



THE PERSIAN EXPEDITION

ADVISORY EDITOR: BETTY RADICE

XENOPHON was an Athenian country gentleman born in the early 420s BC. He may have helped to publish Thucydides' *History* and certainly wrote his own *Hellenica*, also known as *A History of My Times*, as a continuation of it. By his own (probably reliable) account he was a fine officer and outstanding leader, but his admiration for Sparta and devotion to Socrates, among other causes, led to his banishment. He was given an estate at Scillus, near Olympia, and settled down to enjoy the life of a landed aristocrat under Spartan protection, and it was during this period that he began to write histories, biographies, memoirs and special studies and treatises. Events forced him to move to Corinth in 371, but he was allowed to return to Athens in 365, where he lived until his death in the late 350s.

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XENOPHON

THE PERSIAN EXPEDITION

TRANSLATED BY

REX WARNER

With an Introduction

and Notes by

GEORGE CAWKWELL

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INTRODUCTION

EVERY schoolboy used to know how ten thousand Greeks found themselves in the heart of the Persian empire a thousand miles from Greece, with half their leaders arrested by the Persians, and with a Persian army at hand, and how Xenophon the Athenian took charge and brought them safely home over rivers and mountains, through terrible winter and equal terrible barbarian foes, and it was a dull schoolboy indeed who did not thrill at the sound heard one day by Xenophon from the rear of the column as he laboured up yet another mountain against, as he thought, yet another hostile tribe - 'The sea, the sea.' But the book itself was also an expedition not without hardships, for it was generally the first contact with a Greek author, and in the toils of syntax and the weariness of unknown words not a schoolboy enjoyed the journey or indeed ever reached the end. Time has changed all that. Now the every schoolboy knows other things, he and all of us can, with the aid of translations which were once forbidden, learn a great deal about the world of the Greeks, and if one is minded to learn, the *Persian Expedition*, the so-called *Anabasis*, of Xenophon is an excellent book with which to begin.

Ex oriente lux. One sees better what the Greeks were in seeing what they were not. On every page of the *Anabasis* the contrast between Greek and barbarian is sharply drawn - the barbarian world vast and diverse, feudal and ancient or tribal and savage, the Greek world compact and united by the sea, and, despite variety, essentially one in its approach to life. The Greek was pre-eminently a 'political animal,' and the Ten Thousand are all the Greeks in miniature. When they are left leaderless, the crisis is not resolved by authority or seniority. They assemble and debate, arguments and the art of words prevail. The army is really a polity on the move. Let barbarians fall to the ground in submission to whoever wins the contest for the crown. The Greeks will give their allegiance to the man whose reason, not his blood, proves his fitness to lead. Not of course that the barbarians are not in themselves interesting. So much of Greek history is concerned with Greek relations, in war and peace with the ruling power of Asia, that the inside view afforded by the *Anabasis* is unique and precious. Further, the expansion of Hellenism was at the expense of the truly barbarian peoples of the sort that the Ten Thousand met on the southern shore of the Black Sea and in Thrace, and there is no better picture of the colonies of the Greek world than in the fifth and sixth books of the *Anabasis*. There we see Xenophon planning to found amongst barbarians

peoples a city which would trade in cereals and slaves with Old Greece, the merchant ships already sailing up and down the periphery of the Greek world, and all that was needed for enduring prosperity was women who could be bought or snatched from barbarian tribes, just as long ago the noble Ionian founders of Miletus had snatched the Carian women. Where else in Greek literature can one gain comparable insight into the Greek penetration of barbarity? But, above all, the Ten Thousand themselves engage the attention, and teach us what ordinary Greeks were like. Their piety, for instance, is typical. As Xenophon was addressing the assembly of the army at dawn the day after the arrest of the generals, 'someone sneezed and when the soldiers heard it, they all with one accord fell on their knees and worshipped the god who had given this sign'. Or again, in the sixth book, Xenophon who was clearly more attentive to all the claims of religion sought a sign from heaven in the entrails of animals that he might lead out the army to get supplies. For some days he sacrificed to no avail, and the Greeks had no food. But the army as a whole accepted it all. The will of the gods would prevail and signs must be sought and obeyed.

It would be otiose to say more. The *Anabasis* contains such varied matter that again and again one's interest is aroused. In the hands of the gifted teacher it can be a most useful instrument, but even without such guidance the attentive reader cannot fail to understand the Greeks better by the time he returns with Xenophon to Ionia. Nor is he likely to have found the long journey tedious.

