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Leaders Managing Negative Emotions: The Episode Between Cyrus and Cyaxares in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*

Case

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Abstract

In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon (431–354 B.C.) recounts the life and deeds of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire (600–530 B.C.). Throughout this work Cyrus is depicted as an extremely ambitious and talented man, who manages to rule the Persians and many other nations with their consent. The theme of leadership and emotional intelligence is particularly apt in this context, since Xenophon provides valuable information not only about Cyrus' emotions, but also about how he handles the emotions of his followers, allies, enemies, and rivals.

This case study focuses on a famous episode of the *Cyropaedia*, the encounter between the Persian prince, Cyrus, and his uncle, the Median King Cyaxares (5.5). The Median King expresses his discontent towards his nephew because the latter succeeded in gaining the affection of his people, the Medes, a fact that makes Cyaxares feel utterly dishonored. This section of the *Cyropaedia* is replete with emotions: anger, stress, shame, envy, jealousy, and friendship are either explicitly mentioned or indirectly expressed. Xenophon also presents a lengthy conversation between Cyrus and Cyaxares, in the course of which Cyrus attempts to mitigate his uncle's negative emotions. This section of the *Cyropaedia* deserves close scrutiny, not only because of the plethora of emotions it stages but also because it can give rise to several reflections on the ways that leaders can handle negative emotions. This case study encourages students to reflect on negative emotions leaders arouse and the ways they resolve tensions deriving from these emotions.

Case

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this case study students will be able to:

- identify the various emotions that determine the relationship between two leaders, Cyrus and Cyaxares;
- distinguish between explicitly displayed emotions and hidden emotions and consider their implications for leadership;
- detect theoretical reflections on emotions in the respective speeches of Cyrus and Cyaxares;
- evaluate the means by which a leader can mitigate (and even partly transform) negative emotions and assess the leader's emotional intelligence;
- consider to what extent a leader's managing of negative emotions contributes to his own individual and/or communal good;
- establish comparisons between ancient and modern leaders on the topic of envy, considering the question of how usual it is that modern leaders (in politics or in an organization) express openly their negative emotions.

Overview of the Historical Setting of the Case[1]

Xenophon is one of the most important authors of classical Greece. He was born in Athens around 431 B.C. As an aristocrat, he was fond of horses and hunting, and he cherished conservative ideals, such as order and discipline, moderation, and temperance. He is also famous for writing a plethora of works of different genres

(historiography, biography, encomium, treatise, philosophical dialogue) and for using a simple and accessible language.

Xenophon was not a typical Athenian as he admired Sparta, Athens' long-standing enemy (he was a friend of the Spartan king Agesilaus). He also appeared rather adventurous in his decision to follow the Persian king Cyrus the Younger in Persia as a mercenary, in an expedition against King Artaxerxes II (in 401 B.C.). At the time, ancient Greeks had some experience with Persia through various commercial exchanges and, most importantly, through their involvement in the Persian Wars. In these wars, they had fought with the Persians in the 5th century B.C. (490–479 B.C.) and had been victorious. During the 4th century B.C. the Persians continued to intervene in Greek affairs (Vlassopoulos, 2013). Through his participation in the expedition of Cyrus the Younger, Xenophon had closer contact with Persians and thus acquired knowledge of the history of the Persian Empire. It was during this expedition that he probably heard stories and was acquainted with oral tradition concerning Cyrus the Great.

Cyrus the Great had lived in the 6th century B.C. and was a successful military leader with the reputation of being a benevolent king who had liberated the Persians from the Medes and founded the Persian Empire. Other Greek authors, such as the historians Herodotus and Ctesias and the philosopher Antisthenes, had also written about the life of Cyrus the Great. But Xenophon provided the most detailed account of Cyrus' life and deeds in his work *Cyropaedia*.

