

# Governing Diversities



Governing Diversities:  
Democracy, Diversity and Human Nature

Edited by

Joanne Paul  
with Victoria Briggs, Georgios Giannakopoulos,  
Mads Langballe Jensen, Elliott Karstadt, Adam Mowl  
and Lorenzo Sabbadini

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P U B L I S H I N G

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# CONTENTS

Preface .....	vii
<i>Quentin Skinner</i>	
Acknowledgments .....	ix
Introduction .....	1
<i>Joanne Paul</i>	
<b>Part I - Democracy</b>	
Introduction .....	8
<i>Richard Bourke</i>	
Laconism and Democracy: Re-reading the <i>Lakedaimoniōn Politeia</i> and Re-thinking Xenophon.....	10
<i>Christopher A. Farrell</i>	
Monitory Democracy and Humanist Counsel: Politics under ‘The Watchful Eye of a Public of Spectators’ .....	36
<i>Joanne Paul</i>	
Plutocracy and Pluto-democracy: <i>Fin-de-siècle</i> Political Thought and the Pervasive Power of Wealth in Modern Society .....	55
<i>M. F. N. Giglioli</i>	
Participation as Autonomy? Towards a Hypothetical Analogy between Charles Taylor and Cornelius Castoriadis .....	67
<i>Silvia Pierosara</i>	

## Part II - Diversity

Introduction .....	86
<i>Joan-Pau Rubiés</i>	

Alonso de la Veracruz: Natural Law, Dominion and Political Legitimacy in Native American Governance .....	89
<i>Francisco Quijano</i>	

Political Commitment and Historical Epistemology: Raymond Aron's Transcendental Relativism Reconsidered.....	107
<i>Iain Stewart</i>	

Indigeneity, Zapatista Autonomy and Governing in Diversity.....	128
<i>Puneet Dhaliwal</i>	

## Part III - Human Nature

Introduction .....	148
<i>Jeremy Jennings</i>	

'Uniformity is Death': Human Nature, Variety and Conflict in Kropotkin's Anarchism .....	150
<i>Matthew S. Adams</i>	

Materialism and Human Nature: Marx and the Problems of a Materialist Moral Naturalism .....	169
<i>David Marjoribanks</i>	

Violence, Force, Myth and Utopia: Philosophical Arguments in Sorel's <i>Reflections on Violence</i> .....	187
<i>Tommaso Giordani</i>	

Contributors.....	204
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## PREFACE

QUENTIN SKINNER

I am delighted to be asked to contribute a Preface to this extremely fine collection of articles about the complex relations between ideas of human nature and the controlling powers of governments. All the chapters here assembled were originally presented as papers at the first two Graduate Conferences in the History of Political Thought held at the University of London in 2010 and 2011. These were highly congenial as well as productive occasions and seem to have been greatly enjoyed by all who took part. A large number of young scholars came together not merely to discuss their research but to establish contacts with like-minded intellectual communities in universities in many different countries. They were able at the same time to talk about their work with a number of more senior political theorists and intellectual historians who were on hand to chair sessions and to offer advice. It was inspiring to those of us who teach these subjects in the University of London to see so much fruitful co-operation and friendly interchange.

I am greatly struck by the care, the conscientiousness and the professionalism displayed by Joanne Paul as chief editor of this volume and by the rest of her editorial team. They have succeeded splendidly in the complex task of reshaping the conference proceedings into a properly unified book. A large number of papers were submitted for their consideration. By a process of peer review, the papers selected for publication were not merely those of the highest intellectual quality, but those with the closest relevance to their chosen theme. The outcome is a book of impressive coherence, methodologically and substantively, as well as a collection in which a great deal of valuable and wide-ranging research is surfaced for the first time.

Some chapters are more analytical in focus, others more historical in approach. But all display an awareness of the need for historical and philosophical research to be brought together if new insights in political theory are to be generated. The chapters on human nature and diversity examine several different traditions of thinking about the means by which social and political order can be established and maintained, offering thought-provoking reflections on such issues as the role of reason, the

place of autonomy and the challenge of political violence. The chapters on democratic politics engage with classical and Renaissance sources as well as focusing on more recent debates, encompassing Marxist and anarchist discussions as well as contemporary views about the place of participation in public life. The book as a whole brings together different idioms of research in new and challenging ways, and its publication is immensely to be welcomed.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is the product of two conferences organised by postgraduate students based in the University of London. The first took place in May 2010, on the theme of 'Perspectives on Democratic Political Thought', and was conceived by Elliott Karstadt, Robin Mills and Stephen Dean. The second took place the following year, on the theme of 'Diversity and Human Nature'. Both conferences attracted a wide audience and a variety of approaches in the graduate papers that were delivered.

We would like to thank all the speakers who travelled from across Europe and North America to speak at these conferences. This book is the product of only a fraction of the research presented. We are very grateful to John Dunn and Noel Malcolm, who gave the keynote addresses for these conferences and provided so much of the inspiration that has informed this volume.

A number of institutions have been extremely generous in funding the conferences: the School of History at Queen Mary, University of London and the History departments of King's College London and University College London. The Centre for the Study of the History of Political Thought at Queen Mary ensured that our guests and participants received the best possible welcome in London, and the Institute of Historical Research were kind enough to provide us with splendid rooms in Senate House.

For ensuring the high quality of the articles, we are deeply indebted to the peer reviewers, both within London and further afield, whose punctuality, attention to detail and critical feedback were invaluable. We pay tribute to all the contributors to this volume, who have worked so hard to make it a success. In particular, we would like to thank those faculty members who have taken the time both to attend the conferences and contribute to this volume: Richard Bourke, Jeremy Jennings, Joan-Pau Rubiés and Quentin Skinner.

We are immeasurably grateful to the people at Cambridge Scholars Publishing. In particular, this project would never have been conceived had it not been for the confidence and enthusiasm of Carol Koulikourdi who first approached us regarding the possibility of publishing our conference proceedings.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank any other teachers and peers who may have aided in the composition of the individual contributions to this volume as well as in the process of its compilation.