The story begins in spring 401 B.C. Greece is at last free from the long agony of the Peloponnesian War. The Athenian empire is ended. The Spartans have liberated Greece and are firmly in control. The young prince, Cyrus, brother of the newly acceded Artaxerxes II, bent on seizing the throne for himself, and he is not without friends. Sparta, who owes to him and his subsidies her ultimate success in the war, can be counted on and there are a multitude of individuals who are looking for employment or hoping for rich reward at his hands. The long march and the short life of Cyrus come to an abrupt halt on the battlefield of Cunaxa not far from Babylon in September 401, and the Greeks in Cyrus' army are faced with submitting to the King or marching home. They choose the latter, and braving Kurds and the fearsome rigours of winter in the Armenian highlands return in summer 400 to the Hellespont, only to find that Sparta has no use or indeed liking for them, and another bitter winter has to be passed in Thrace before a change of Spartan policy finds them employment in spring 399 helping to defend the liberty of the Greeks of Asia. One of them was a young man from

Athens called Xenophon.

Of the life of Xenophon we know very little beyond what we can glean from his own writings.¹ He was born in the early years of the Peloponnesian War into the wealthy class of the Knights, whose devotion to the democracy was always suspect, and in his teens he must have been much stirred by the ruinous failure of the Sicilian expedition followed shortly by the brief but violent oligarchic revolution of 411, which showed how greatly dissatisfied men of Xenophon's kind were with the operation of democracy. Nor in the sequel was there anything to endear to him the Athenian way of life. Dissuaded from coming to terms with Sparta after the great naval victory of Cyzicus (410), the people continued on their dizzy course, exiling their ablest statesman and soldier, Alcibiades, for whom Xenophon in his *History of Greece* (I.4.13 f.) was to indicate sympathy, and condemning to death by illegal process, despite the opposition of Xenophon's master Socrates, all the generals who had just won the victory of Arginusae (406), Xenophon again showing his sympathies by the space accorded to their defence (*H.G.I.7.16f.*). To a man of such persuasion, the defeat at Aegospotami (405), the sufferings brought by the Spartan blockade of Athens, and finally unconditional surrender (404) must have been the nemesis of folly, and Xenophon, who had probably, to judge by the detail of his account of a cavalry action in Ionia in 410 (*H.G.I.2.If.*), already played his part in the cavalry in the war, may have joined those Knights who supported the so-called Thirty, harsh rulers in harsh times. Whatever he thought in 403 of the death throes of this revolution, Xenophon could have felt no enthusiasm for staying on in Athens after the restoration. The Knights shared in the common pardon, but remained suspect (*H.G.111.1.4.*) It was time for a young man with a taste for war and a distaste for democracy to be off. When in early 401 he was invited by Proxenus the Boeotian to join him in the army of Cyrus, Xenophon, pious man that he was, put a leading question to the Delphic oracle and went (*III.1.4f.*). He had hopes of Cyrus but no hopes of Athens. He would rather live anywhere else, even in a colony far from Greece (*V.6.15f.*).

For what he did from spring 401 when he set off from Sardis under Cyrus, until spring 399 when he joined the Spartan army under Thibron in Ionia, the *Anabasis* provides his fullest account, but apart from what he tells us in the fifth book (ch. 3) about his return to Greece in 394 with Agesilaus, who broke the resistance of the Boeotian army at Coronea on the highway south, and his settlement on an estate at Scillus near Olympia by favour of the Spartans, we have to guess his movements for thirty years from the vividness of parts of his

History of Greece which betokens eye-witness. Guesses remain guesses, but it is likely enough that he was continuously in Spartan service from 399 to 394, and at first still commanding the remnants of the Ten Thousand (cf. *H.G.*III.2.7). He did not immediately meet with Spartan approval. The ill repute which had preceded the Ten Thousand in their return march secured them less than a welcome for heroes, and Xenophon as their commander was held responsible. Thibron indeed, before he took him into his service, had even been reported intending to have him executed (VII.6.43f.), and suspicions of Xenophon died hard. When Thibron was recalled and exiled for allowing his army to plunder his allies, Spartans did not have to wonder which part of his army could be to blame (*H.G.*III. 1.8, & 2.7), but Xenophon found the new commander Dercyllidas more congenial, and when in spring 396 King Agesilaus arrived with a new army Xenophon's troubles were over. To Agesilaus, would-be leader of a new crusade of Greece against Persia and of a new Anabasis, Xenophon promptly accorded his life-long admiration, receiving in return the honour of a lifelong intimacy. This friendship in fact shaped the rest of Xenophon's life. There had been a black moment in 400/399 when Xenophon had even thought of going home to Athens (VII.7.57), but this course was no longer open to him by the time Agesilaus came on the scene; he had by then been exiled from Athens² and so depended wholly on the Spartans who ruled Greece. Agesilaus did not fail friends. Xenophon was given the estate at Scillus and established as one of the 'best men', as the Greeks put it, of the Peloponnese. As such, he did his stint of military service – the precision of his account of various campaigns would later attest it – but after the King's Peace (386) he could settle down to enjoy the idyllic life he touches on in the third chapter of Book V, the life of the landed aristocrat – festivals, hospitality, hunting, and, what he does not mention there, freedom from 'troublesome demagogues' (*H.G.*V.2.7). Like the typical Peloponnesian gentleman, he looked to Sparta as the inspiration of the good life, and sent his sons there for the best education that he deemed Greece could offer; he visited the city at its chief festivals; he was entertained by Agesilaus, meeting in his company along with other aristocratic clients from all over the Peloponnese the leading Spartans. At the Olympic festival, he was well placed to return hospitality, and we may picture him and his guests receiving the nodding sage approval of the Panhellenic speeches, of which Isocrates' *Panegyric* (380) is the most notable instance. Altogether it was a time of happiness, and of leisure to reflect and to begin to write. Tasks were not lacking – the completion of Thucydides' *Histories* (*H.G.*II.3.10), a Xenophontic contribution, drawing on his memories and his reading, to the eve