The *Cyropaedia* recounts the life and deeds of Cyrus the Great, from his early childhood till his death. It constitutes a very thorough account of Cyrus' life (eight books, around 400 pages of translated text) and is considered a forerunner of the biography genre. This text also contains detailed advice and theoretical reflections on issues of leadership. That is why it exerted a great influence in later times, especially on the formation of the so-called *Mirrors of Princes* of the Renaissance. Xenophon differentiates himself from other Greek authors: he does not depict Cyrus liberating the Persians from the Medes but rather presents harmonious relationships between the two peoples. According to Xenophon's version, Cyrus is the son of the Persian Cambyses and the Median Mandane. During his childhood he spends time in the court of his Median grandfather, Astyages, and then returns to Persia to complete his education until his adolescence. However, a glimpse of the rivalry between Persians and Medes can be detected in the section discussed in this case, which recounts the encounter between Cyrus and Cyaxares. In this section Cyrus is still a young prince; he has not yet become the king of Persia. Cyaxares is Median; he is his uncle, the brother of his mother, Mandane. The section under study narrates how Cyaxares experiences jealousy and envy for Cyrus' success as a leader and how Cyrus manages to mitigate these emotions.

It is also worth noting that Xenophon was a pupil of the Athenian philosopher Socrates, who was condemned to death by the Athenians in 399 B.C. Xenophon believed that this condemnation was unjust, and he devoted some of his works to the defense of Socrates' memory. In his so-called 'Socratic works' he presents Socrates as the epitome of virtue.[2] Throughout his works, Xenophon frequently praises Socratic virtues (such as temperance, moderation, self-control, and benevolence). Moreover, Xenophon presents the characters of his works (not only Socrates, but also other figures, such as Cyrus, as described below) using *Socratic dialectics*. In this method, consecutive questions and answers are used to challenge underlying assumptions (or even prejudice) and to foster critical thinking (Hintikka, 2007, Fink, 2012).

Part 1: Managing Negative Emotions Through Rational Arguments (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.1–5.1.12)

The episode between Cyrus and Cyaxares is emblematic of how leaders can handle negative emotions expressed by their rivals. The concept of negative emotions is a modern development. Various attempts have been made by psychologists to define negative emotions and to distinguish between negative and positive

emotions. Negative emotions include, for example, stress, anxiety, envy, anger, jealousy, embarrassment, regret, disgust, sadness, and irritation, as opposed to positive emotions, which encompass joy, relief, happiness, love, and contentment. Negative emotions are usually conceived as painful, in contrast with positive emotions, which are considered to produce a pleasant effect. According to another definition, negative emotions usually involve interpreting something as being against one's wishes. Interestingly, modern studies do not dwell only on the negative effects of negative emotions, but also on their positive role: for example, expressing a negative emotion, such as anger or jealousy, can foster intimacy and contribute to the resolution of a conflict or misunderstanding; in a similar vein, experiencing a negative emotion, such as stress, can help people to be more responsible and successful (Gerrod Parrot, 2014).

This case study discusses a long section of Book 5 of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (Xenophon, 2001, pp. 168–175), which provides the opportunity to reflect on negative emotions experienced by people within Cyrus' entourage and how, in general, leaders can handle those emotions. Cyrus is a young prince with extraordinary leadership qualities. Before ascending to the Persian throne, he gained the friendship and alliance of many nations. Moreover, both the Persians and the Medes willingly follow him in all his expeditions, trusting him entirely and admiring his strategic and military skills. Cyaxares is the Median king and Cyrus' uncle. He does not view Cyrus' popularity positively, especially since the Medes who were formerly under his control have now abandoned him in order to serve Cyrus.

Xenophon describes Cyaxares' psychological situation as follows:

> When Cyaxares saw many noble and good troops following Cyrus, yet with himself a retinue both small and of little worth, it seemed to him to be something dishonourable, and he was seized by grief. When Cyrus got down from his horse and approached in order to kiss him according to custom, Cyaxares got down from his horse but turned away. He did not kiss him but was crying visibly. (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.6; Xenophon, 2001, p. 169)

Cyrus wishes to resolve this tension. He takes Cyaxares away from the troops and speaks to him as follows:

> "Tell me, by the gods, uncle," he said, "why are you angry at me, and what harsh sight do you see that you are so harshly disposed?" (Xen. *Cyr*. 5.5.8–9; Xenophon, 2001, p. 169)

Cyaxares then describes in detail his emotional situation. He feels ashamed as a king because Cyrus appears greater than him:

> "Because, Cyrus, I think that I am a natural descendant of a father who was a king and of ancestors [who were kings] for as far back as the memory of human beings reaches, and I believe that I myself am a king. Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this humiliating and unworthy fashion, and I see you present here, great and magnificent, accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power. I think that it is harsh to suffer these things even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them: I think that it would be more pleasant to sink into the earth ten times than to be seen so humiliated and to see my own troops neglecting me and laughing at me. I am not ignorant of this, that not only are you greater than I, but even my slaves are stronger than I in this present encounter, and they have been so prepared that they have the power to do me more harm than they can suffer at my hands." (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.8-9; Xenophon, 2001, pp. 169-170)

While he expresses these emotions, Cyaxares continues weeping. Cyrus' eyes are filled with tears, too. Yet he tries to mitigate his uncle's negative emotions by putting forth rational arguments. First, he pragmatically advises his uncle not to be angry with many people at once (in this case all the Medes), because this entails the risk of uniting these people against him. Second, concerning Cyaxares' personal grudge towards Cyrus, Cyrus declares that it stems from a misinterpretation of his intentions:

> "That you believe you have been unjustly treated by me, however, I take ill-if working as much as is within my power to do as many good things for my friends as is possible, I then seem to have accomplished the opposite of this." (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.12; Xenophon, 2001, p. 170)

Questions to Consider

a. Which of the emotions experienced by Cyaxares is, in your opinion, most predominant? Are there emotions that are not explicitly mentioned?
b. In what ways are Cyaxares' negative emotions described? Are there different nuances (or different emphases) in the terms used? Would different emphases point to different perceptions of negative emotions by different people (e.g., by the narrator, by Cyaxares, and by Cyrus)?
c. Concerning Cyaxares' self-awareness and expression of negative emotions, can you make a comparison with modern leaders? Is it usual that modern leaders (e.g., political leaders or business managers) express negative emotions so openly?
d. How would you evaluate Cyrus' response from a strategic point of view? Does it have the potential to mitigate his uncle's negative emotions?

Part 2: Managing Negative Emotions Through Socratic Dialectics (Xen. *Cyr*. 5.1.13–34).

Apart from his military qualities, Cyrus is depicted in the *Cyropaedia* as also possessing considerable dialectical skills, especially those of a Socratic type. These qualities are displayed in several episodes in the *Cyropaedia*. For example, like Socrates, Cyrus often poses leading questions and invites his interlocutors to provide specific answers by which they eventually agree with him on a specific topic (Gera, 1993, pp. 98–108). Cyrus applies the same Socratic method with Cyaxares, too. In order to mitigate his uncle's negative emotions, he embarks on a conversation with him that has the form of a common inquiry:

> "But let us not blame ourselves so pointlessly. Rather, if it is possible, let us see most clearly what sort of unjust act I have committed…come then…let us examine one by one all the things I have done. In this way both what is good and what is bad will be especially clear." (Xen. Cyr. 5.5.13, 5.5.15; Xenophon, 2001, pp. 170–171)

Through consecutive questions that recall previous episodes in which Cyrus had displayed reverence and obedience to Cyaxares, Cyrus makes his uncle concede that he has been benefited, rather than harmed, by Cyrus. Cyaxares appears bewildered and remains silent (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.20, 5.5.21). This gives Cyrus the opportunity to counter his uncle's main complaint about attracting the goodwill of the Medes. Cyrus emphasizes the fact that *he persuaded them* to follow him:

> "I asked that you grant me anyone who wished to follow along. Obtaining this from you would accomplish nothing, if I did not persuade them. I went, therefore, and tried to *persuade* them, and with those whom I *persuaded*, I marched, since you had allowed it. If you believe that this deserves blame, then, as it appears, it is not even blameless to accept from you what you give." (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.21–22; Xenophon, 2001, pp. 171–172, my emphasis)

Finally, Cyrus exposes the military successes achieved through his initiatives and his collaboration with Cyaxares that prove, in his view, that his actions overall were beneficial both for the Persians and for Cyaxares:

> "The greatest and most noble thing of all is that you see your country being enlarged and your enemies being diminished; you see your enemies' forts occupied; those of yours that previously ended up under the power of the Syrians you now see, in opposite fashion, have come over to you. If there is in these events some evil for you, or something that is not good for you, I do not know how I could say that I wish to learn it; nothing prevents me from listening, however." (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.24; Xenophon, 2001, p. 172)

He then invites his uncle to consider all these issues.