*The Editors*, March 2012

# INTRODUCTION

JOANNE PAUL

‘Human society is marked by the inescapable fact of diversity (of race, culture, gender, religion, sexuality, etc.), which raises a fundamental political question... namely, how should society be organised and arranged in light of such differences.’

The contributors to this collection all engage with the crucial question of how to govern diversities. Spanning almost two and a half millennia – from fourth-century BCE Greece to present-day Mexico – and engaging with perspectives from intellectual history, political theory and philosophy, the contributions stand as a testimony to the productive and beneficial nature of diversity. Taken as a whole, they converge on three key themes, which present valuable insights into the question of governing diversities.

First, this volume demonstrates the need for citizens to remain attentive to the ‘hidden’ or ‘veiled’ forces at work within a democratic political regime. This requirement for political participation undergirds the project of the history of political thought by calling us to question the meanings of political vocabularies in historical perspective. Second, it is made clear that this act of engaging with a historically situated politics is essential in constituting the identity of both the individual and the individual-in-society. Finally, this volume brings together these themes in making the argument that any project of governing diversity must take seriously both the historical self-production of individuals and groups and the nature of these hidden political forces.

Christopher A. Farrell draws attention to the ways in which vocabularies of democracy have obstructed our understanding of its history by presenting a critique of attempts to locate democracy in classical political thought. In particular, he examines how dichotomous categories (democratic Athens as opposed to non-democratic Sparta) have served to obstruct a nuanced understanding of the roots of our own democratic practices in the works of classical writers, specifically the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* of Xenophon. By emphasising the role of the audiences for such works, in

this case the Athenians, Farrell highlights the important position that a democratic public holds in the construction of its own political vocabularies.

The role of a spectator public in the development of political thought and practice is emphasised in the next contribution to the volume. This chapter seeks to question the vocabulary of ‘democratic’ and ‘monitory’ political practices in the work of John Keane through an analysis of the writings of such sixteenth-century English humanists as Thomas More and Thomas Elyot. These writers articulated an awareness of the political power that could be exerted by critically engaging with activity on the political stage. This influence comes to be articulated in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in a language of unveiling and unmasking akin to the description that Keane gives of monitory democracy. However, the humanists’ work addressed a monarchical political context, not the democratic one that Keane seeks to associate with monitory political thought. Just as Farrell employs a contextualist approach to question the attribution of non-democratic thought to Xenophon, this chapter questions our application of ‘democracy’ to practices and theories that historically have been associated with non-democratic regimes and attempts to highlight the role of the public in the shaping of political vocabularies.

M. F. N. Giglioli also presents an analysis of democratic terminology in his chapter on ‘plutocracy’ and ‘pluto-democracy’ in *fin-de-siècle* European thought. Giglioli demonstrates that these terms were applied widely in this period, pejoratively denoting both a system of rule and a ruling class defined by the power of wealth in society. He also notes the functioning of ‘veils’ in such thought – the plutocratic nature of the political system becomes hidden by a performance of popular sovereignty. Because plutocratic power does not assume ‘traditional forms of dominion’, writers on pluto-democracy feared that it would be occluded by the invisible forces of the market and obscured by more conventional, but less potent, democratic practices. As Giglioli notes in his conclusion, these terms carry little currency in contemporary political thought, encouraging us to question whether such threats are past, or rather if they have simply been forgotten.

If these contributions are united in their aim of uncovering the nuances of democratic political thought, those that follow question the very mechanisms at work when thinking of the individual and her place within society, highlighting the importance of the contestation and conflict inherent in diversity. Francisco Quijano’s chapter on the political works of Alonso de la Veracruz, an oft-overlooked member of the influential sixteenth-century School of Salamanca, introduces a model of political legitimacy as emerging out of the community itself. Veracruz’s writings

on the natives and governance of New Spain, Quijano argues, demonstrate a profound knowledge of, and respect for, native political organisation, serving to delegitimise the Spanish conquest of America and structuring later arguments around indigenous self-government. As Quijano demonstrates, Veracruz, against contemporary divine right theorists, puts forward the argument that dominion must come from the governed community and can only be transferred according to the good of the people, necessitating an understanding of not only what this 'good' consists, but also the nature of the political community itself.

David Marjoribanks reinforces the argument for the importance of understanding historical mechanisms and processes in his treatment of Marxist materialism. In suggesting that we need to conceptualise a *via media* between historicist and essentialist ethical systems, Marjoribanks highlights the need for a materialist immanent critique of the present through an understanding of contradictions in practice. This is only possible through an understanding of the historical contexts of human agency and the mutually constituting relationship between the agent and her context.

These themes of conflict and history bring us to Matthew Adams's contribution, which re-evaluates scholarly consensus regarding the thought of Peter Kropotkin by analysing his treatment of the relationship between the individual and society. Adams's chapter introduces another important theme into the discussion about governing diversity – the political need both for diversity and the conflict that necessarily accompanies it. Kropotkin, in Adams's view, held that the conflict resulting from competing egotistical needs within a multitude is essential to the health of his proposed anarchical society and, indeed, any healthy political association. Furthermore, Adams tells us, Kropotkin's theory of history is defined by perpetual conflict between these individualist wills and communal values. Contrary to more static views of history and politics, Kropotkin suggests that it is this continual conflict which is the driving force of history and the guarantor of a well-functioning society.

We see similar processes at work in the theories of Georges Sorel, whose 1908 *Reflections on Violence* is analysed by Tommaso Giordani. Giordani explains that Sorel draws a distinction between parliamentary socialism and revolutionary syndicalism in the form of contrasts between utopia and myth on the one hand, and force and violence on the other. The former are prescriptive elite-controlled characteristics of the parliamentary model, whereas the latter are representative of a will to act that seeks the overthrow of the established order from below. Sorel's project is to reconfigure and question the relationship between knowledge and action

present in utopias, in which a claim to an objective description of society leads to a prescriptive course of action. Instead, Sorel advocates a revolutionary approach in which action – ‘struggle’ – becomes essential to knowledge itself. It is through struggle and conflict, Sorel believes, that we construct both ourselves and our political environments.