growing Socratic literature (the so-called *Memorabilia*), a delineation of virtue as embodied in the person of the founder of the Persian Empire (the *Education of Cyrus*). Xenophon must have been as busy as he was happy.

The catastrophic defeat of Sparta at Leuctra (371) changed all that. The whole Peloponnese was in ferment, and in 370 the Eleans seized Scillus. Xenophon was ejected from his estate and went to Corinth, where he lived for the rest of his life, as we learn from Diogenes Laertius (2.56), a most significant fact. He had long been free to go home,³ but he declined to do so. Although, once Athens allied with the Sparta he admired against the Thebans he detested as the wrecker of the Peloponnese, his attitude softened to his native city (in 356 he even wrote a treatise (the *Revenues*) on how to cure Athens' economic woes), though his memories of his youth, the quiet pleasures of his middle age, and above all his devotion to Sparta and Agesilaus combined to keep him in the Peloponnese. So it was at Corinth that he wrote the rest of his *History of Greece* and much else, including perhaps the *Anabasis* – over thirty years after the death of Cyrus.

The date at which Xenophon composed the *Anabasis* is disputed, but most scholars would agree that it was not written before the mid 370s and not a few would put it in the early 360s. In speaking of Scillus Xenophon did so as if it was all in the past, which suggests a date after 370, but even if this was merely a stylistic device his allusion to his sons hunting wild boar demands a late date. Xenophon had no sons when he joined Cyrus (VII.6.34) and probably did not marry until he returned to Greece in 394; his sons would not have been old enough to hunt before the mid 370s; one would hardly have a boy of much less than sixteen hunting wild boar, and in fact elsewhere Xenophon says as much (*Art of Hunting* 2.1). So a date of 370 at the earliest is inevitable. Nor is this so surprising when one remembers that both the chief histories of Alexander were written by members of his army some forty or more years after his death. In fact a considerable lapse of time is needed for Xenophon's literary development and the *Anabasis* is unlikely to be his earliest work. It is hard to believe that a man who had already written the *Anabasis* could then have painted the idealized picture of royal virtue which is the *Education of Cyrus*. Xenophon himself felt the need of a postscript to this work and in the eighth chapter of the eighth book, written after 362, bitterly denounced Persian perfidy. Time was needed to harden Xenophon's attitude to Persia and somewhat to transmute, as we shall see, the events of 401, and it seems better therefore to put *the Anabasis* after the main body of the *Education of Cyrus*. Our book is not the work of a young man fresh

from the wars.⁴

Nor was he first in the field. Leaving aside his own reference to the account of Themistogenes of Syracuse (*H.G.III.1.2*), which is generally agreed to be a pseudonym for himself, we know of two other accounts. Ctesias of Cnidus, the Greek doctor who spent a number of years at the Persian court and indeed was in attendance on Artaxerxes on the battlefield of Cunaxa, wrote a history of Persia down to 397 in twenty-three books. The work exists only in epitome and in fragments, but probably Plutarch used it largely for the earlier part of his *Life of Artaxerxes*. It was published before the *Anabasis*, for Xenophon alludes to it (*I.8.26f.*). The other account was written by one Sophaenetos, a much more shadowy figure and poses a serious problem. Only four small fragments remain and on the strength of these alone, one can say no more than that his account was in places both similar to that of Xenophon and different. But in the fourteenth book of Diodorus Siculus' history written in the first century B.C. there is an account which differs in detail from that of Xenophon, and, since it is sure that in this part of his work Diodorus was merely making an epitome of the great fourth-century historian Ephorus, whose *Universal History* is now lost, a startling fact emerges. When Ephorus wrote his account of the march of the Ten Thousand from Cunaxa to the Hellespont, he drew largely on a source which not only differed in detail from the *Anabasis* of Xenophon but also led him to assign to Xenophon so minor a part that when Diodorus came to make his epitome of Ephorus the very name of Xenophon was not even mentioned. Evidently someone did not share Xenophon's estimate of himself. It may have been Ephorus himself, but it seems more likely that it was this mysterious source. Was it Sophaenetos? Many have supposed so, and though this is a mere guess it may not be a bad one. We know of an account by Sophaenetos, and accounts must not be 'multiplied beyond necessity'. So Sophaenetos let it be, and, since one of the original generals of Cyrus' Greek army was Sophaenetos of Stymphalus in Arcadia, it would appear likely that the general and the writer were one and that Xenophon was not the only one of the generals to write his account. Xenophon was the youngest, Sophaenetos the oldest (*VI.5.13*). So presumably his *Anabasis* which Xenophon figured so little was published first. Did Xenophon receive it unmoved? Or did he write his *Anabasis* partly in reply?

