

as Ctesias the doctor says, — saying also that he dressed the wound himself. But while he was in the very act of striking the blow, someone hit him hard under the eye with a javelin. In the fighting there between Cyrus and the King and their supporters, Ctesias (who was with the King) tells how many fell on the King's side. But Cyrus was killed himself, and eight of the noblest of his company lay dead upon his body. It is said that when Artapatas, the most trusted servant among his sceptre-bearers, saw Cyrus fall, he leapt from his horse and threw himself down on him. Some say that the King ordered someone to kill him on top of Cyrus, others that he drew his scimitar and killed himself there. He had a golden scimitar, and used to wear a chain and bracelets and the other decorations like the noblest of the Persians; for he had been honoured by Cyrus as a good friend and a faithful servant.

Chapter 9

THE CHARACTER OF CYRUS

THIS, then, was the end of Cyrus. Of all the Persians who lived after Cyrus the Great, he was the most like a king and the most deserving of an empire, as is admitted by everyone who is known to have been personally acquainted with him. In his early life, when he was still a child being brought up with his brother, and the other children, he was regarded as the best of them all in every way. All the children of Persian nobles are brought up at the Court, and there a child can pick up many lessons in good behaviour while having no chance of seeing or hearing anything bad. The boys see and hear some people being honoured by the King and others being dismissed in disgrace, and so from their childhood they learn how to command and how to obey. Here, at the Court, Cyrus was considered, first, to be the best-behaved of his contemporaries and more willing even than his inferiors to listen to those older than himself; and then he was remarkable for his fondness for horses and being able to manage them extremely well. In the soldierly arts also of archery and javelin-throwing they judged him to be most eager to learn and most willing to practise them. When he got to the age for hunting, he was most enthusiastic about it, and only too ready to take risks in his encounters with wild animals. There was one occasion when a she-bear charged at him and he, showing no fear, got to grips with the animal and was pulled off his horse. The scars from the wounds he got then were still visible on his body, but he killed the animal in the end, and as for the first man who came to help him Cyrus made people think him very lucky indeed.

When he was sent down to the coast by his father as satrap

of Lydia and Great Phrygia and Cappadocia, and had been declared Commander-in-Chief of all who are bound to muster in the plain of Castolus,¹⁸ the first thing he did was to make it clear that in any league or agreement or undertaking that he made he attached the utmost importance to keeping his word. The cities which were in his command trusted him and so did the men. And the enemies he had were confident that once Cyrus had signed a treaty with them nothing would happen to them contrary to the terms of the treaty. Consequently when he was at war with Tissaphernes all the cities, with the exception of the Milesians, chose to follow him rather than Tissaphernes. The Milesians were afraid of him because he refused to give up the cause of the exiled government. Indeed, he made it clear by his actions, and said openly that, once he had become their friend, he would never give them up, not even if their numbers became fewer and their prospects worse than they were.

If anyone did him a good or an evil turn, he evidently aimed at going one better. Some people used to refer to an habitual prayer of his, that he might live long enough to be able to repay with interest both those who had helped him and those who had injured him. It was quite natural then that he was the one man in our times to whom so many people were eager to hand over their money, their cities and their own persons.

No one, however, could say that he allowed criminals and evil-doers to mock his authority. On the contrary, his punishments were exceptionally severe, and along the more frequented roads one often saw people who had been blinded or had had their feet or hands cut off. The result was that in Cyrus's provinces anyone, whether Greek or

¹⁸ This was in 408 (*H.G.*, I.4.3). Castolus was east of Sardis near the Hellenistic foundation, Philadelphia. For the annual military reviews, see *Oeconomicus*, 4.6.

native, who was doing no harm could travel without fear wherever he liked and could take with him whatever he wanted.