Cyaxares delivers a long speech in which he depicts in greater detail his emotional situation. He states that Cyrus' successes are a burden for him and also makes the extraordinary declaration that he would be less displeased to see the Medes a bit wronged by Cyrus than being so greatly benefited by him (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.27). In order to explicate more his emotional situation, he invites Cyrus to ponder some analogies: how would Cyrus react if somebody made his dogs more familiar with him than with their master? How would he feel if somebody gained the goodwill of his attendants, attracting them to his side and alienating them from their master? How would he feel if somebody ever courted his wife? How would he feel if somebody took off from him his most valuable possessions, just because he happened to tell him to take what he wants? (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5. 28-32).

After the enumeration of these analogies, Cyaxares stresses once again the fact that Cyrus' attitude and achievements make him feel deprived of honor. He even compares himself with a woman:

> "Now, however, if I have not suffered this at your hands, Cyrus, I think I have suffered something similar. Admit the truth: When I said to lead those who were willing to go, you took my entire power and left, leaving me deserted. And what you took with my power, now, of course, you bring to me, and my country you enlarge with my power. Since I am in no way responsible for these blessings, I seem to offer myself up to be treated well, like a woman, and both to other human beings and to these my subordinates you appear a man and I unworthy of rule. Do these seem to you to be good deeds, Cyrus? Be assured that if you cared for me at all, you would guard against depriving me of nothing so much as my dignity and honour. What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonoured?" (Xen. *Cyr*. 5.5.33-34; Xenophon, 2001, p. 173)

Questions to Consider

- e. In your opinion, is Cyrus' strategy of mitigating Cyaxares' negative emotions successful?
- f. What emotions does Cyaxares' response reveal? Does Cyaxares experience other, not explicitly mentioned, emotions? Which emotion is, in your opinion, most predominant?
- g. What is the role of gender in Cyaxares' understanding of power and honor?

Part 3: Managing Negative Emotions Through Gestures (Xen. *Cyr*. 5.5.35-44)

In this section Cyrus seems to change his strategy. He abandons dialectical speech and resorts to emotional appeal. First, he interrupts his uncle while he is still talking and makes the following exclamation:

> "By the gods, uncle, if I ever gratified you before in anything, gratify me now in what I ask. For the time being, stop blaming me. When you get more evidence of how we are disposed toward you, then, if what I have done comes to light as having been done for your good, greet me in turn when I greet you and believe me to be a benefactor, but if the reverse, blame me then." (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.35; Xenophon, 2001, pp. 173-174)

Cyaxares seems to agree. Second, Cyrus asks from his uncle to allow him to kiss him. Cyaxares agrees on that, too (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.36). Third, Cyrus orders the Medes to appear before Cyaxares and offer him presents (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.39). This technique seems effective. Xenophon notes that "Cyaxares consequently *changed his mind* and did not think any longer that Cyrus was leading the Medes to revolt from him or that the Medes were paying him any less attention than before" (Xen. *Cyr*. 5.5.40; Xenophon, 2001, p. 174). Finally, Cyrus declines Cyaxares' invitation for dinner, but at the same time urges Cyaxares to have dinner himself and also gives him detailed advice:

> "But especially since you have come a long way, have your dinner now. If some come and honour you, greet them in turn, and entertain them so that they may have confidence in you. I shall leave and turn to what I mentioned." (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.42; Xenophon, 2001, p. 174)

After having settled the issue with his uncle, Cyrus invites his close friends and provides them instructions for the upcoming expeditions (Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.44).

Questions to Consider

- h. What does Cyrus' change of strategy tell us about Cyrus' emotional intelligence?
- i. What does Cyaxares' response tell us about his emotional situation? What are the factors that contributed to its change?
- j. Could the fact that Cyrus advises Cyaxares suggest that the superiority of Cyrus is now more established than before?
- k. In your opinion, did Cyrus manage to eliminate his uncle's negative emotions?

