

The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



Dakyns' Translation of Xenophon *The Works of Xenophon*, translated by H. G. Dakyns, M.A. in four volumes. Vol. I. Books i. and ii. of the Hellenica, and Ana-basis. Macmillan and Co. 10s. 6d.

E. S. Shuckburgh

The Classical Review / Volume 5 / Issue 06 / June 1891, pp 257 - 258

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00167265, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00167265

How to cite this article:

E. S. Shuckburgh (1891). The Classical Review, 5, pp 257-258 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00167265

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

quent. Certainly no one of the four previously existing translations of the seven tragedies possesses nearly so great merits, nor even in the *Prometheus Vincetus* (though perhaps the play in which he succeeds least) and the *Agamemnon* has Prof. Campbell any reason to shrink from comparison with the fifteen and twenty competitors who

here confront him. He is never pedantic, never pompous, rarely tame; the general level of his verse is high, and he possesses the happy capacity of combining, throughout long passages, an admirable fidelity to his author with a freedom and charm which are not often found in translated verse.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.

DAKYNS' TRANSLATION OF XENOPHON.

The Works of Xenophon, translated by H. G. Dakyns, M.A. in four volumes. Vol. I. Books i. and ii. of the *Hellenica*, and *Anabasis*. Macmillan and Co. 10s. 6d.

THIS is the first of four volumes in which Mr. Dakyns proposes to publish a translation of the entire works of Xenophon. It will, if continued with the same accuracy and care as the first volume, be a work of great utility, and will reflect credit on the enterprise of author and publisher alike. It is excellently printed, convenient in size, and furnished with good maps. Mr. Dakyns has brought to his task the high recommendation of enthusiasm for his subject, and great diligence in studying and digesting all that has been written upon and can be known of his author. The volume begins with about fifty pages of what he calls 'Notes,' in which he discusses the sources of the Life of Xenophon, the age of Xenophon himself, the composition and connexion of the *Hellenica* with the other works. He holds that the *Hellenica* consists of three parts 'composed under different moral and physical circumstances, the impress of which they bear, and at different periods of the author's life.' As to Xenophon's birth-year he rejects the story of his presence at the battle of Delium B.C. 424, which would imply that he was twenty (or rather twenty-one according to the newly found treatise of Aristotle), and infers from various considerations that he was born about the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. As to the *Anabasis* and the curious question of the production of an earlier one by the mysterious Themistogenes, his 'own impression is that Themistogenes, whose personality seems to be established, brought out the original edition of Xenophon's *Anabasis* or a portion of it; possibly the first four books only. Possibly Xenophon preferred to publish the work in the first instance in this manner, as it were anonymously—because it was so full

of personal matter.' These are some of Mr. Dakyns' judgments on disputed points in regard to Xenophon. The conclusions in them and others are not exactly novel; but they are put well and with full consideration of other theories. The 'Life' which occupies about eighty pages more is interesting and teems with evidence of careful work on all points of doubt, of which the elaborate notes on pp. xcix—ci. dealing with the questions of Xenophon's marriage and exile are conspicuous instances. If it is not ungrateful to criticise a work of so much care and genuine love of its subject, one would be inclined to find fault with it on the score of fancifulness. Mr. Dakyns will often fill a page with conjectures and imaginary details of what Xenophon was doing or thinking at a particular time, which we feel to be charming, but sometimes fail to recognise as business. In the same way some of his literary criticisms are apt to appear high-flown or Boswellian in their extra-appreciation; for instance (p. cxxvii.):—

'It is to Xenophon that we owe the truly fine phrase "They magnify themselves on their lowliness"—*τῶν ταπεινῶν εἶναι μεγαλύνονταί*—which has the very ring of a magnificat.'

As to the translation itself, which of course is the main point of the book, it is possible to give it very sincere praise, and yet to note some points in which one is inclined to be critical. The problem which a translator has to solve is how to give the exact meaning of an ancient author, observing the modifying effect of particles, tenses, moods, and order of words, and yet to produce sentences which may strike an English ear as not wholly unlike those of a good English writer. Mr. Dakyns recognises the difficulty: he means to give up trying to represent the particles, and sets before himself two models—for the simpler parts of Xenophon the language of the English Gospels, for the more pretentious parts the style of modern journalism (p. ix.). For myself I

