
INTRODUCTION

1 CYRUS AND THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

The events X. describes in *Anabasis* 3¹ were an unexpected consequence of the ambitions of a Persian prince, Cyrus. In 407² Cyrus had been appointed by his father, Darius II, to a special command in western Asia Minor. Previously the Persian satrap (3.4.31n.) Tissaphernes had played off the two protagonists of the Peloponnesian War (431–404), Athens and Sparta, against each other. But now Cyrus' arrival marked the start of concerted Persian support for Sparta – the ultimate cause of Spartan victory in the war. In return, Cyrus received Spartan support (700 hoplite troops under a Spartan general Chirisophus) for his attempt to overthrow his brother Artaxerxes, who had succeeded to the Persian throne on the death of Darius in 405. Despite a bold march into the heart of the Persian empire, the attempt failed, and it was this failure and the subsequent breakdown of negotiations with the Persians that left the surviving Greek soldiers in the desperate position on the banks of the Greater Zab described at the start of Book 3.

What had been at stake in Cyrus' rebellion was rule over the vast Persian empire, which stretched from the shores of Asia Minor to Afghanistan and India.³ At around the start of the first millennium, the Persians, who spoke a language from the Iranian branch of Indo-European, had moved (probably from central Asia) to what is now the region of Fars (Greek *Persis*) in south-west Iran. They appear as tribute-payers in Assyrian inscriptions from the ninth century, and seem to have fallen under the control of the Medes (also speakers of an Iranian language) in the latter part of the seventh century, after the overthrow of the Assyrians (3.4.7–12n.). The Persian empire itself was founded by Cyrus II (known as 'the elder Cyrus' or 'Cyrus the Great'; Old Persian *Kūrush*), who ruled 559–530. Cyrus defeated the Medes, conquered the wealthy Lydian empire in western Asia Minor, thereby bringing under his sway the Greek cities in that region which had been subjected by the Lydian king Croesus, and then seized control in Babylonia. He also expanded Persian rule eastwards. Cyrus' son Cambyses extended the empire further by conquering

¹ The title *Anabasis* ('March upcountry') applies properly only to the first of its seven books; similarly *Cyropaedia* applies only to the first stages of that work. It is not certain that the titles of X.'s works are original.

² Dates in sections 1–6 of the Introduction are BC unless indicated otherwise.

³ Briant 2002 is the fundamental study of the Persian empire. See also Waters 2014 for an accessible shorter account and Kuhrt 2007 for a valuable collection of sources. For X.'s presentation of Persia, see *CCX* 360–75; Hirsch 1985; Tuplin 2004a.

Egypt in 525. Cambyses' death was followed by political disorder which was resolved when Darius seized power and founded the Achaemenid dynasty (Darius sought to connect his own family with Cyrus' by claiming a common ancestor, Achaemenes). It was during Darius' reign that the first major clashes between Greeks and Persians occurred: the Greek cities in Ionia revolted from Persian rule in 499 and received help from Athens, which led to the burning of part of the satrapal capital Sardis. Some years later, in 490, Darius sought revenge by sending an expedition against mainland Greece, but his army was defeated by the Athenians at Marathon (3.2.11n.). His son Xerxes sent a larger expedition in 480, but this too was defeated (3.2.13n.), though it did succeed in burning the Athenian acropolis. From that point the Persians made no further attempts on mainland Greece; when opportunity arose towards the end of the century, however, they sought to strengthen their hold on Asia Minor (their claim to which they had never abandoned) by supporting Sparta against Athens, which after the victory over Xerxes had established a position of hegemony over many of the coastal cities and offshore islands (a peace treaty between Persia and Athens may have been agreed in the early 440s).