Of course it is well known that he treated with exceptional distinction all those who showed ability for war. In his first war, which was against the Pisidians and Mysians, he marched into their country himself and made those whom he saw willing to risk their lives governors over the territory which he conquered; and afterwards he gave them other honours and rewards, making it clear that the brave were going to be the most prosperous while the cowards only deserved to be their slaves. Consequently there was never any lack of people who were willing to risk their lives when they thought that Cyrus would get to know of it.

As for justice, he made it his supreme aim to see that those who really wanted to live in accordance with its standards became richer than those who wanted to profit by transgressing them. It followed from this that not only were his affairs in general conducted justly, but he enjoyed the services of an army that really was an army. Generals and captains who crossed the sea to take service under him as mercenaries knew that to do Cyrus good service paid better than any monthly wage. Indeed, whenever anyone carried out effectively a job which he had assigned, he never allowed his good work to go unrewarded. Consequently it was said that Cyrus got the best officers for any kind of job.

When he saw that a man was a capable administrator, acting on just principles, improving the land under his control and making it bring in profit, he never took his post away from him, but always gave him additional responsibility. The result was that his administrators did their work cheerfully and made money confidently. Cyrus was the last person whom they kept in the dark about their possessions, since he showed no envy for those who became rich openly, but, on the contrary,

tried to make use of the wealth of people who attempted to conceal what they had.

Everyone agrees that he was absolutely remarkable for doing services to those whom he made friends of and knew to be true to him and considered able to help him in doing whatever job was on hand. He thought that the reason why he needed friends was to have people to help him, and he applied exactly the same principle to others, trying to be of the utmost service to his friends whenever he knew that any of them wanted anything. I suppose that he received more presents than any other single individual, and this for a variety of reasons. But more than anyone else he shared them with his friends, always considering what each individual was like and what, to his knowledge, he needed most. When people sent him fine things to wear, either armour or beautiful clothes, they say that the remark he made about these was that he could not possibly wear all this finery on his own body, but he thought the finest thing for a man was that his friends should be well turned out. There is, no doubt, nothing surprising in the fact that he surpassed his friends in doing them great services, since he had the greater power to do so. What seems to me more admirable than this is the fact that he outdid them in ordinary consideration and in the anxiety to give pleasure. Often, when he had had a particularly good wine, he used to send jars half full of it to his friends with the message: 'Cyrus has not for a long time come across a better wine than this; so he has sent some to you and wants you to finish it up today with those whom you love best.' Often too he used to send helpings of goose and halves of loaves and such things, telling the bearer to say when he presented them: 'Cyrus enjoyed this; so he wants you to taste it too.' When there was a scarcity of fodder, — though he himself, because of the number of his servants and his own wise provision, was able to get hold of it, — he used to send round to his friends

and tell them to give the fodder he sent to the horses they rode themselves, so that horses which carried his friends should not go hungry.

Whenever he went on an official journey, and was likely to be seen by great numbers of people, he used to call his friends to him and engage them in serious conversation, so that he might show what men he honoured. My own opinion therefore, based on what I have heard, is that there has never been anyone, Greek or foreigner, more generally beloved. And an additional proof of this is in the fact that, although Cyrus was a subject, no one deserted him and went over to the King, — except that Orontas tried to do so; but in his case he soon found that the man whom he thought reliable was more of a friend to Cyrus than to him. On the other hand there were many who left the King and came over to Cyrus, when war broke out between the two, and these also were people who had been particularly favoured by the King; but they came to the conclusion that if they did well under Cyrus their services would be better rewarded than they would be by the King. What happened at the time of his death is also a strong proof not only of his own courage but of his ability to pick out accurately people who were reliable, devoted and steadfast. For when he died every one of his friends and table-companions died fighting for him, except Ariaeus, who had been posted on the left wing in command of the cavalry. When Ariaeus heard that Cyrus had fallen, he and the whole army which he led took to flight.¹⁹

19. See *Oeconomicus*, 4.16ff. for another laudation of Cyrus.

XENOPHON

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EXPEDITION

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