

My paper analyzes the narration and structure of Plutarch's *Agesilaos* in comparison with Xenophon's *Agesilaos* and *Hellenika* and focuses particularly upon the treatment of the Spartan king's ascension in each of the works. That Plutarch employed Xenophon's works as a source in composing the *bios* of Agesilaos is clear from a comparison of the several works, and this is especially marked when examining Plutarch's story of the ascension alongside *Hell.* 3. 3. 2-4. The differences between the treatments of the story, however, are just as obvious as the similarities and indeed are even more significant. In this study, I elucidate how the treatment of a single event can be so different depending on the literary demands of genre; be it a work of historiography, encomium, or biography. Where Xenophon aims to place Agesilaos among many others within a historical context in the *Hellenika*, for example, and praise Agesilaos uncritically in the encomium, Plutarch rather portrays the effects of the king's character upon the political events during the fourth century B.C.E. in his biography.

In this comparative study, I show that Plutarch makes crucial choices in selecting and arranging the available material. Plutarch essentially reverses Xenophon's arrangement of the events of the ascension from the *Hellenika* and transfers the interpretation of the oracle from Lysander, as Xenophon presented it, to Agesilaos, and thereby makes the new king's role in his own ascension practically a footnote. I posit that the reason for this switch is Plutarch's gradual development of the theme of Agesilaos' personal relationships in the *bios* and the effects of these upon his life and decision-making. The literary motivations of Plutarch in this work become even more evident after we consider his rejection of his own version of events as biased in the *Synkrisis*. The effect of literary demands of genres upon the narration of this event is further explored in Xenophon's *Agesilaos*. Here, the controversy over the king's rise is summarily treated and dismissed in order to downplay that there was any controversy at all. The variant versions of the ascension reflect not the quest for historical "truth" by the authors, but rather the divergent literary agendas in each work.

My analysis of Plutarch's *Agesilaos* demonstrates that the work is far more than a representation of Xenophonic materials and that it is rather Plutarch's literary aims that dictate how he selects and arranges events in his *bios*. His story about Agesilaos penetrates into the character and motivations of the king, including his personal relationships, which shaped the course of Spartan and Greek history in the fourth century B.C.E. It was the effects of Agesilaos' character upon the historical events that Plutarch sought to portray in the biography, and this literary aim demanded a different presentation than those supplied in Xenophon's history or encomium.