The account offered in *Anabasis* of the background to Cyrus' revolt is sketchy. X. mentions the official Spartan support only allusively (1.2.21, 4.2; contrast the much more explicit treatment at *Hell.* 3.1.1).⁴ He says nothing about the state of the Persian empire (Cyrus may have been encouraged to strike when he did by a revolt against Persian rule in Egypt (cf. 2.1.14, 5.13)) and little about the attachments of the Persian nobility.⁵ As for Cyrus' motives, it is Plutarch (*Artax.* 2.4) who mentions that his claim to the throne was based on his having been the first son born after Darius became king – though this version may be influenced by Herodotus' possibly unreliable account of the succession of Xerxes (7.2–3). X. suggests instead that Cyrus' revolt was an escalation of the suspicion between the brothers that had been fostered by Tissaphernes, who felt himself overshadowed by Cyrus' appointment in Asia Minor. This account might seem to prepare a bit too well for the stress on the mutual suspicion between Greeks and Persians that features strongly in *Anabasis* 2–3. That it is at least plausible may nonetheless be seen from other examples of fraternal hostility in the Achaemenid court: thus Darius II had seized power by overthrowing a half-brother who had himself killed his brother.

⁴ Similarly sketchy is X.'s account of relations after the army's arrival at the Black Sea coast between Spartan officials and the Spartiate Neon, who takes over (unelected) from Chirisophus when the latter is absent seeking ships from the Spartans and then after his death (see Huitink and Rood 2016: 217–18).

⁵ Against recent Achaemenid historians who stress loyalty to the king, Lee 2016 argues that many elite Persians hedged their bets.

A clearer picture emerges in *Anabasis* of the way Cyrus presented his plans to the Greek mercenaries. When he was gathering the different contingents, he used a variety of pretexts, including the suggestion that he was preparing a punitive expedition against the Pisidians (1.1.11, 3.1.9), who occupied a mountainous region north of Lycia and Pamphylia and were perceived as troublesome (3.2.23n.). This suggestion was later used as a pretext for the whole army (1.2.1). Later still, when the army mutinied at Tarsus, after bypassing the Pisidians in its march through Asia Minor, Cyrus responded by claiming that he was leading them against a personal enemy on the Euphrates (1.3.20) rather than against the king, as they suspected (1.3.1). It was only when the Greeks reached the Euphrates that he finally revealed that he was actually leading them against the king (1.4.11).

X.'s detailed picture of Cyrus' subterfuge is complicated by his claim that the object of the expedition was known all along to one of the Greek generals – the Spartan exile Clearchus (3.1.10).⁶ The first-century universal historian Diodorus, by contrast, claims that all the generals knew that Cyrus was marching against the king (14.19.9). In view of the controversy generated by Cyrus' expedition, X. might be thought to be defending the other generals and the army as a whole from the charge that they knowingly sought to overthrow the king (for an Athenian, even following Cyrus was controversial, given his role in the Peloponnesian War, 3.1.5n.). Diodorus' statement, however, may not accurately reflect his likely source, the fourth-century historian Ephorus, or else Ephorus may have extrapolated this claim from X.⁷ In any case, X.'s claim that Clearchus alone knew of Cyrus' plans is restricted to those Greeks who were with Cyrus from the start; Cyrus' aim must have been known to Chirisophus, but he joined the expedition only at a later date.⁸ X.'s main concern, then, is to build up a picture of close collaboration between Cyrus and Clearchus: on his first mention, Clearchus is said to be admired by Cyrus (1.1.9); he is shown manipulating the soldiers into following Cyrus when they mutiny at Tarsus (1.3); he is the only Greek admitted into Cyrus' tent for the trial of an errant Persian officer (1.6); and he holds a position on the right wing in the decisive battle against the king at Cunaxa (1.8.4).⁹

The march through Asia Minor and down the Euphrates is described by X. in *Anabasis* 1. That book ends with Cyrus' death at Cunaxa and his

⁶ Earlier X. states that the soldiers suspected all the generals of having had prior knowledge (1.4.12); at 1.3.21 ('no one had been told even then that he was leading them against the king, at least not openly (ἐν τῶι γε φανερωῖ)') he hints at secret information.

⁷ Stylianou 2004: 87.

⁸ Bassett 2001: 12 wrongly impugns X.'s reliability on this account.

