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### Xenophon's "Noble Barbarian": Pharnabazos in the *Hellenika*

The Persian satrap Pharnabazos is one of the most memorable characters of Xenophon's *Hellenika*, in which he is mentioned more often than any individual except Agesilaos. Like his satrapal colleague and rival Tissaphernes in the history of Thucydides, Xenophon's Pharnabazos stands out as a Persian of great importance in a Greek historical work that has relatively little concern with Persia (Giraud 1999, 120-21).

What has struck modern scholars most about Pharnabazos is the sympathetic treatment given him by Xenophon, particularly in comparison with the arch-villain Tissaphernes. Most modern commentators have taken this apparently favorable portrayal of Pharnabazos, above all in his famous meeting with Agesilaos (*HG* 4.1.27-33), at face value. Pharnabazos has been cited often as primary evidence for Xenophon's admiration of traditional Persian aristocratic values, despite his criticisms of the Achaemenid empire in his own day (Hirsch 1985, 22; Gray 1989, 54-58). Xenophon, though, was well aware of the flaws of his most heroic characters, as scholars have recognized in his treatment of Agesilaos (Tuplin 1993, 58; Dillery 1995, 114-19).

I intend to discuss several instances in which Xenophon paints a negative picture of Pharnabazos, giving him many of the faults that the historian attributes to other Persian contemporaries. In his mistreatment of subordinates, his hunger for power, and his scheming against the Ten Thousand, Pharnabazos shows a distinct similarity to characters like Tissaphernes. Xenophon stops short of outright condemnation, though, and does not mention the worst transgression attributed to Pharnabazos by fourth-century writers, the assassination of Alkibiades (although he may hint at it in his discussion of an oath-exchange at *HG* 1.3.10-12).

Despite Pharnabazos' misdeeds, he does live up to positive Xenophontic standards on key occasions in the *Hellenika*. He does not allow a serious defeat to discourage him as it does his Spartan allies, and makes arrangements to rebuild the Spartan fleet when its own admirals have no idea how to improve the situation (1.1.23-26). He keeps an oath to Athenian envoys despite pressure from Cyrus the Younger to do otherwise (1.4.5-7). Above all, in the conference with Agesilaos during the later Spartan war with Persia, he deliberately puts aside Persian luxury (4.1.30) and shames the Spartans to silence by denouncing their ingratitude (4.1.31-33). He refuses to desert his royal master, not out of slavish fear of the King, but because of his own *philotimia*, which will drive him to make war on the Spartans to the best of his ability if he is honored with high command (4.1.37).

I will argue that this high moment for Pharnabazos is not the simple result of Xenophon's admiration for the Persian noble. Xenophon downplays his flaws in this episode in order to highlight the faults of the Spartans, a central theme of his historical project. Pharnabazos is a foil, his interaction with the Spartan king allowing Xenophon to illuminate the reasons for Agesilaos' failure in Asia Minor. Ultimately, Pharnabazos is most important for Xenophon as a tool for exploring the behavior of Greek historical characters, not the state of the fourth-century Achaemenid empire.