The self-constituted nature of identity as part of a dialectic of reflection and action is at the heart of Raymond Aron’s philosophy of history, the subject of Iain Stewart’s chapter. Stewart presents a view of Aron not as an anti-relativist, as many would have him, but as putting forward a theory of historical relativism alongside more concrete views of human nature. Aron’s theory, Stewart tells us, takes as fundamental the idea that the individual in society has a history, that this history shapes values and that the individual herself *is* history – she constitutes her humanity and her society through a historical process. Thus self-determination is not only a historically bounded project, but one that is essential to the self-in-society. As Stewart puts it, ‘no political commitment is conceivable without some kind of understanding of the past of the society in which it is exercised. To think or act politically is to think or act in terms of the values and goals expressed historically within a given community, even if it is to reject them’. Participation – through critical engagement – in one’s community is inseparable from the process of attaining and determining selfhood.

The relationship between participation and selfhood also forms the main argument of Silvia Pierosara’s chapter on the work of Charles Taylor and Cornelius Castoriadis. Pierosara argues that democracy is inconceivable without a connection between participation and autonomy, requiring an independent agent who can only be recognised as such through her activity in the larger political structure. Charles Taylor, Pierosara suggests, gives us a model of participation within democracies, while Castoriadis indicates a link between such a view of participation and his own conception of autonomy. Pierosara argues that by bringing these views together we can conceive of a democratic political structure that takes seriously the role of the agent within a collectivity. She highlights the ways in which these two thinkers – for all their differences – articulate a theory of democracy with a number of shared characteristics, the most important of which echoes the themes brought forward by other contributors to this volume, namely that democracy cannot be defined statically, but only as a temporally placed process of construction in which the individual plays a fundamental role. This role, in Castoriadis’s view, is defined by a ‘questioning mind’ which constantly evaluates and re-evaluates established institutions and meanings.

These themes are all present in Puneet Dhaliwal’s chapter on the Zapatista movement in Mexico. He questions the very notion of governing

diversities, proposing instead that we should turn our attention to an attempt to govern *in* diversity. Rejecting the existing approaches of ‘recognition as universal dignity’ and ‘recognition as difference’, Dhaliwal advocates an approach sensitive to how identities are constructed from below. Thus the politics of recognition, as developed by Charles Taylor, must be placed in political context – through an understanding of power-relations – and in historical perspective – by seeking to analyse the processes of identity-construction. Dhaliwal adds a final element to our discussion by reminding us that it is not enough to consider the construction and articulation of democratic power from below: we must take into consideration the political structures in which that power seeks to articulate itself. It is the very act (or ‘struggle’ as Sorel might put it) of questioning those power relations and their history that constitutes democratic practices and identities.

Taken together, the chapters in this volume point to a number of ways in which the very study of the history of political thought is foundational to healthy democratic practice, especially in a context of diversity. By critically engaging with key political vocabularies, such as democracy, we not only uncover obscured political forces, but also engage in the process of self-construction, participation and contestation essential to the functioning of a political community. In the words of the Zapatistas themselves, it is crucial that ‘as we walk, we question’. In so doing, the question of governing diversities becomes rearticulated – no longer ‘how to govern diversities?’, but ‘how do diversities govern?’ As the chapters that follow tell us, it is not the answer to the question, but the process of questioning itself that is critical.





# **PART I**

## **DEMOCRACY**

# INTRODUCTION

RICHARD BOURKE

The essays that follow, in spanning ancient and modern history, offer testimony to the longevity of debate about democracy. They also demonstrate the intrinsically polemical nature of the term. Most of the surviving ancient commentary on democracy, from Herodotus and Plato to Polybius and Cicero, is critical of the phenomenon it sought to describe. This sceptical posture has continued into modern discussions, as liberal-democratic procedures became associated with undemocratic outcomes, giving rise in the nineteenth century to the pervasive notion of 'sham democracy'. This development raises the question of the relationship between ancient and modern democratic practices in striking terms. Indeed, it throws the question of what democracy is supposed to comprise into stark relief. Democracy cannot simply denominate a voting procedure, since majoritarian voting occurs in a variety of institutions that are not standardly denominated 'democracies': trade unions, for instance, might adopt democratic procedures, but they are not thought of as democracies in themselves. Democracy, in the first instance, refers to a form of state, legitimised by appeal to popular sovereignty. In modern democratic politics, moreover, popularly sovereign states are expected to be administered by democratic governments – selected through electoral competition. They are regulated, in turn, by the rule of law and bound by various constitutional procedures. On account of resort to an electoral process which selects victors from rival party organisations, democracy does still carry its original sense of 'rule by the people', but it is clear that this meaning is drastically attenuated in practice to enable it to meet the requirements of liberal restraints upon power.

Many of these restraints pre-date the emergence of modern democratic states: constitutionalism, 'monitory' arrangements, deliberative institutions and so on. Each of these distinct elements has an intricate and extended history, stretching back into the Enlightenment and Renaissance. The essays collected here, in focussing on key figures in the history of democratic thought from Xenophon through humanism to Pareto and Le Bon, and beyond these to Taylor and Castoriadis, collectively demonstrate the complex intellectual history that has determined the emergence of

modern liberal democracy, and thereby help us to discriminate among its components. This process of discrimination serves to remind us that modern democracy is a contingent combination of elements which are not all directly dependent on the will of the people. Bureaucratic organisation, the separation of powers and judicial scrutiny of the executive together exemplify this reality. The residue of ancient democracy within modern democratic governments has for this reason always had a controversial status: on the one hand, it has often been charged with subjecting the spirit of modern liberty to popular tyranny; on the other hand, it has frequently been taken to expose the poverty of democracy in modern representative regimes. The imaginative and searching essays presented below by a group of innovative young scholars illustrate the extent to which this controversy continues among a new generation of historians and political theorists.