⁹ Cunaxa is named as the location of the battle at Plut. *Artax.* 8.2 (but not by X.).

Greek mercenaries stranded in the heart of the Persian empire. The rest of *Anabasis* tells the story of their unexpected survival – their return to the sea up the Tigris valley (Book 3), through Kurdistan and Armenia (Book 4), their march along the Black Sea coast, and finally, on their approach to the Hellespont and after they have crossed over into Europe, their dealings with the Spartans (now the dominant power in Greece) and Seuthes, a Thracian dynast (Books 5–7). It is an exciting tale in its own right and a useful source for the Persian empire (e.g. 3.4.17, 3.1 nn.; Tuplin 2004a) – even if modern Achaemenid historians have been frustrated that it does not do more to supplement the knowledge gained in the past century from the discovery of clay tablets from Persepolis and other archival material. But the fame of the account has above all lain in its depiction of the army with which Xenophon was serving.

2 THE TEN THOUSAND

The Ten Thousand has been the term used since antiquity to describe the mercenaries recruited by Cyrus' Greek generals;¹⁰ in *Anabasis* X. most often calls them 'the Greeks' (for his other works, see 3.2.17n.). His careful delineation of the different contingents reveals that their total number was in fact 12,900 – that is, 10,600 heavy-armed troops (hoplites) and 2,300 light-armed (peltasts). It was presumably the largest unit of Greek mercenaries ever assembled, foreshadowing the increasing importance of mercenaries and the growing specialization of the art of war in the Greek world in the fourth century.¹¹

The Ten Thousand have often been seen as a model political unit. Thus Edward Gibbon contrasted the lassitude of a Roman army stranded in Mesopotamia after the death of the emperor Julian with the vigorous response of the Ten Thousand at the start of *Anabasis* 3, following the loss of their generals: 'Instead of tamely resigning themselves to the secret deliberations and private views of a single person, the united councils of the Greeks were inspired by the generous enthusiasm of a popular assembly: where the mind of each citizen is filled with the love of glory, the pride of freedom, and the contempt of death.'¹² From the nineteenth century onwards, the qualities displayed by the Ten Thousand have been

¹⁰ Plut. *Ant.* 45.12; Arr. *Anab.* 1.12.3, 2.7.8; Justin 5.11.10; *Suda* ξ 48 Adler; note also the interpolation ἐκ τῶν ἀμφὶ τοὺς μυριάδας in the f MSS at *An.* 5.3.3. The term could have been partly inspired by *An.* 3.2.31, 5.7.9, 6.4.3 (cf. Schaefer 1961 on 10,000 as a desirable size for a city). Bonner 1910 points out that they were roughly 10,000 when they reached the Black Sea.

¹¹ On Greek mercenaries, see Parke 1933; Trundle 2004. On the influence of this increasing specialization on X.'s language, see section 5 below.

¹² Gibbon 1994: 1.951. Cf. Gillies 1790: II.317 n. 2.

particularly associated with democratic Athens: the French historian Hippolyte Taine called them ‘a sort of Athens wandering in the middle of Asia’ (though only a handful of the soldiers are known to have come from that city).¹³

However they have been viewed subsequently, the Ten Thousand did not start out as a ‘*polis* on the march’. They were originally part of a much larger army that included many non-Greeks. While the Greek component of this larger army always seems to have marched together, it was itself a collection of smaller units, ranging from 500 to 2,000 in size, enlisted by Cyrus’ Greek generals (στρατηγοί) in Asia Minor, the Chersonese and the Greek mainland. These units were divided into companies (λόχοι) of about a hundred men, each led by a captain (λοχαγός) and itself divided into still smaller units (3.4.21n.); there were also strong bonds between tent-mates (σύσκηνοι).¹⁴ Besides this, the contingents were at times caught up in the rivalries among the Greek generals who were competing for Cyrus’ favour: during the mutiny at Tarsus, Clearchus attracted to his contingent more than 2,000 of the troops with Xenias and Pasion (1.3.7) – both of whom soon thereafter abandoned the expedition (1.4.7); later, the troops of the main rivals, Clearchus and Meno, almost came to blows (1.5.12–17).