Discussion Questions

The Appendix contains selected passages from the *Cyropaedia* that will be useful to students in answering the following Discussion Questions. The entries in the Appendix are numbered, with the numbers corresponding to the Discussion Question numbers.

1. What are the most important emotions that you detect in this case study and how are they focalized? In which ways are they expressed?
2. Can you trace theoretical reflections on the emotions in this case study?
3. Does Cyaxares' self-awareness contribute to his effectiveness as a leader?
4. Analyze Cyrus' emotional intelligence: to what type of leadership does it correspond and how effective is it? Does Cyrus manage to mitigate, eliminate, or superficially handle his uncle's negative emotions?
5. What does Cyrus gain by handling his uncle's negative emotions? (e.g., personal good, communal good, etc.)
6. Establish a comparison with modern political leaders: could the emotions (or some of the emotions) found in the section under study be relevant also in modern discussions on leadership? How often do modern leaders express negative emotions? For instance, when a politician loses an election, his disappointment may be manifest in his face, but perhaps he would not explicitly say: "I am disappointed." What does this mean about our culture? Are we more disinclined to express negative emotions?
7. Imagine that you are a supervisor at a company and that you hire a young and promising employee with many credentials and communication qualities. Will you feel threatened by this person? If yes, will you express openly your negative emotion? How will you try to handle the situation?
8. Imagine that you are recently hired in a company and that you possess many more qual-

ifications than your colleagues and even your supervisor. Will you consider this situation potentially risky or problematic? How will you try to handle it?

Appendix

The following are selected passages from the *Cyropaedia* that will be useful for student responses to the Discussion Questions. The numbers below correspond to the Discussion Questions.

1.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.8–10:

> When Cyaxares saw many noble and good troops following Cyrus, yet with himself a retinue both small and of little worth, it seemed to him to be something dishonourable (*atimon ti*), and he was seized by grief (*achos*). When Cyrus got down from his horse and approached in order to kiss him according to custom, Cyaxares got down from his horse but turned away. He did not kiss him but was crying visibly. Cyrus next bade all the others stand apart and be at ease, and he himself took Cyaxares' right hand and led him away off the road and under some palm trees. He ordered some Median rugs to be put down for him, and he sat him down; then sitting down beside him, he said the following: "Tell me, by the gods, uncle," he said, "why are you angry at me (*ti moi orgizei*), and what harsh sight do you see that you are so harshly disposed (*chalepōs phereis*)?"
>
> Then Cyaxares answered, "Because, Cyrus, I think that I am a natural descendant of a father who was a king and of ancestors [who were kings] for as far back as the memory of human beings reaches, and I believe that I myself am a king. Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this humiliating and unworthy fashion (*tapeinōs kai anaxiōs*), and I see you present here, great and magnificent (*megan te kai megaloprepē*), accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power. I think that it is harsh to suffer these things (*peponthenai*) even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them: I think that it would be more pleasant to sink into the earth ten times than to be seen so humiliated (*tapeinōs*) and to see my own troops neglecting me and laughing at me. I am not ignorant of this, that not only are you greater (*meizōn)* than I, but even my slaves are stronger than I in this present encounter, and they have been so prepared that they have the power to do me more harm than they can suffer at my hands." And as he was saying this, he was still more overcome by tears, so that he also led Cyrus' eyes to be filled with tears (Xenophon, 2001, pp. 169–170).

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.25–27 (Cyaxares speaking):

> "But Cyrus, I do not know how one could say that the things you have done are bad. Be well assured, however, that they are good in such a way that the more numerous they appear, the more they oppress me (*barunei*), for I would wish to make your country greater by my power rather than to see mine so enlarged by you, for your deeds are noble to you who do them, but somehow the same deeds bring dishonour (*atimian*) to me. And as for valuables and the way you are now giving them to me, I think it would be more pleasant to bestow them upon you than to receive them from you like this, for being enriched in them by you, I perceive even more those things in which I am becoming ever more impoverished. And I think that if I should see my subordinates unjustly treated by you, at least in small things, it would cause me less pain (*lupeisthai*) than seeing now that they have experienced great goods at your hands." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 172).