# LACONISM AND DEMOCRACY: RE-READING THE *LAKEDAIMONIŌN POLITEIA* AND RE-THINKING XENOPHON<sup>1</sup>

CHRISTOPHER A. FARRELL

## Abstract

*The present paper proposes that circular reasoning colours the way we approach Xenophon's Lakedaimoniōn Politeia and obscures its role in Xenophon's corpus. Part one deconstructs some of the suppositional evidence underpinning the longstanding communis opinio that Xenophon was innately predisposed to reject democracy, while part two offers a new reading of the Lakedaimoniōn Politeia. This perspective considers the themes of the Lakedaimoniōn Politeia alongside Xenophon's Memorabilia and Plato's Alcibiades I, and highlights the work's unity and its capacity to rebuke members of the Athenian elite accused of laconising and subverting democracy.*

*What follows approaches ancient democracy through an alleged 'critic' of that system, Xenophon the Athenian, and proposes a new reading of his Lakedaimoniōn Politeia. As neither Athens nor its democracy is invoked explicitly therein, the treatise appears an unlikely source for reconstructing Xenophon's views on democracy. Yet the work continues to underpin the longstanding communis opinio that Xenophon was an oligarch.<sup>2</sup> The present paper challenges this view. It examines the expectations typically brought to the Lakedaimoniōn Politeia and*

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at Perspectives on Democratic Political Thought on 4 May 2010. I am grateful to Elliott Karstadt and Robin Mills for their invitation to speak, to Joanne Paul for her invitation to submit the present work for review, and to Dr. Hugh Bowden and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions. All translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Tigerstedt 1974, p. 15; Goldhill 1997, p. 4; Rebenich 1998, p. 20; Pownall 2004, p. 110; Lee 2007, p. 14; Cartledge 2009, p. 91; questioned by Gray 2007; Kroeker 2009.

*demonstrates that traditional readings rely on unsustainable assumptions of birth and background. Considered alongside Xenophon's Memorabilia and Plato's Alcibiades I, it is argued that the Lakedaimoniōn Politeia can be read as a didactic, Socratic work directed principally, though not exclusively, towards young Athenians aspiring to advise and lead the Athenian democracy.*

## I – Xenophon, Sparta and Re-creating a Theory of Ancient Democracy

Relative to the study of antiquity, the quest for a theory of ancient democracy represents a recent and ongoing pursuit. Lamenting that modern scholars had ‘rather uncritically accepted the oligarchic view of Athens’s and shocked that ‘no statement of democratic political theory’ had survived antiquity, A. H. M. Jones turned to democracy’s critics to ‘re-create’ a theory of Athenian democracy in 1953.<sup>3</sup> While the method has been questioned and ultimately refined, the desire underlying such re-creation reflects a much larger shift in the way that we now study ancient and modern manifestations of democracy and ancient authors such as Xenophon.<sup>4</sup>

### Xenophon, Aristocracy, and Democracy

Relatively little is known of Xenophon’s early life or his social and economic background. He first enters the world’s historical consciousness as a character in his own *Anabasis*, which recounts his participation in Cyrus the Younger’s unsuccessful *coup d’état* against his brother Artaxerxes, the King of Persia. Its third-person narrative records some of the events in Xenophon’s life between 401-399 BCE and briefly alludes to Xenophon’s activities before and after the campaigns it recounts.<sup>5</sup> Using these incidental vignettes and a late, flawed biography composed by Diogenes Laertius, modern commentators have endeavoured, like Diogenes

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<sup>3</sup> Jones 1953, p. 26; Scharr 1919, especially pp. 146-51, cf. Roberts 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Finley 1962, pp. 9-10; Loraux 1986; Ober 1989, et al. offer more positive reconstructions, drawn from Attic oratory; Ober 2002 returns to social criticism. **Ancient Democracy:** cf. an earlier proposal by Gernet 1983 (1948), p. 276; **Modern Democracy:** cf. de Sola Pool 1970, especially chapter three; Parsons 2007, pp. 684, 686-7 for the proliferation of democracy through the history of ideas.

<sup>5</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.1.4-10; *Anabasis*, 5.3.4-13. All dates that follow are BCE unless otherwise stated.

before them, to reconstruct a narrative beginning from Xenophon's own works.<sup>6</sup> In attempting to illuminate the shadows of Xenophon's life, however, they continue to draw on otherwise unsustainable generalisations often derived from little more than assumptions of class and background.

Scholars presume Xenophon's outlook to be 'aristocratic', though the label and his qualification as an aristocrat remain poorly, if ever, defined.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Pericles and his ward Alcibiades, or Critias and his nephew Plato, Xenophon does not fit the class of *eupatridoi* reconstructed by modern scholars. In his own works Xenophon identified himself simply, and ubiquitously, as an Athenian. The gesture forsakes his patronymic and reproduces the idealised democratic practice evident in Attic *epitaphioi*, which put communal ties before personal relationships.<sup>8</sup> Nor do any extant Athenian records reveal whether Xenophon's family held high office or were affluent enough to perform liturgies, the latter outlined by Davies as *the* criterion for 'defining membership of the Athenian upper class.'<sup>9</sup> Despite such unknowns, the mere assertion that Xenophon was an aristocrat is taken as evidence that he opposed democracy.<sup>10</sup> This view oversimplifies, misleads and ultimately exaggerates the degree to which members of the Athenian elite held, let alone supported, the same views.

In the fifth-century *Athēnaiōn Politeia*, attributed to the 'Old Oligarch', the author observed that well-born and well-to-do Athenians acted against innate self-interest to support democracy.<sup>11</sup> The orator Lysias likewise invoked the services rendered to Athens by such individuals, while Ober has suggested that the backgrounds and economic means of Athens's leaders hint at the democracy's symbiotic relationship with, if not *de facto* dependence upon, the Athenian elite for leadership.<sup>12</sup> Although meriting additional development elsewhere, Xenophon's background – the complexities of re-constructing it and its historical misuse for distilling the essence of his political thought – exceed the scope of the present paper. It shall suffice to caution that the foundations for

<sup>6</sup> Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers*, II.6 'Xenophon'.