In X.’s account, it is after the arrest of the generals – in the dramatic scene at the start of Book 3 that was picked out by Gibbon – that the Ten Thousand first function as a unified political community. It is true that, after Cyrus’ death, there are no further hints of different contingents within the Greek army (though rivalries among the generals continue). But decisions are taken by the generals without consultation of the troops (e.g. 2.1.2–5, 8–23, 2.3–5, 8–12), though the troops do sometimes make

¹³ See Rood 2004b: 99–100.

¹⁴ These subdivisions do not in themselves weaken the parallel with the *polis*, given that the *polis* too had numerous other types of social bond; the stimulating study by Lee 2007 argues nonetheless for the priority of these small-scale ties over the *polis* model (articulated in the classic sociological analysis of Nussbaum 1967) – though part of Lee’s evidence is the experience of modern soldiers. Cf. also Dalby 1992; Dillery 1995: 63–95. Hornblower 2004a sees the democratic pattern in other Greek armies too. For analogies of city and army, see e.g. Soph. *Aj.* 1073–6, *Phil.* 386–8; Isoc. 6 (proposal that the Spartans should abandon their city and live like an army off the land); cf. Hdt. 8.61 and the Thucydidean image of the Athenian army in Sicily as like a city (Avery 1973: 8–13). The political language of the city was applied to symposia (Dover on Pl. *Symp.* 176a1–178a5) and to festivals (the women’s assembly in Ar. *Thesm.*). Within *Anabasis*, note the accusation that Xenophon is a ‘demagogue’ (7.6.4); the terms for voting at 1.4.15, 3.2.9 (with qualifications in n.), 38(n.), 5.1.4, 14, 6.11, 35, 7.3.14; the judicial language at 4.4.14, 5.7.34, 6.6.18; the formal dealings with Greek cities (e.g. the offer of ξένια at 6.1.15); also 3.1.37, 3.20nn.

their views heard (e.g. 2.4.2–4, 5.29), and among the generals Clearchus assumes a leading role owing to his personal authority (2.2.5; cf. 2.2.21, 4.5, 18). At the start of Book 3, by contrast, new generals (Xenophon among them) are elected to replace the ones who have been lost, and the whole army meets and votes by hand on a range of proposals. But it is only a democratic community in a limited sense: no further such meetings take place in the course of the retreat to the sea, and even at the first assembly speakers resort to voting only because they are sure of the outcome (the votes are unanimous), to give the troops the feeling that their destiny is in their own hands. It is still the generals (sometimes with the captains) who make all the strategic and tactical decisions (3.3.11–19, 4.21, 5.7–12, 14–17, 4.1.12–13, 26–8, 3.14–15, 6.7–19).

X. presents the army as most similar to a '*polis* on the march' after its arrival at the Black Sea: it now holds frequent meetings,¹⁵ votes on some measures (albeit still with no opposition indicated), and negotiates as a body with the Greek and non-Greek inhabitants (e.g. 5.5.7–25, 6.2–14, 6.1.15). Even so, the soldiers are hostile to the possibility of establishing a permanent new *polis* on the Black Sea coast (5.6.19, 7.1, 6.4.7). The army's unity also succumbs to the renewed prominence of its ethnic divisions: an Arcadian group splits off for a time, with disastrous results (6.3; cf. 5.5.5). Even when the army is united, moreover, the presentation is not consistently positive: the soldiers increasingly succumb to greed, at one point even electing a single leader for the sake of greater efficiency and profit in plundering expeditions (6.1.17–18); and their violence alienates the Greek cities along the coast (e.g. 5.7.17–26).