Apologia is plain enough. Isocrates in his *Panegyric* (§146) had described the Ten Thousand disparagingly as men 'too base to be able to make a living in their countries', a view which their conduct, once they got clear of the danger of the Persian attack, must have made wide

shared. Xenophon will have none of it (VI.4.8). According to him the motives of ‘the majority of the soldiers’ were far from base, and in the sixth book he makes the Arcadians principal to blame for acts of indiscipline. But suspicions lingered on. He had even been described most damningly to Spartan ears, as ‘too friendly with the men’, and as courting popularity by ‘playing the demagogue’ (VII.6.4). So he may well have been seeking to bury once and for all the charges made long ago against his conduct and his character. But there may be more than this.

From the start of Book III Xenophon’s name occurs about two hundred and thirty times. He delivers over twenty speeches, and he leaves us in no doubt whom he considers the true saviour of the Ten Thousand. For instance, in his account of the dawn assembly in the second chapter of Book III the speeches of Chirisophus and Cleanor occupy a page of Greek text; the speech of Xenophon occupies five pages and contains sage proposals for the conduct of the march which are immediately ratified, and the assembly concludes with further words from Xenophon giving instructions for the army to move in hollow square and appointing which general should go in the van and which should share with himself the hazardous task of guarding the rear. All this may be an accurate record of what happened, but it is easy to conceive that another general might not have the same balance in his narrative. It is notable that in Diodorus’ account of the replacement of the generals (XIV.27.1) the army ‘chose several generals but accorded the leadership of the whole army to one man, Chirisophus the Spartan’. This may be due to confusion in Ephorus’ mind with the debate about having a single commander in Book VI (1. 19–33), but at least it indicates that in Ephorus’ account and therefore perhaps in Sophraenetes’, Chirisophus played the part played in Xenophon’s account by Xenophon himself. Nor is the *Anabasis* lacking in hints to support such a view. Although often one would not suspect that Xenophon was not the complete equal of Chirisophus, the latter who seems to have been in charge at the dawn assembly (III.2.33, c. 3.3) is twice found bluntly ordering Xenophon (III.4.38, IV.6.19). So the hypothesis may be proposed that Xenophon read in the work of Sophraenetes an account which he thought very much failed to do justice to himself and that it was this in part which moved him to write.

A question presents itself. Is the *Anabasis* of Xenophon not truthful and reliable? It may have its limitations: for instance, his account of the battle of Cunaxa simply will not do. Again, he may have been less detached about the plan to found a colony than he labours to make clear that he was. But are we to reject the one full, eye-witness account we have?

favour of the skeleton of someone else's? This is a question that cannot be satisfactorily answered in brief. The answer depends on one's estimate both of the judgement of Ephorus and of the method of Xenophon. Here it will have to suffice to say that the discovery of the fragments of the *History of Greece* by the so-called Oxyrhynchus Historian has damaged beyond repair Xenophon's reputation for accuracy, and that, as Xenophon's credit has dropped, Ephorus' has as sharply risen. If Ephorus with his knowledge of the literature of the first half of the fourth century preferred to follow Sophocles rather than Xenophon, his judgement may be no less respectable here than when he preferred elsewhere to follow the Oxyrhynchus historian rather than Xenophon. Nor is this necessarily to accuse Xenophon of downright dishonesty. Old men forget. Time can engender queer omissions and even queer distortions. So if we doubt whether Xenophon was as important as he thought he had been, we are not charging him with conscious falsehood. (But we may suspect equivocation.) Granted that there was initially division of command (VI.1.17), Chirisophus may have been accorded the position of seniority which Clearchus had attained and which Cyrus' order before the battle to him rather than to all the generals implies (I.8.12f.). Now in Xenophon's speech which closed the dawn assembly he assigned the generals posts in the hollow square thus: 'If anyone has a better suggestion to make, let us adopt it. If not, then I propose that Chirisophus should lead since he is also a Spartan. Two generals, the oldest ones, should look after the flanks; and the youngest of us, Timasion and myself, should be responsible for the rear.' At first glance, he seems to be talking merely about leading the van, but he may also be acknowledging Chirisophus as *primus inter pares*.)