<sup>7</sup> Strauss 1939, p. 533; cf. Bazin 1885, p. 39; Luccioni 1947, p. 108; Proietti 1987, p. xiv; Lee 2007, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> The toponymic parallels Attic *epitaphioi*. Cf. Loraux 1986, p. 23. If one accepts that a patronymic also denoted 'class, status, and political values' as Whitehead 1986, pp. 50, 71-2 and Ober 1989, p. 256 do, Xenophon's omission is potentially more significant.

<sup>9</sup> Davies 1971, p. xx.

<sup>10</sup> Bazin 1885, p. 35; Scharf 1919, p. 146ff.; Luccioni 1947, p. 142; Strauss 1948, p. 55; Moore 2010, p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> Old Oligarch, *Athēnaiōn Politeia*, 2.19.

<sup>12</sup> Lysias 16.21; 27.10; cf. Ober 1989.

reconstructing Xenophon's thought on the basis of an uncertain social and economic background, from which we then read his works, remains unsound.<sup>13</sup> Such caution is magnified by a second fallacy nourished by the first, which underpins virtually all readings of Xenophon's *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia*: the presumption that as an Athenian *aristocrat*, Xenophon was innately predisposed to reject democracy because the Athenian elite preferred Sparta.

### **Laconism and its Ancient and Modern Perceptions**

Broadly speaking laconism entailed two forms of imitation. The first, and seemingly more innocuous, concerned itself with the superficial affectation of Spartan fashions and manners.<sup>14</sup> Beginning with Cimon, Athenian 'aristocrats' are alleged to have admired, imitated, and ultimately proliferated what became the 'Spartan mirage'.<sup>15</sup> Prestel asserted that the trend was increasingly common during the Peloponnesian War among 'young Athenian aristocrats', a group traditionally thought to include Xenophon.<sup>16</sup> Yet Prestel's study relies on Plutarch's biographies that, although invaluable, were composed under the Roman Empire and so offer a perspective that may reveal more about Roman social divisions and conflicts of the first century CE than those of Athens in the fifth century BCE.<sup>17</sup>

Scholars typically develop Laconic traits from caricatures, though the embryonic jests from which they develop are in turn complex.<sup>18</sup> Such narrow focus obscures, for instance, that Aristophanes also invited Athenians to make peace with Sparta.<sup>19</sup> In the satirical *Birds*, Aristophanes observed that before the founding of the avian utopia, 'all men', had suffered from 'laconomania'. Although the joke attests to the historical phenomenon of laconising, its presentation demands additional consideration. Aristophanes highlights that 'all men' and thus not simply

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<sup>13</sup> See for example Bazin 1885, p. 39; cf. Ollier 1934, pp. xxxii-xxxiii; Luccioni 1947, p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> Tigerstedt 1965, p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> Tigerstedt 1974, p. 15; Prestel 1978, p. 41.

<sup>16</sup> Prestel 1978, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 1.1.32; 4.4.15; 4.8.18; 5.4.55; 6.4.18; 6.3.14, 7.1.44-46, where he highlights cases of political faction defined in terms of laconism and its manipulation.

<sup>18</sup> Tigerstedt 1965, pp. 123, 155; Lipka 2002, p. 121; and Rawson 1969, pp. 35, 45 enumerate the symptoms of laconism from Aristophanes' *Birds* and *Wasps*.

<sup>19</sup> See for example Aristophanes, *Acharnians*; *Lysistrata*, especially ll. 1133-4.

the elite were seduced by Sparta; second ‘laconomania’ is depicted as a trend and thus by definition ephemeral. Moreover, precisely how uniform such ‘aristocratic’ imitation of Sparta could have been remains equally uncertain given the coeval adoption of ‘Perserie’, (the imitation of Persian attire and manners).<sup>20</sup>

Although Aristophanes enumerates one alleged ‘symptom’ of laconomania as a tendency ‘to Socratise’, Plato complicates this perspective. In the *Protagoras* Socrates suggests that Spartan ascendancy relied on wisdom, specifically an education in philosophy enabled by the presence of more sophists than any other place in Greece; only deceived fools, whom Socrates himself labels ‘laconisers’, would accept and emulate what we now speak of as the ‘Spartan mirage’ and believe that by wearing Spartan attire and exercising one could replicate Spartan excellence and power.<sup>21</sup> Most disconcerting of all, however, is that it remains to be shown that Xenophon adopted or advocated such physical affectations.

Xenophon typically stands accused of a second, more serious degree of imitation that scholars suggest came to connote treason in the closing years of the fifth century.<sup>22</sup> Such ‘political laconising’ was first attributed to the sophists, themselves influential in shaping the education of the Athenian elite during the fifth century. If the sophists are understood to have promoted Sparta as a political ideal in explicit opposition to democracy, Xenophon’s own writings suggest caution.<sup>23</sup> In *On Hunting* Xenophon rejects certain Sophistic paradigms and so their views cannot simply be equated with Xenophon’s own.<sup>24</sup> More explicitly, Xenophon depicts himself opposing Spartan interests at great personal risk.<sup>25</sup> Despite such complexities, received opinion perpetuates a view of Xenophon as a committed ‘laconophile’ unequivocally opposed to democracy.<sup>26</sup>

Here the force of twentieth-century events appears. Popper adopted Athenian democracy as the embodiment of his *open society*, defined by individual freedom, while Sparta symbolised *closed society* and the

<sup>20</sup> Miller 1997, pp. 136-150; Balcer 1983, p. 260.

<sup>21</sup> Plato, *Protagoras* 342b-343a.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Azoulay 2004 p. 330 n. 15, p. 435; Bazin 1885, p. 38; Luccioni 1947, pp. 143-4; Lipka 2002, p. 4 ‘admiration’ and ‘devotion’.