For Cyrus the initial attraction of the Greek troops had lain in their military rather than political qualities. Greek hoplites were experienced at fighting as a cohesive force. This type of fighting was made possible by their heavy armour – though just how heavy their armour was and just how cohesively they fought are both matters of controversy. The traditional view of hoplites charging and pushing close together may reflect an ideal rather than reality.¹⁶ In practice there was probably considerable variation among the hoplites: while they would all presumably have been equipped with shields of wood faced with bronze and with a long spear for thrusting and a short sword, their breastplates would have been of either bronze or folded linen (perhaps with bronze plates), and some would have worn heavy enclosed bronze helmets, others lighter conical ones.¹⁷ Whatever the differences of armour, the power of a hoplite phalanx is

¹⁵ For a list (fifteen or sixteen in all), see Ferrario 2014: 196 n. 74.

¹⁶ The essays in Kagan and Viggiano 2013 offer an overview of different positions.

¹⁷ See Snodgrass 1999; Lee 2007: 111–17; also 3.3.20n.

suggested by two scenes in the opening book of *Anabasis*: a parade early in the march where a charge by the hoplites frightens the non-Greek spectators (1.2.15–18), and the battle against the king, which is presented as an easy victory for the Greek hoplites against the troops stationed opposite them (3.1.23n.). During their retreat, by contrast, it was the hoplites' ability to adapt to changes in terrain that was vital: mobile companies were instituted to prevent disorder as the line contracted and expanded (3.4.19–23n.), and the troops fought in columns spaced out to outflank the enemy (4.8.10–19).

Even more vital for the success of the retreat was close co-ordination with the light-armed troops (3.2.36n.). The peltasts mainly came from mountainous areas on the fringes of the Greek world; there were many non-Greeks among them (e.g. 800 Thracians recruited by Clearchus, 1.2.9). With their equipment of light crescent-shaped wicker shields, long javelins and short swords, they were far more mobile than hoplites in mountainous terrain. The diversity of the army was further boosted by 200 Cretan archers (3.3.7n.) and by a volunteer force of slingers constituted from Rhodians in the course of the retreat (3.3.16n.).

There were also non-combatants accompanying the army, including market-traders and personal attendants (3.2.36, 3.16, 4.49nn.).¹⁸ In addition, there were women companions and slaves, though they appear only infrequently in X.'s account – for instance as dancers or as spectators of athletic games.¹⁹ And as the army progressed it took prisoners, some of whom acted as guides (3.1.2n.), others as additional sexual partners (4.1.14, 6.3, 7.4.7).

Why did so many Greeks enlist with Cyrus?²⁰ A broad overview of their motives is offered when X. explains why the soldiers are opposed to the idea of founding a city on the shores of the Black Sea: most of them wanted to return home because they 'had sailed out not owing to a lack of livelihood but hearing of Cyrus' excellence' (6.4.8; cf. 3.1.3n.). If applied to the whole army, this comment is belied by X.'s own narrative: there were some – like the seer Silanus, a particular beneficiary of Cyrus' generosity (1.7.18) – who had good reason to return home (5.6.17–18, 6.4.13; cf. 5.7.15), but most of the survivors joined the Spartans at the end of the expedition, resuming a career of mercenary service in Asia Minor. X.'s comment at 6.4.8 can still be defended if it is taken to exclude those members of the Ten Thousand who, even if they came originally from

¹⁸ For the suppression of slave attendants in ancient historical narratives, see Hunt 1998; Lee 2007: 256–9 argues that there were in fact relatively few accompanying the Ten Thousand.

¹⁹ Lane Fox 2004c; Lee 2004.

²⁰ Roy 1967, with some modification in Roy 2004, is the fundamental study.

mainland Greece, were already serving as mercenaries in Asia Minor, following a long tradition of such service (in 440, for instance, the Samians were provided with 700 Greek mercenaries by the satrap Pissuthnes (Thuc. 1.115.4)); those thus excluded would probably include many of the hoplites (almost two thirds of the total) who came from the relatively poor regions of Arcadia and Achaëa in the Peloponnese.²¹ In his obituary notice for Clearchus, moreover, X. refers to the authority he exercised over those who were serving with him 'owing to want or constrained by some other necessity' (2.6.13). This claim refers to Clearchus' whole career rather than exclusively to the Ten Thousand, but it must capture the circumstances of some of the troops.