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.29–32 (Cyaxares speaking):

> "If I seem to you to lack judgment in the way I take these things to heart, put yourself in my situation, and then see how they appear to you. If you were raising dogs to guard yourself and what belongs to you, and if someone were attentive to them and thereby made them more familiar to himself than to you, would he delight you by this attention? If this seems to you to be a small matter, consider this: If someone should so dispose your attendants, whom you maintain for the sake of your protection and military expeditions, such that they wish to be his rather than yours, would you owe him gratitude in return for this good deed? What about this, which human beings long for most of all and attend to most dearly: if someone is so attentive to your wife that he makes her love himself rather than you, would he delight you by this good deed? Far from it, I think, and I know well that in acting like this, he would be unjust to you to the highest degree. In order to mention also what pertains especially to my own suffering (*pathei empheres*), if someone should be so attentive to the Persians whom you led here that they followed him with more pleasure than they followed you, would you believe him to be a friend? I think not, but more of an enemy than if he had killed many of them. What about this, if you -in a friendly way- bid one of your friends to take what he wants, and on hearing this he then takes as much as he is able to get and leaves, and if he then becomes rich with what is yours, while you do not have the use of even a moderate amount, would you be able to believe such a person to be a blameless friend?
>
> Now, however, if I have not suffered this at your hands, Cyrus, I think I have suffered something similar (*peponthenai*). Admit the truth: When I said to lead those who were willing to go, you took my entire power and left, leaving me deserted. And what you took with my power, now, of course, you bring to me, and my country you enlarge with my power. Since I am in no way responsible for these blessings, I seem to offer myself up to be treated well, like a woman, and both to other human beings and to these my subordinates you appear a man (*anēr*) and I unworthy of rule (*ouk axios archēs*). Do these seem to you to be good deeds, Cyrus? Be assured that if you cared for me at all, you would guard against depriving me of nothing so much as my dignity and honour (*axiōmatos kai timēs*). What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonoured? (*atimazesthai*)." (Xenophon, 2001, pp. 171–173)

2.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.9 (Cyaxares speaking):

> "I think that it is harsh to suffer these things even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 169)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.11 (Cyrus speaking):

> "It seems to me to be a great error, however, for a man who is a ruler to be angry with all his subjects at the same time: He must of necessity, by frightening many, make many enemies, and by being angry with them all at the same time, he must of necessity instill the same attitude in them all. This is why, I assure you, I did not send these troops back without me, for I was afraid that your anger might provoke something painful for all of us." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 170).

3.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.8–9 (Cyaxares speaking):

> "Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this humiliating and unworthy fashion, and I see you present here, great and magnificent, accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power. I think that it is harsh to suffer these things even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 169)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.33 (Cyaxares speaking):

> "Now, however, if I have not suffered this at your hands, Cyrus, I think I have suffered something similar… Since I am in no way responsible for these blessings, I seem to offer myself up to be treated well, like a woman, and both to other human beings and to these my subordinates you appear a man and I unworthy of rule (*ouk axios archēs*). Do these seem to you to be good deeds, Cyrus? Be assured that if you cared for me at all, you would guard against depriving me of nothing so much as my dignity and honour (*axiōmatos kai timēs*). What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonoured? (*atimazesthai*)?" (Xenophon, 2001, p. 173)

4.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5. 29 (Cyaxares speaking):

> "If I seem to you to lack judgment in the way I take these things to heart, put yourself in my situation, and then see how they appear to you." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 173)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.10–11:

> After pausing a little, Cyrus said such things as follows: "But in this, Cyaxares, you neither speak the truth nor judge correctly, if you think that Medes have been so prepared by my presence that they are capable of harming you. I do not wonder, however, that your spirit is roused and that you are afraid. As for whether you are justly or unjustly severe with them, however, I shall let this go, for I know that you would not take it well if you should hear me making a defense on their behalf." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 170)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.13 (Cyrus speaking):