If what Sophocles had to record of Chirisophus was not to Xenophon's taste, one wonders what Sophocles had to say of Xenophon himself and his share in, the command. Perhaps very little, but one passage invites speculation. In the Armenian highlands the headman of a village was suspected of leading the Ten Thousand where there were no villages; Chirisophus hit the man but neglected to tie him up, and he ran away leaving the army without a guide. Xenophon remarks (IV.6.3) : "This affair – ill-treating the guide and then not taking adequate precautions – was the only occasion on the march when Chirisophus and Xenophon fell out.' (Translation can hardly do justice to the effect of the Greek particles which emphasize the uniqueness of 'this affair'.) One wonders who had asserted the contrary. Was it Sophocles? One can easily imagine that another general might take a quite different view about the tensions between Chirisophus in the van and Xenophon commanding the rear.

guard (III.4.38f., IV.1.19). In Xenophon's view Chirisophus had been difficult to get on with as he plainly implied in the debate about command in Book VI (1.26–29), and Xenophon did not formally notice Chirisophus' death, let alone accord him the sort of obituary he had accorded Clearchus; a passing allusion sufficed (VI.4.11); Chirisophus was neither considerable nor amiable. Perhaps Sopaenetes had taken a different view of the extent and the cause of the trouble, and in this way too provoked Xenophon to set down his own version.

In the lapse of time Xenophon might have come to esteem his own part more highly than did his contemporaries. But is there not a solid framework of fact in the book? Did Xenophon not compose his work on the basis of a diary? It is widely presumed that he did. Although he could hardly have kept a diary posted day by day, there were rest-periods, and although it is hard to imagine his carrying writing materials over such terrain even if he had taken them as far as Cunaxa, it is harder still to believe that such abundance of details could have been kept so long in the head. How otherwise than with a diary could Xenophon have kept those distances in *parasangs*? But perhaps this presumption is wrong-headed. Anyone who wanted to write an account of a march through the Persian Empire had to hand an invaluable aid in the twenty-third book of Ctesias' *History of Persia*, which provided, for some routes certainly and perhaps for all, an account of 'the number of stages, days, and parasangs'.⁵ It is notable that generally speaking, Xenophon gave distances in parasangs only for the subjected areas of the Persian Empire. When the army moved into Kurdistan such measures were forgotten, but were promptly revived when it reached Armenia. Perhaps Ctesias, not a diary, was behind all this. Again, many of the geographic notes with which Xenophon sprinkled his narrative are of a form common, from Herodotus onwards, to the literature of itineraries and geographic description. Xenophon may have chosen to make notes of this form in his diary: it is equally possible that he drew them from Ctesias. So there was a framework for memory to fill in. Why postulate a diary? We must never forget that in ancient Greece memory had to play a much larger part than with us who have ample reference works ready to hand, and that consequently memories were very highly developed. Nor did Xenophon display elsewhere any lack of confidence in his own power to remember. The largest part of his *History of Greece* was written, so the present writer believes, at a very great interval after the events described, and essentially as memoirs, unaided by research or methodical assemblage of materials; hence omissions, inaccuracies, unevenness, inconsistency of method. Xenophon

indeed possessed a lively memory, but as many who are similarly endowed will grant, liveliness does not necessarily guarantee accuracy. Thus it would seem that omissions in the *Anabasis* are quite as likely to arise from a failure of memory as from an irregularly posted diary. To take a test case, he has omitted to mention the crossing of the Lesser Zab, no mere rivulet and, though it is at its lowest in the late summer, contributing in October, when Xenophon crossed it, about 13 per cent of the water of the Tigris. It was noticeable. Is it more likely that he failed a few days later to record it in a diary, or forgot to mention it thirty years after? All in all, nothing compels acceptance of the hypothesis of a diary, and those who so ground their confidence in Xenophon perhaps delude themselves. But this is not to destroy all confidence. His memories still have considerable credit, even if we doubt his version of his own importance.

It is not all self-justification. Political bias has a part. Xenophon lived and wrote in a period when the sentimental longing for a union of Greeks in a crusade against Persia was widespread. The chief spokesman of this so-called Panhellenism was Isocrates who for forty years urged it as the panacea for Greece's ills, and, though it had been familiar talk in the fifth century, receiving expression for instance in the *Olympic Oration* of the Sicilian sophist Gorgias, on the Attic stage (Arist. *Lysistrata* 1128f.) and from a Spartan admiral (H.G.I.6.7f.), it rose to a crescendo as poverty and the violent divisions both within and between cities increased. A central theme was that by seizing Persian territory Greece could settle her impoverished people in colonies which would exploit the wealth of Asia – a programme which found fulfilment of a sort in the foundations of Alexander and his successors. As Isocrates' *Panegyric* shows, to the Panhellenists Persia was despicably weak, no match for Greek valour; the crusade would be more like a revel than a war. This creed Xenophon shared as did also his hero Agesilaus and his circle (baldly to assert what needs to be more fully argued than is possible here). At any rate, the *Anabasis* contains one passage in which the doctrine shows itself unmistakably. In Xenophon's speech in the dawn assembly, after commenting on the Great King's inability to master various peoples, he went on:

I am certain that the King would offer the Mysians all the guides they wanted, and would give them numbers of hostages to guarantee his good faith in sending them out of the country and would actually build roads for them, even though they wanted to go away in four-horse chariots. And I am as certain that he would be three times as pleased to do all this for us, if he saw that we were planning to stay here. No, what I am really afraid of is that, if we once

learn to live a life of ease and luxury, enjoying the company of these fine great women, the wives and daughters of the Medes and Persians, we might be like the Lotus-eaters and forget about our road home. So I think that it is right and reasonable for us to make it our first endeavour to reach our own folk in Greece and to demonstrate to the Greeks that their poverty is of their own choosing, since they might see people who have a wretched life in their own countries grow rich by coming out here. [III.2.24f.]

Here are the essentials of the doctrine – the weakness of Persia, the opportunities it afforded the Greeks of sending the poor to reap the wealth of Asia. Of course, it cannot be proved that Xenophon did not utter such words on that tense October morning of 401, but when one considers the grim situation in which the Greeks found themselves on the banks of the Zab confronted by the cavalry of Tissaphernes it seems more likely that these cheerful sentiments belong to the Greek historian's art of composing speeches. This passage in itself is not much, but it should remind us of the intellectual milieu in which the *Anabasis* was composed. For there is a serious matter which affects our understanding of the book. The curious inconsistency was noted above between the laudation of Persian virtue in the *Education of Cyrus* and the picture in the *Anabasis* of Persian perfidy, Tissaphernes agreeing with Clearchus to hold a round-table conference and then seizing those who came. It was suggested that the latter work belonged to a later phase of Xenophon's development. But was there not perfidy in 401? Had Xenophon forgotten the treacherous fate of his friend Proxenus, when he wrote the *Education of Cyrus*? Of course, he could not forget, but precisely what? The facts were complex. Tissaphernes had for some time suspected that Clearchus was plotting to kill him, and fourteen days before the arrest of the generals a mysterious message had reached Proxenus that the Persians were about to attack the Greeks (II.4.16). At the Zab Tissaphernes and Clearchus met to discuss rumours of plots (cf. esp. II.5.1,10,16), and the upshot was that Clearchus consented to face his accusers before Tissaphernes. Hence the fatal visit to the Persian camp. What Xenophon makes little of is that it was Menon the Thessalian supported by Proxenus, Xenophon's own friend, who made the accusation: Clearchus suspected that it was Menon who was slandering him, and the messenger from Ariaeus, after the arrest, declared that Menon and Proxenus had 'reported his conspiracy' (II.5.28, 38); Xenophon gave Menon as abusive an obituary as can ever have been written of anyone (II.6.21f), but that was all. Ctesias, who professed to have done all he could to mitigate the lot of Clearchus in prison, confirmed that Menon was responsible (*Fr.*27). We may sympathize with

Tissaphernes. From the Greeks themselves came the accusation that Clearchus was plotting against him. Clearchus was summoned to his tent for trial, as Cyrus had previously summoned the traitor Orontas (1.6). The case was heard. Clearchus may even have seemed to be caught *in flagranti delicti*, for he had chosen to take with him about two hundred soldiers 'as though to buy provisions', and Menon may have made something of it; the purple flag was raised (Diod.XIV.26.7), perhaps a general alarm, not, as the Greeks took it, a prearranged signal. But whatever the truth of that, Menon's accusation confirmed those black suspicions which, at the earlier meeting with Tissaphernes, Clearchus had sought to talk away. The arrest and condemnation are intelligible, a miscarriage of justice but not foul treachery. No Xenophon may never have taken so detached a view. Tissaphernes may have seemed from that day a monster of perfidy. But what is so striking is that he has so little to say about the perfidy of the Greek generals themselves. The bad faith is all on the Persian side. His account is thus fully in accord with the mood in which he wrote the postscript to the *Education of Cyrus*. The impassioned Panhellenist, with the lapse of time, saw it all clearly in black and white, in this way too perhaps following Agesilaus, who spent his last six years in bitter efforts to harm Persia, but whose first act on landing in Asia in 396 had been to seek to negotiate a treaty with Tissaphernes (H.G.III.4.5). Both were Panhellenists who passed from fashionable sentiment to bitter hostility. The *Anabasis* was perhaps infected more with the latter.

Much of this account is debatable. The study of Xenophon is a slippery business. He was not a man of great intellect. One has only to compare his Socratic dialogues with those of Plato to see that. Nor did he have the lofty detachment or intellectual rigour of a Thucydides. His philosophy is second-hand and second-rate, his history moralizing memoirs. He was at his happiest when far removed from what he regarded as the debasing trivialities of sophists' talk (*Art of Hunting* 13). But though plain, he is never transparent. His fate has been to be read by schoolboys and to be puzzled over by scholars. His silences in the *History of Greece*, which the innocent ear does not catch, are loudly to the attuned but often remain unexplained. Fortunately the *Anabasis* is his least perplexing and his most enthralling book. If we had Sophocles and Ctesias, much would be clearer. But we may be sure that, unlike Xenophon, they would be read by very few.