<sup>23</sup> Tigerstedt 1974, p. 13; applied to Xenophon Tigerstedt 1965 p. 167, cf. Rebenich 1998, p. 18

<sup>24</sup> Xenophon, *On Hunting*, 13.1-2.

<sup>25</sup> By no means exhaustive, cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis*: 4.6.13-5; 7.1.30; 7.2.14; 7.3.3-6, 10-14, 7.6.9, also Strauss 1939, pp. 516-7; Humble 2004, p. 220.

<sup>26</sup> Gray 2004 and Kroeker 2009 are notable exceptions.



‘ancient tribal aristocracy’ from which democracy miraculously had freed humanity.<sup>27</sup> In turn, Tigerstedt equated ‘salon-Laconism’ of fifth- and fourth-century Athens with ‘its later counterparts in salon-nazism and salon-communism.’<sup>28</sup> He reiterated this view with respect to Xenophon himself, asserting that with Xenophon ‘we encounter for the first time Lycurgus the great reformer and the ideal statesman whom long afterwards men – French philosophers and revolutionaries, no less than German Nazis – admired and endeavoured to emulate’.<sup>29</sup> America’s founders are conspicuously absent.<sup>30</sup> Rather than drawing upon Athenian ideals, such views illuminate *our* collective predisposition towards modern democratic values and its emphasis on the individual in particular. The result implicitly predisposes readers to respond negatively to apparent infringements on personal liberty.<sup>31</sup> As Bowden’s study of religion in Athenian democracy rightly cautioned, however, Athens was not ‘liberal, individualistic, capitalist... [or] secularist’.<sup>32</sup>

Such expectations nevertheless continue to plague evaluations of Xenophon’s broader political thought. Citing the ‘philo-Laconian aspects’ of Xenophon’s writing, Ober implied that the Athenian was an external/rejectionist social critic.<sup>33</sup> Yet Ober offered no analysis to support this claim. Following Ober, Schofield proposed that Xenophon adopted a rejectionist stance, though he too left Xenophon’s writings untouched; his conclusions instead rely on assertions of genre.<sup>34</sup> Building on the studies

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<sup>27</sup> Popper 1945, pp. 145; 15; 88, 150-2; Tigerstedt 1965, p. 113.

<sup>28</sup> Tigerstedt 1965, p. 156.

<sup>29</sup> Tigerstedt 1965, pp. 162-3.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Adams 1787, I, letters 40, 42; on Xenophon in particular cf. Pangle 1990, p. 147 ‘probably the most widely read and cited classical political theorist at the time of the Founding’.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Luccioni 1947, p. 145; Popper 1945a, p. 159; Proietti 1987, p. 51.

<sup>32</sup> Bowden 2005, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Ober 2002, p. 50 n. 70. Cf. Ober 2002, pp. 48-51 criticism derived from a value system alien to a particular society; p. 49, n. 68 reveals that Ober conflates Walzer’s external critic with Wolin’s epic theorist and the conception of derangement cf. Wolin 1969, p. 1081, but doing so transgresses the intended bounds of Walzer’s model, which understood ‘conversion and criticism’ as ‘different activities’ Walzer 1987, pp. 44, 45, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Schofield 2006, p. 47 n. 40. Schofield 2006, pp. 37-8, 54 asserts that *politeia* writing was a ‘politically partisan activity... favoured by aristocratic admirers of Sparta: ‘Laconizers’; Kroeker 2009, p. 200 n. 20 refutes Schofield’s assertion directly, proved by nothing ‘beyond the bare statement’; Bordes 1982, p. 166-7 questioned the title and genre of the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* observing that the work is primarily descriptive and that functional political institutions are not described, while the word *politeia* appears only in the final chapter.

of Tuplin and Humble, who advocated a more balanced assessment of Xenophon's relationship with Sparta, Kroeker partly refuted the insinuations of Ober and Schofield and proposed that Xenophon 'tended strongly towards an internal/immanent critique'.<sup>35</sup> With respect to the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia*, however, Kroeker declared that the work 'exhibits a decidedly external/rejectionist stance'.<sup>36</sup> Attempting to harmonise Xenophon's corpus according to Walzerian canons, Kroeker questioned the work's authorship. While precedent for doing so exists, the work's language and style are Xenophonic, and Xenophon's intellectual context reveals that such a procrustean solution proves unnecessary.<sup>37</sup>

## II – Rethinking the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia*

Rather than severing the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* from Xenophon's corpus, we should question traditional approaches to the text. The studies of Xenophon's political and social thought and the assumption that Xenophon was an aristocrat and laconiser predate our modern re-creation of a theory of ancient democracy.<sup>38</sup> This hypothesis offers a more objective means of evaluating Xenophon's thought and reminds us that ours is an age and an intellectual climate hostile to perceived critics of democracy, whereas those preceding ours have apologised for, or agreed with, 'critics'.<sup>39</sup> Putting aside such expectations, therefore, part two of the present study proposes a new reading. It argues that: (1) the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* can be understood as a Socratic exercise to enhance self-knowledge; (2) its content and themes are consistent with those present across Xenophon's *oeuvre*; (3) its ideas are compatible with our reconstructed theory of Athenian democracy.

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Tuplin 1993, especially chapter six; Humble 2004; Lipka 2002, p. 14 contests both, though concedes Xenophon is 'not the stout, simple-minded lakonist that he was supposed to be by previous scholarship'.

<sup>36</sup> Kroeker 2009, p. 226. In antiquity Demetrius of Magnesia questioned Xenophonic authorship, cf. Ollier 1934, p. vii; while Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch accepted the work. Modern concern for authenticity arose with Valckenaer in the late eighteenth century, cf. Bazin 1885, p. 24; Lipka 2002, p. 5. Chrimes's proposal for Antisthenes's authorship has not found support, 1948, pp. 40-48; Chrimes 1949 pp. 490 *ff.*

<sup>37</sup> On linguistic and stylistic grounds, Richards 1907, pp. 41-7; 67-72; cf. Rebenich 1998, pp. 14-15; Ollier 1934, p. xi, Bordes 1982, p. 165, following Ollier 1934, pp. vii-xi and Delebecque 1957, pp. 194-9, 329-331, *et al.*

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Scharr 1919; Luccioni 1947.