> "But let us not blame ourselves so pointlessly. Rather, if it is possible, let us see most clearly what sort of unjust act I have committed. I put forward the proposition most just for among friends: If I shall come to light as having done you some harm, I agree that I am unjust. If, however, I come to light as having done no harm, and as having wished none, will you agree in turn that you have not been unjustly treated by me?" (Xenophon, 2001, p. 170).
>
> Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.15-16: "Come then," said Cyrus, "let us examine one by one all the things I have done. In this way both what is good and what is bad will be especially clear. Let us begin with this command of mine, if this seems sufficient also to you." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 170-171)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.35-36:

> Interrupting him as he was still talking, Cyrus said, "By the gods, uncle, if I ever gratified you before in anything, gratify me now in what I ask: For the time being, stop blaming me. When you get more evidence of how we are disposed toward you, then, if what I have done comes to light as having

been done for your good, greet me in turn when I greet you and believe me to be a benefactor, but if the reverse, blame me then." "Perhaps," said Cyaxares, "you speak nobly. I will do so." "Well then," said Cyrus, "shall I kiss you?" "If you wish," he said. "And you will not turn from me as you did just now?" "I will not turn from you," he said. So he kissed him. (Xenophon, 2001, pp. 173–174).

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.37-40:

The Medes followed Cyaxares (for Cyrus gave them a nod to do so), the Persians followed Cyrus, and the others followed after them. When they arrived at the camp and settled Cyaxares into the tent that had been prepared for him, those so assigned got busy preparing provisions for Cyaxares. For as long as Cyaxares was at leisure before dinner, the Medes came to him, some by themselves and of their own accord, but most having been so ordered by Cyrus; and they brought gifts: someone a beautiful cupbearer, another a good cook, another a baker, another a musician, another cups, another beautiful clothes. Nearly everyone brought him at least some gift from what he himself had received. Cyaxares consequently changed to the opinion that Cyrus was not leading them to revolt from him and that the Medes were not paying him any less attention than before (Xenophon, 2001, p. 174)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.8-9 (Cyaxares speaking):

"Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this humiliating and unworthy fashion, and I see you present here, great and magnificent, accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power. I think that it is harsh to suffer these things even at the hands of enemies, and much more harsh, by Zeus, at the hands of those from whom I ought least to have suffered them." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 169)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.33 (Cyaxares speaking):

"Now, however, if I have not suffered this at your hands, Cyrus, I think I have suffered something similar… Since I am in no way responsible for these blessings, I seem to offer myself up to be treated well, like a woman, and both to other human beings and to these my subordinates you appear a man and I unworthy of rule (*ouk axios archēs*). Do these seem to you to be good deeds, Cyrus? Be assured that if you cared for me at all, you would guard against depriving me of nothing so much as my dignity and honour (*axiōmatos kai timēs*). What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonoured? (*atimazesthai*)?" (Xenophon, 2001, p. 173)

5.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.37:

When the Medes, Persians, and the many others saw this (for the result was a matter of concern for all of them), they took immediate pleasure and beamed with joy (Xenophon, 2001, p. 174)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.41-42:

When it was time for dinner, Cyaxares called Cyrus, expecting to dine with him, since it was some time since he had seen him. "But", Cyrus said, "Do not order it, Cyaxares. Do you not see that the troops who are here are all here because they have been made expectant by us? I would not be acting nobly if, neglecting them, I should seem to attend to my own pleasure. When they think they are

neglected, good soldiers become much more despondent, while the worthless ones become much more insolent. But especially since you have come a long way, have your dinner now. If some come and honour you, greet them in turn, and entertain them so that they may have confidence in you. I shall leave and turn to what I mentioned. Early tomorrow morning the chief aides will report here at your doors in order that we may all deliberate with you about what ought to be done in the future. Come and put forward for us the question as to whether it still seems that we should campaign or whether now is the moment to dissolve the army." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 174).