To men like Isocrates the march of the Ten Thousand exposed the truth about the Persian empire. The mighty edifice was cracked and crumbling. A concerted effort by the Greeks

would send it crashing in ruins. So Agesilaus could talk grandly in 394 about a new march upon the country (*H.G.* IV.I.41). Jason of Pherae in the 370s indulged in similar fine utterances (*H.G.* VI.1.12). Isocrates kept issuing appeals to the great, and to the not so great, men of the age to lead the Greeks against Asia, to Agesilaus, to Alexander of Pherae, to Dionysius of Syracuse, finally to Philip of Macedon. What Cyrus had done others could do. The Persians had not even been able to stop the Ten Thousand moving through their empire virtually unscathed.

Nothing so bedevils understanding of Greek history as the uncritical acceptance of such talk. We must detach ourselves. The revolt of Cyrus was a domestic wrangle – the struggle of one member of the blood royal to deprive his brother of the throne. The essence of it was the single combat on the field of Cunaxa. As Cyrus indicated by his last-minute order to Clearchus to march against the King, the King's person was sought, no more. Had Cyrus succeeded things would have been no different from what they had been before. Any Greek attempt to do the same would encounter the resistance of the satrapal forces which Cyrus took with him from Asia Minor, and there would have been time for the King to assemble the royal army and come down to the sea, as Darius III was to do in 333 for the battle of Issus. The revolt of Cyrus divided Persian sympathies as it divided the terrible royal women (*Ctes. Fr.*27), but the unity of the empire against outside attack was, save for the year 401 alone, unimpaired.

Nature and the opposition of untamed, barbarian tribes made the march of the Ten Thousand arduous. Their march through Persian territory was not so remarkable. For a mere nineteen days after the arrest of the generals and the rupture of the pact with Tissaphernes they had to expect harassment by Persian cavalry, and on six days to suffer it. But even then it was only harassment. Tissaphernes made no real attempt to block their passage. When he appeared with a large army (*III.*4.13f.), he attacked the Greeks on three sides, but despite his ample cavalry he left the van free. If the King had wanted to do more, he could have had the route blocked and the Greeks surrounded by mounted archers; in which case the Ten Thousand could hardly have avoided the fate of the Romans at Carrhae. (As it was, in the skirmishing many were wounded; Greek hoplites were well protected from death by arrows, not so well from disabling wounds.) So their march from the Zab up the Tigris was no great feat and proved nothing about Persian military power. Once they turned into the Kurdish hills, they were out of Persian-controlled territory. For it is important to understand that there were large areas of Asia which the King made no attempt to subject. Like the Romans

empire in the age of Cicero, the Persian empire was basically a number of fertile, prosperous areas linked by great roads to the heart of the empire (I.5.9). The art of maintaining so vast extended power was to avoid the inessentials. Kurds in their highland fastnesses were more trouble than they were worth: it was sufficient to keep them, by force or by agreement, from troubling the plain (III.5.16, Diod.XIV.27.5). The outlandish peoples, Macrones, Colchians, Mossynoeci and the like, had appeared at one stage on the official lists of peoples (cf. Herodotus VII.78), but by 401 they had clearly been written off as unimportant. The price of total pacification was too great. There was enough to do keeping the vital routes open and the tribute-bearing satrapies immune from warlike and perpetually troublesome people like the Cadusians by the Caspian Sea. Even a bargain, like the system of tolls paid to the Uxiarids on the road to Persepolis (Arrian *Anabasis* III.17), was good sense, not weakness – Alexander had had to traverse it more than once, he might have thought well of the Persian method. Satraps could have constant war with Mysians, Pisidians, Lycaonians (III.2.23) but all argued no more than the constant wars of, say, the Roman governors of Macedonia against the troublesome Thracian tribes. So the absence of Persian opposition for most of the march is no sign that the empire was tottering. The Greeks had six troubled days north from the Zab, they went unmolested through Armenia after an agreement with the satrap, until they themselves broke the agreement (IV.4.4,14,18); for the rest they were beyond Persian dominion. It took an Isocrates to think that this showed that the empire was ripe to fall.

