

Xenophon's *Cynegeticus* promotes hunting as an ideal form of education. Striking shifts in the treatise's style have raised some doubts about its unity and attribution to Xenophon. This paper, however, argues that Xenophon appropriates sophistic styles to draw a comparison between sophistry and the education which he considers to be *philosophia*. Much like Isocrates' *Helen*, Xenophon's treatise on hunting demonstrates the superiority of its author to his literary competitors through parody and corrective imitation.

The unity and authenticity of the *Cynegeticus* have been suspect since L. Radermacher took its varied style to be proof of later revision (*RhM* 51 596-629 and 52 13-41). Yet, V.J. Gray has shown that other writings of Xenophon contain all the styles represented in the *Cynegeticus*, and she argues that the treatise has an overarching unity like that of Hesiod's *Works and Days* (*Hermes* 113 156-172). But while Gray plays down Xenophon's closing critique of sophistry as conventional, I argue that it brings into focus a comparison between Xenophon and the sophists that recurs throughout the treatise. In its structure, the *Cynegeticus* resembles Isocrates' *Helen*, another work considered to lack unity (Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3.14.1414b). While Isocrates improves on the epideictic speeches that he criticizes in the preface with show-pieces of his own (T. Papillon, *CJ* 91 377-391), Xenophon's closing tirade against the sophists distinguishes his *Cynegeticus* from its rhetorical models.

By making hunting a paradigm of *paideia* and praising *philosophia* on the same terms, the *Cynegeticus* demonstrates Xenophon's pedagogical principles and uses them to justify his manner of writing. Advising young men "not to despise hunting nor the rest of education" (1.18), he indicates his rhetorical aim and method. He will later tell how sophists so abuse the practice of teaching that many could feel right to despise learning itself. But through the example of hunting—a most traditional pursuit for young men—Xenophon defends the value of *paideia*.

Paradoxically, Xenophon derives the form of that defense from sophistic writings: the *Cynegeticus* likely owes its form not just to Hesiod but also to the technical treatises of Protagoras (like the one on wrestling mentioned at Plato's *Sophist* 232d). This genre-conscious construction, along with the imitations of Gorgianic, Hippocratic, and technical styles, demonstrates Xenophon's knowledge of his competitors' practices. In contrast to their empty verbiage, though, Xenophon promotes hunting as a paradigm for education, noting its history as a study for young heroes (1.1-17), its status as the *paideia* students engage in first (2.1), and its efficacy as a preparation for all the most important pursuits (Ch. 12-13). When Xenophon relates the charge that hunting distracts young men from household affairs (12.10), the paradigm faces an attack made on all forms of *paideia*. As in the case of Isocrates' *Helen*, the defense of style and rhetorical aims in the *Cynegeticus* can serve as a general guide to Xenophon's writing and pedagogy.