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.44:

After this, Cyaxares was busy about his dinner, but Cyrus assembled those of his friends who were the most competent at both thinking and, if needed, acting in concert, and he spoke as follows… (Xenophon, 2001, p. 175)

6.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.25 (Cyaxares speaking):

"But, Cyrus, I do not know how one could say that the things you have done are bad. Be well assured, however, that they are good in such a way that the more numerous they appear, *the more they oppress me*…" (Xenophon, 2001 p. 172, my emphasis)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.33 (Cyaxares speaking):

Since I am in no way responsible for these blessings, I seem to offer myself up to be treated well, like a woman, and both to other human beings and to these my subordinates you appear a man and I unworthy of rule (*ouk axios archēs*). Do these seem to you to be good deeds, Cyrus? Be assured that if you cared for me at all, you would guard against depriving me of nothing so much as my dignity and honour (*axiōmatos kai timēs*). What do I gain if my land is extended but I am myself dishonoured? (*atimazesthai*)? (Xenophon, 2001, p. 173)

7.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.8–9 (Cyaxares speaking):

"Nevertheless, I see myself riding here in this *humiliating and unworthy fashion*, and I see you present here, *great and magnificent*, accompanied by my own retinue along with additional power. I think that it would be more pleasant to sink into the earth ten times than to be seen *so humiliated* and to see my own troops neglecting me and laughing at me…I am not ignorant of this, that not only are you *greater than I*, but even my slaves are stronger than I in this present encounter, and they have been so prepared that they have the power to do me more harm than they can suffer at my hands." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 169–170, my emphasis)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.26-27 (Cyaxares speaking):

"I would wish to make your country *greater* by my power rather than to see mine so enlarged by you, for your deeds are noble to you who do them, but somehow the same deeds bring dishonour to me. And as for valuables and the way you are now giving them to me, I think it would be more pleasant

to bestow them upon you than to receive them from you like this, for being enriched in them by you, I perceive even more those things in which I am becoming ever more impoverished." (Xenophon, 2001, p. 172, my emphasis)

8.

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.5:

> On the next day Cyaxares marched out with those of the Median knights who had remained with him. When Cyrus perceived that he was approaching, he went to meet him and brought along with him the Persian cavalry, which was already numerous, all the Medes, Armenians, Hyrcanians, and, of the other allies, those with the best horses and weapons, thus *showing his power to Cyaxares* (Xenophon, 2001, p. 169, my emphasis)

Xen. *Cyr.* 5.5.37-40:

> The Medes followed Cyaxares (for Cyrus gave them a nod to do so), the Persians followed Cyrus, and the others followed after them. When they arrived at the camp and settled Cyaxares into the tent that had been prepared for him, those so assigned got busy preparing provisions for Cyaxares. For as long as Cyaxares was at leisure before dinner, the Medes came to him, some by themselves and of their own accord, but most having been so ordered by Cyrus; and they brought gifts: someone a beautiful cupbearer, another a good cook, another a baker, another a musician, another cups, another beautiful clothes. Nearly everyone brought him at least some gift from what he himself had received. Cyaxares consequently changed to the opinion that Cyrus was not leading them to revolt from him and that the Medes were not paying him any less attention than before (Xenophon, 2001, p. 174)

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Students could consult Anderson (1974) for the life and works of Xenophon, as well as Tamiolaki (2017) for the *Cyropaedia*, more specifically (see References).
- In order to understand the role of envy and shame in ancient Greek society, it would be useful for students to read Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 2 (especially the sections devoted to these emotions: 2.6, 2.9), together with some basic readings on the emotions of the ancient Greeks (e.g., Konstan, 2006). In this work Aristotle provides a definition and analysis of some important emotions and on the ways orators could handle them in order to be more persuasive.
- Students could also study Xenophon's *Hellenika* (3.4.7–9), an episode that recounts another rivalry between leaders, this time the Spartan leaders Agesilaus and Lysander.
- Finally, students could study Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 2.6, particularly the discussion between Socrates and Critobulus on friendship, in which Socrates talks about the predominance of envy in social life (Xen. *Mem*. 2.6.21–22).

Notes

1. Translations of the *Cyropaedia* in this case study and the accompanying teaching notes are from *Xenophon*. The Education of Cyrus (2001, trans. W. Ambler), modified in places. The specific sections on

which this case is based are 5.5.1–44.

2. Xenophon's Socratic works are the *Memorabilia*, the *Oeconomicus*, the *Apology*, and the *Symposium* (see a translation of these texts by Todd, Marchant, & Henderson, 2013).

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