Nor should one be misled by the curious situation revealed by the opening chapter of the first book, where Cyrus is found besieging Miletus, which Tissaphernes had disposed to his own satisfaction. The large satrapy, or rather combination of satrapies, and the equally large military command conferred on Cyrus by his father (I.9.7) was without precedent; it expressed the King's determination to put an end to Greeks playing off one satrap against another and to bring Athens to defeat; and the wrangle between Cyrus and Tissaphernes is obscure. But the normal situation was for satraps to have, within broad limits, very considerable autonomy, and this could involve not just failure to concert strategy, as happened with Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus in 412, but even agreement with the enemy to another satrapy's disadvantage, as happened in 395 when Tithraustes provided Agesilaus with money to take his army out of his satrapy and into Pharnabazus'. This strikes us as an odd form of imperialism, but we must recognize that it was not necessarily weakness. The empire was, in relation to the system of communications, huge and fragile. At so many points,

mountain passes or river-crossings, could the line of communications be broken that the king could only keep control by not trying to keep tight control. The Lydian and Phrygian satraps could be brought to heel in time of crisis. For the rest their freedom to wrangle was a safeguard of the authority of the central power.

The one real weakness of the empire touched on in the *Anabasis* was Egypt, which had revolted yet again shortly before the expedition of Cyrus (II.1.14, 5.13). It proved again and again more trouble than it was worth. The intense nationalism of the native people rendered the satrapy prone to revolt. Its reconquest was a difficult military problem. The approach by march across the desert made the provision of supplies difficult; the campaign had to be timed to begin as the Nile fell and to end before it rose; the arms of the Nile and the canal system made the country peculiarly defensible. In the fourth century the Persians had to make four expeditions before they recovered it in early 342, by which time they should have been active against their new enemy, Macedon. Egypt was a waste of effort, the great error of Persian policy, but that was all. The weakness discerned by Panhellenists was wishful thinking.

The Persian empire was vast. The *Anabasis* takes us through the western satrapies. Of the eastern, Xenophon knew perhaps little. There is no hint of the splendours of Persepolis or the vast tracts of eastern Iran where the strains and stresses of migrations were felt by Persian and later by Parthian. If he had known more, he might have hesitated before speaking in such general terms when in the *Oeconomicus* (4.4f.) he makes Socrates approvingly describe the Persian system. But at any rate that passage is a guide to the west.

The empire was divided into satrapies, provinces, and normally a satrap ruled in the name of the King. Often the satrapy was virtually hereditary. We are not accurately informed about the antecedents of Tissaphernes, but Pharnabazus certainly was son and father of satraps. Sometimes the king did not even send a Persian as satrap, but was content with native rulers provided that, like the regular satraps, they produced the stipulated tribute and troops on demand. The most celebrated case is the native dynast of Caria, Mausolus, but another is the Syennesis (1.2.26f.), who bore the hereditary title of the native rulers of Cilicia. As already noted, the satraps were accorded considerable independence, but there were effective checks on their good conduct. Most notable were the officials called the Eyes and the Ears of the King, who scrutinized the satrapal administration, and the Royal Judges. If a satrap was reported on unfavourably to the King, there were generally sufficient loyal Persians at the

satrapal court to arrest or to execute him, or at any rate not to prevent such order.

Tissaphernes himself, as satrap of Lydia, was to die six years after Cunaxa by royal command. Cyrus was in the exceptional position of being so close to the throne that he could command loyalty to himself, and his brother had to wait for news of his plans until Tissaphernes carried it in person. Normally a satrap would neither have been able to keep his secrets as long as Cyrus nor have even conceived such large ambitions. The proof of the effectiveness of the system is to be found in the fact that only in the late 360s, during the so-called Satrap Revolt when a large portion of Asia Minor was for a brief period alienated from the King, was revolt a serious problem, except of course for Egypt.

Xenophon in the *Oeconomicus* asserts curiously that the principle of division of civil and military authority was applied in all cases, save where there were satraps appointed. This is very odd, since as far as we know, apart from native rulers like Syennesis, every satrapy had a satrap. But perhaps we should take his statement as a serious warning against supposing that the system was uniform. We meet in the Greek sources officials described as hyparchai (governors), and it would be wrong to assume that they are either satraps or direct subordinates of satraps. Tiribazus (IV.4.4), hyparch of western Armenia, may be a case in point. He was, as Xenophon remarks, of high standing with the King. Although Diodorus refers to him as a satrap, presumably Xenophon had some different office in mind. Perhaps he was a military commander independent of a civil governor. Certainly the Persians showed in other spheres the tolerance necessary for a great empire. We should not expect uniformity in administration.

There was variety too in the tribute that satrapies had to pay. The Greeks entertained fantastic notions of the wealth of the King, for they conceived of every satrapy paying money. This is almost certainly wrong. Greek experience was largely confined to the western seaboard satrapies. But when the Macedonians captured Susa, they found precious metals of value no greater than five times the reserve wealth of Athens at the height of her power. The explanation is provided by one of the Alexander historians, Potyclitus of Larisa, Most of the inland satrapies paid in kind. That is why the Ten Thousand found in Armenia ponies being reared as tribute (V.5.24, 34). The economy of such areas was too primitive for the King to be able to exact the sums of money he regularly received from the prosperous western satrapies. For Persia, as for Rome, these latter were of exceptional importance financially speaking.

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