation in the later Hellenistic *ephēbeia* was a way for non-Athenians to gain citizenship.

In addition to an epilogue on the end of the *ephēbeia*, the book offers a full catalogue of ephebic inscriptions, a selection of documents in Greek and in translation, four appendices with demographic and prosopographic data, an index of literary and epigraphic sources, and a general index. The selection of documents (324–55) is an odd feature, since these documents are essentially illustrative; in its place, more direct quotation of relevant or typical texts in the course of the argument would have been welcome.

This book is not a straightforward introduction to its subject; it is shaped by the historiographical debates in which it takes part, and its main audience will be those who are already familiar with those debates. Even so, it is a rich and valuable work, which has the further virtue of being engagingly written. It helpfully integrates new evidence into known discussions and advances the study of the Athenian *ephēbeia* on numerous points.

ROEL KONIJNENDIJK
University of Edinburgh
Email: roel.konijnendijk@ed.ac.uk

HOBDEN (F.) **Xenophon**. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Pp. xiv + 147. £15.99. 9781474298476.

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It is hard to think of an author from Greek antiquity more appropriate for inclusion in a series titled ‘Ancients in Action’ than Xenophon, whose *Anabasis* shows his own predilection for adventure. But beyond that, as Fiona Hobden shows, Xenophon presents the ‘the deeds of exceptional individuals in conflict situations’ (16) as exemplars for the instruction of his readers. Actions provide the starting point for his narrative and his analysis.

The late twentieth- and twenty-first century resurgence in studies of Xenophon has produced a vast array of monographs and edited collections exploring specific themes and details in his extensive and varied corpus. While, as Hobden observes, Xenophon’s writing should make him the ‘most accessible’ (1) of the ancients, in some ways the recent burgeoning of bibliography on him has complicated matters. Fierce debates in this scholarship have had a polarizing effect; is Xenophon a simplistic moralist, a savage ironist or somehow simultaneously both? Does reading him as an ironist necessitate a specific interpretation of his political thought? This short and straightforward introduction provides a clear sense of the structure and detail of Xenophon’s work, and will equip a wide array of readers to understand the breadth of his corpus and to make sense of the often irreconcilable presentations of him in the secondary literature.

Hobden’s initial organizing principle is genre, starting appropriately enough with historiography, but one way in which Xenophon is complex is his elusive slippage between more recent constructions of genre, so there is necessarily some crosstalk as episodes from his major works find their way into multiple chapters, and as themes, such as the pursuit of the good life (the focus of chapter 4), extend across the corpus.

As Hobden notes in the first chapter, ‘Writing History’, Xenophon’s contribution to the genre has been undervalued and misinterpreted. The reputation of his history of Greece (*Hellenica*) has suffered from its being treated as a continuation of Thucydides’ history of the Peloponnesian War; Hobden starts with the view that Xenophon successfully achieves his goal of narrating the past in a way that develops critical reflection. She treats the *Cyropaedia* as another historical work.

Xenophon's philosophical writing has featured strongly in his recent renaissance, and provides the theme for the second chapter. There are many questions about Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates and the extent of their interactions, and the veracity of the conversations reported in the *Memorabilia* and *Symposium*. Hobden hedges her bets on these questions (56), but usefully connects the Socratic works to the rest of the corpus.

Recent scholarship has placed a particular emphasis on Xenophon's interest in political organization and leadership, and connected it to a continuing commitment to Athens as well as to a systematic programme. In 'Rethinking the Polis', Hobden draws together narratives from the histories with discussions from the Socratic works, and integrates them with Xenophon's treatment of monarchical Sparta (*Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*), and tyrannical Syracuse (*Hiero*), as well as his advice to Athens (*Poroi*).

The interest in Xenophon's political thinking has tended to get in the way of perception of him as an ethicist. Hobden's fourth chapter, 'Living the Good Life', positions Xenophon within the mainstream of Greek ethical thought of his time, as a writer concerned with the achievement of the good life through 'personal morality and public service' (87), and consistent thought on how to achieve it. As she properly notes, Xenophon accords moral agency to human actors beyond male citizens more readily than some ancient thinkers do, distinguishing him from near contemporaries such as Aristotle, although the main examples here, including Ischomachus (*Oeconomicus*), Cyrus and Agesilaus, do not illustrate that claim in any straightforward way.

It seems impossible to condense the complexities of Xenophon's reception history from antiquity to the present day into a short chapter, given the sheer variety of works and authors he has influenced. In 'Thinking through Xenophon', Hobden outlines Xenophon's role as a supplier of exemplars to moralists of later antiquity, with a strong account of his influence on Roman thought, and the inspiration he provided to authors such as Arrian. She gives a good summary of Machiavelli's reading of him, on which more recent political-theoretical readings depend. The account of more recent receptions is necessarily selective.

This book achieves its aims as an introduction; it provides an excellent orientation to Xenophon and his work. Hobden crams in plenty of useful detail into its 129 pages of text, much of it carefully referenced to Xenophon's writing. One might wish that there had been more space for quotation and close reading of some of the key passages to which she refers, and more sense of both the charm and style of Xenophon's prose. But the case for Xenophon as a systematic and influential thinker is well made.

CAROL ATACK

Newnham College, Cambridge

Email: cwa24@cam.ac.uk

KULESZ (R.) and SEKUNDA (N.) (eds) **Studies on Ancient Sparta** (Monograph series Akanthina 14). Gdańsk: Gdańsk University Press, 2020. Pp. 302. zł.39.99. 9788378659457. doi:[10.1017/S0075426922000726](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426922000726)

This estimable but not easily accessible publication adds to the growing swell of Sparta-related research volumes that have been enhancing the ancient Greek historical field since Anton Powell's beautifully judged two-volume Wiley-Blackwell *A Companion to Sparta* (Hoboken 2017–2018). It has been very well edited by two notable Poland-based Spartan scholars. For each chapter there are both bibliographies and a Polish summary, and for the collection as a whole there are – a great boon – indexes both *locorum* and *nominum et rerum*.