believe that a conscious imitation of any model, good or bad, is a mistake; and that a translator should write the best style he can command, but his own. And it seems to the present writer that Mr. Dakyns has sometimes failed to make his translation pleasing precisely because he was not writing naturally, but was conforming to some imaginary model of style, and has only succeeded in being somewhat artificial. For instance, p. 1. ὡς ἦνοιγε is translated 'as he shook himself free of the narrows.' And in the whole of the difficult passage, *Hell.* 1, 4, 13—17, giving an account of the various comments made on the career of Alcibiades by the Athenians, the translation is certainly skilful: 'He had been the victim of plots, hatched in the brains of people less able than himself, however much they might excel in pestilent speech.' But 'hatched in the brain' seems to smack of 'modern journalism' and has nothing in the Greek (ἐπιβουλευθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ἑλαττων ἐκείνου δυναμένων) to account for it: while the 'however much' seems a doubtful turn to give to the participle μοχθηρότερα τε λεγόντων. Again p. 36 [*Hell.* 1, 7, 32] of the generals at Arginusae τούτων δὲ μάρτυρες οἱ σωθέντες ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰτομάτου 'There are witnesses ready to attest the truth of this: the men who escaped *as by a miracle*.' Is not 'as by a miracle' an unnecessary modernism, and besides misleading? The point seems to be that such persons were saved without the intervention of the ships sent to pick them up. In the same page too Xenophon says of the assembly, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἔκριναν τὴν Εὐρυπτολέμου. Mr. Dakyns' 'at the show of hands the tellers gave the majority in favour of Euryptolemus' amendment' is quite a journalistic amplification of 'they voted' or 'they passed.' The same word ἔκριναν is rendered three lines below 'the verdict was in favour of.' Again p. 61 (*Hell.* 2, 3, 53), ὑμῶν μέντοι, ἔφη, ὧ ἄνδρες καλοὶ κάγαθοι, θαυμάζω εἰ μὴ βοηθήσετε ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς—'yet I do marvel, good sirs and honest gentlemen, for

so you are, that you will not help yourselves.' The introduction of the words italicised does not appear to help out the sense, and has an air of artificiality not pleasing. More serious is the question on p. 62 whether 'seeing the companions of Satyrus at the bar' can be held to represent ὁρῶσα καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τοῖς δρυφάκτοις ὁμοίους Σατύρῳ. These instances are from the *Hellenica*. Turning to the *Anabasis*, p. 110 (*An.* 1, 9, 5) 'aptest of learners' does not well represent φιλομαθέστων. Nor was it necessary to interpolate 'he would tell lies to no one,' as though Xenophon were making a general statement of Cyrus' character instead of confining it to a particular sphere of action, i.e. his dealings with parties to a treaty. In the same page 'to outdo his friends and his foes alike *in reciprocity of conduct*' is a strange and very ugly phrase. Once more, on p. 205 (*Anab.* 4, 8, 11), ἔπειτα ἦν μὲν ἐπὶ πολλοὺς τεταγμένοι προσάγωμεν, περιττεύουσιν ἡμῶν οἱ πολέμοι—again if we advance several deep, the enemy will *none the less* overlap us.' Surely they would do so all the more, for the line would be shorter the deeper it was. The introduction of 'none the less' gives exactly the wrong sense.

Such and some more of the same nature, generally in the direction of amplification and rather elaborate style, are the defects which have struck me in Mr. Dakyns' translation. I am glad to have done with them, and to have come to the point where it is proper to congratulate him on a sound and interesting piece of work, which it is exceedingly desirable should be brought as soon as possible to completion. The question whether it was wise to interpolate the *Anabasis* between Books I. and II. of the *Hellenica* and the other books is not one of great importance. It is good in so far as it presents the reader with a certain consecutiveness in history; it would perhaps for some purposes have been more convenient to follow the ordinary arrangement of the Greek Texts. E. S. SHUCKBURGH.

ARISTOPHANES.

De Praepositionum usu Aristophaneo. Scripsit SERGIUS SOBOLEWSKI. Mosquae. Typis Universitatis Caesariae. 1890. pp. vi., 229. [Index and table of statistics separate.]

To those who are jaded with the statistics offered by the ordinary 'programm' and

academical dissertation this contribution to historical syntax should come as a welcome relief. The author has succeeded in making his work something more than an ingenious exercise in arithmetic. He has, in the first place, appended a short argument upon various readings to all the examples in which any textual question arises, and he has also