<sup>39</sup> Scharr 1919, pp. 146-7.

## Uncertain Intent

The purpose of Xenophon's *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* remains contested. Some understand the work purely as praising Sparta;<sup>40</sup> others find subtle satire or explicit condemnation.<sup>41</sup> The question is ultimately more complex. Observing that both Demosthenes and Aeschines used Sparta as a paradigm to contrast the behaviour of Athenian audiences in the 350s and 340s, Yunis explained away such laconism by noting that at the time, 'Athens viewed Sparta with moderately friendly intentions'.<sup>42</sup> The qualification ought to caution that it is not simply the invocation of, or even explicit praise for, Sparta, or Spartan connections, but the context of such references that ultimately matters in assessing the tone of laconism. If we accept that political laconism was among the casualties of the Battle of Leuctra, the democracy's passive acceptance extends to at least 371, and likely earlier when Athens sought to check an ascendant Thebes.<sup>43</sup> Shortly thereafter, Xenophon himself records that Athens and Sparta became allies once more.<sup>44</sup> Thus, evaluating Xenophon's *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* as praise or satire proves less illuminating until we can discern when the text was composed and circulated.

## Date(s)

Contextualising the work ought to begin with consideration of its date, yet both the unity of the text and the date(s) of its composition(s) remain contested.<sup>45</sup> Cartledge's observation that 'chronological certainty is impossible' remains the most transparent assessment.<sup>46</sup> For, despite agreeing

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<sup>40</sup> Ollier 1934, p. 13; Luccioni 1947, pp. 139-41, 144, 152, 167; Lipka 2002, pp. 4, 10; cf. Humble 2004, p. 215.

<sup>41</sup> Strauss 1939, pp. 503, 506, 528, 531; Higgins 1977, p. 75 'an essay against tyranny'; Proietti 1987, p. 45, 50; cf. Humble 2004, p. 216.

<sup>42</sup> Yunis 1996, p. 254 n. 32; cf. Aeschines 1.179-82; Fisher 2001, p. v; Harris 1995, p. 7; Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*.

<sup>43</sup> Tigerstedt 1974, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> Xenophon *Hellenica*, 6.3.14, 18; 7.1.1-14.

<sup>45</sup> **Unity of composition** – Anderson 1964, p. 36 n. 6; Bordes 1982, pp. 198-9; Cartledge 1987, p. 57; Higgins 1977, p. 66; Meulder 1989, pp. 74, 85; Momigliano 1936; Proietti 1987, pp. 46, 74; Rebenich 1998, p. 30; Strauss 1939, pp. 522-5. **Opponents** – Bazin 1885, p. vi; Delebecque 1957, pp. 194-9; 329-31, 341 n. 18; Ollier 1934, pp. vii-xi; Luccioni 1947, pp. 173-4; MacDowell 1986, pp. 9-10; Tigerstedt 1965, p. 169.

<sup>46</sup> Cartledge 1987, p. 57; Rawson 1969, p. 33 and Gray 2007 p. 42 suggest a window c. 494-454 BC.

that the work's dateable clues appear in chapter fourteen, scholars have applied the same details to place the work in the 390s, 380s, 370s, 360s, and 350s.<sup>47</sup> Rather than investigating what a fixed date might reveal about the text's content, scholars attempt the opposite. Dates are assigned on the basis of content, and such interpretation inevitably begins from unproven expectations of laconism. More perverse, as Higgins observed in 1977, 'in an abandoning of logic', the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* is then taken to *prove* Xenophon's laconism.<sup>48</sup> Although the placement of the fourteenth chapter remains constant in our manuscript tradition, some have joined it to chapter one or swapped it with fifteen.<sup>49</sup> Such manipulation suggests that wherever the section belongs, it represents a later addition. As Bianco notes, however, accepting the dates proposed for the work on the basis of chapter fourteen proves unwise when the very unity of the work remains contested.<sup>50</sup> We must therefore concede that no objective means of dating the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* presently exist beyond placing it in the first half of the fourth century.

### Audience and Circulation

Ascertaining the immediate circulation, reception and purpose of the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* appears an equally tortuous task. Its proposed recipients vary as widely as its possible composition date(s). The present spectrum ranges from all Greeks<sup>51</sup> to just one, Callias the Athenian.<sup>52</sup> In

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<sup>47</sup> Chrimes 1948, p. 17; Rebenich 1998, p. 26; Humble 2004, p. 215; Gray 2007, p. 42. **390s:** Bazin 1885, pp. iii, 36; Rebenich 1998, pp. 24-5; Bianco 1996, pp. 23-4; Lipka 2002, p. 13 but chapter 14 dated between 394 and 371 p. 10; Ollier 1934, pp. xxi uncertain, xxix though on the assumption of a tone of anger at Athens dates chapter fourteen to 378. **380s:** c. 388-80 Delebecque 1957, p. 195; c. 386/5 Luccioni 1947, p. 165; **370s:** 378 - Momigliano 1936, pp. 172-3; Higgins 1977, p. 163, n. 68; Meulder 1989, p. 81 c. 377-71; 371 Breitenbach 1967, col. 1752; **360s:** Gray 2007, p. 43; **350s:** Jaegar 1986, pp. 326 n. 56; 344 n. 170; Cartledge 1987, p. 57.

<sup>48</sup> Higgins 1977, p. 66.

<sup>49</sup> **One:** Chrimes 1948, p. 7, cf. Lipka 2002, p. 29 Chrimes extends the argument of Wulff 1884, pp. 44-49, 53 ff., 59 ff.; **Fifteen:** Bazin 1885, pp. vi, 268-71; Ollier 1934, p. ix, xii-xiii, xvi; Luccioni 1947, p. 168 n. 179.

<sup>50</sup> Bianco 1996, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> Luccioni 1947, pp. 170-1 as propaganda; Tigerstedt 1965, p. 168, though especially Athens; Rebenich 1998 pp. 24-5 all Greeks under Spartan influence; Gray 2007, p. 43 suggests that smaller *poleis* could apply its message and model for reform.

<sup>52</sup> Meulder 1989, pp. 82, 86; cf. Bianco 1996, p. 17.

between, one finds proposals that the work was directed towards all Athenians,<sup>53</sup> ‘aristocratic’ Athenian youths,<sup>54</sup> those who thought that they educated their young nobly,<sup>55</sup> laconophiles<sup>56</sup> and critics of Agesilaus.<sup>57</sup> Expectations of Xenophon’s Spartan bias are again apparent. It is often understood as a piece of pro-Spartan propaganda composed to justify Spartan hegemony,<sup>58</sup> or Xenophon’s association with Sparta during the Corinthian War (395-87).<sup>59</sup> The latter conflict remains central to the unresolved debate over the cause and date of Xenophon’s exile. Yet many who understand the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* as propaganda also have proposed that, although drafted early in the fourth century, the work (along with its later additions) was published only posthumously, i.e. after 354.<sup>60</sup> If correct, the work’s alleged force as propaganda dissipates, along with its supposed anti-democratic tone. For, as Yunis’s assessment of Demosthenes and Aeschines reiterates, Greek audiences would have understood the treatise differently in the 350s when the geo-political landscape of Greece had changed and fewer tensions between Athens and Sparta existed.<sup>61</sup> As Xenophon himself offers no dedication or explanation of the work’s intended beneficiaries, and we are wholly ignorant of the work’s initial reception, each interpretation holds merit. Yet by suspending pro-Spartan expectations and contextualizing the work’s themes alongside other Xenophontic works an altogether different emphasis emerges.

### **The *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia*: The Proem**

Xenophon’s proem outlines a hypothesis explored throughout the work. Spartan ascendancy resulted from their *epitādeumata* (ways of living). The suggestion recalls the funeral orations presented by Pericles in Thucydides and Socrates in the *Menexenus*, where both understand the quality of citizens to reflect the quality of the *politeia* producing them.<sup>62</sup> The proem

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<sup>53</sup> Ollier 1934, p. xxviii as a challenge to Athenians; Chrimes 1948, p. 32 claimed that its dialect is Attic and thus it is ‘virtually certain’; Tigerstedt 1965, p. 168; Rawson 1969, p. 33; Lipka 2002, pp. 13, 32, 132, followed by Kroeker 2009, p. 203 n. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Lipka 2002, p. 32; Chrimes 1948, p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> Proietti 1987, p. 49.

<sup>56</sup> Chrimes 1948, pp. 30-2.

<sup>57</sup> Meulder 1989, p. 81; though Lipka 2002, p. 13 rejects a Spartan audience.

<sup>58</sup> Ollier 1934 pp. xviii, xxi ff. xxix; Luccioni 1947, pp. 160, 163, 165, 171.

<sup>59</sup> Specifically his presence at the Battle of Coroneia in 394; cf. Lipka 2002, p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Lipka 2002, p. 37; Ollier 1934, pp. xvi-xvii; Luccioni 1947, pp. 173-4.

<sup>61</sup> Yunis 1996.

<sup>62</sup> Thucydides 2.34 ff., Plato, *Menexenus* 478c-d.

and summative transitions at *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* 5.1 and 11.1 suggest that the work comprises five main parts after 1.2: (1) practices specific to age groups (1.3-4.7); (2) practices applicable to all (5.2-10.8); (3) martial practices (11.2-13.10); (4) an assessment of the continuity of Spartan habits (14); and (5) Spartan kingship as the lone uninterrupted practice (15). Combined with Xenophon's *Agésilas* and *Cyropaedia*, the work offers an idealised account of the 'nurture' and 'education' of Spartan and Persian rivals. Its content therefore supplements the knowledge outlined by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's *Alcibiades I*. In both Socrates guides ambitious Athenians to acquire self-knowledge and to become *useful* citizens, that is to enhance Athenian democracy and its standing in Hellas.

Although no immediate link between Plato's *Alcibiades I* and Xenophon's *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia* exists, Xenophon's work offers an Athenian audience precisely the same means of acquiring political self-knowledge that Plato's Socrates offers Alcibiades.<sup>63</sup> In the *Alcibiades I*, Plato outlines an educational paradigm for attaining self-knowledge to enable Alcibiades to successfully rival Athenian adversaries.<sup>64</sup> Not yet twenty years old, Alcibiades intends to speak in the assembly immanently and aspires to lead the democracy.<sup>65</sup> Despite his confidence in his innate advantages, namely wealth, birth and an education that surpassed Athenian competitors, Socrates chides Alcibiades that he is unprepared to enter political life.<sup>66</sup> It is not the Athenian demagogues, but the kings of Sparta and Persia who represent the true adversaries of Athens and thus of Alcibiades himself. Success requires besting domestic *and* foreign rivals. Socrates' reasoning is straightforward. Athens goes to war with both polities and so competes with both to win power and prestige.<sup>67</sup> Although Plato's Socrates offers an overview of the lineages,<sup>68</sup> educations<sup>69</sup> and wealth<sup>70</sup> of the Kings of Sparta and Persia, he curtails a fuller discussion of the 'nurture' and 'education' of Alcibiades' adversaries as doing so proves

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<sup>63</sup> Denyer 2001, p. 11 dates Plato's *Alcibiades I* to the 350s; the proposed range covers 390 to the 350s.

<sup>64</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 124b-c.

<sup>65</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 105a-106c.

<sup>66</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 118b-c.

<sup>67</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 124a-b; 120a.

<sup>68</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 120e, 121a.

<sup>69</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 121e-122e.

<sup>70</sup> Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 122e-123c.