That the majority of the mercenaries were not driven by extreme poverty is nonetheless suggested by their conditions of service. The hoplites probably supplied their own equipment; as noted above, some were even wealthy enough to bring servants with them. The rate of pay (3.5.8n.) was not particularly high by comparison with the known rates for other types of employment, though pay was at least given for each day of service. While serving under Cyrus, they also had to buy food at quite high prices from local villages or from the merchants who accompanied the expedition, though they were sometimes allowed to plunder once they were outside the districts that Cyrus himself ruled (3.1.2n.).

Overall, while X. is probably right in disclaiming extreme poverty as a motive, a considerable variety of motives must be allowed. The army included the Spartan general Clearchus, who after an adventurous career was now an exile (3.1.10n.). Another Spartan exile was Dracontius (probably a captain), who had accidentally killed a boy in his youth (4.8.25). And the variety of motives is further expanded if we turn to the man whose circumstances are explored most elaborately, Xenophon himself.

3 XENOPHON'S LIFE

The sources for our knowledge of X.'s life are *Anabasis* itself; the short anecdotal biography by Diogenes Laertius (2.48–59) written in the third century AD and drawing on a range of earlier authors; and a few anecdotes preserved by other writers. Besides this, a certain amount may be inferred from X.'s other works. All the various sources must be treated with some scepticism:²² X.'s own treatments because he may have been

²¹ Roy 2004: 276. Roy persuasively argues that the overall proportion of Arcadians and Achaëans does not reflect a sudden crisis at the end of the Peloponnesian War, but an Arcadian tradition of raising sons in the expectation that some of them would go abroad to serve as mercenaries.

²² Against the common practice of judging from X.'s narrative style in particular passages whether he was an eyewitness, see Anderson 1986: 37.

concerned to defend himself or to exaggerate his own influence, other sources because they reflect later fabrication.²³

X. was probably born in the early 420s. The best evidence for this date comes from the scene in *Anabasis* 3 where Xenophon insists that his youth is no reason for him not to take a lead in stirring the troops (3.1.25): that his ξένος Proxenus was already a general at the age of 30 (2.6.20) suggests that X. was, if anything, somewhat younger (the ξενία itself need not imply that they were the same age, especially if it was inherited, 3.1.4n.).²⁴ At any rate, there is no reason to trust the *akme* dates (i.e. the date at which X. reached the age of 40) given by ancient sources: 'the fourth year of the ninety-fourth Olympiad' (401/400: Diog. Laert. 2.55) and 'the ninety-fifth Olympiad' (400/399–397/396: *Suda* ξ 47 Adler) are both evidently based on Xenophon's overall role in *Anabasis*, while 'the eighty-ninth Olympiad' (424/423–421/420: cited from another source by Diog. Laert. 2.59) seems to be based either on Xenophon's presence at the dinner described in X.'s *Symposium* (dramatic date 422, but his presence is probably an authenticating fiction) or on the story that he was saved by Socrates at the battle of Delium (424).²⁵

Diogenes offers the information that X. came from the inland Attic deme of Erchia and that his father's name was Gryllus (2.48). Nothing further is known of the father, but he was presumably wealthy, to judge from his son's pursuits – horses (3.3.19, 4.47–9nn.), hunting (cf. *Cynegeticus*) and Socrates (3.1.5n.). As for the origin of the Socratic connection, Diogenes tells the story that Socrates prevented X. moving forward in an alley and reduced him to ἀπορία by asking first where food was sold, then where men become noble and good (2.48) – a story that seems to anticipate X.'s later ability to extract the Greeks from tight spots (3.1.2n.). The extent of X.'s acquaintance with Socrates has sometimes been doubted, particularly by Platonic scholars, but this scepticism (which reflects the

²³ See 3.1.4n. for one example; other examples include his being enamoured of Clinias (Diog. Laert. 2.49 – clearly based on Critobulus' expression of love for Clinias at X. *Symp.* 4.12); and the very popular story of his response while sacrificing to news of his son's death (Tuplin 1993: 32 n. 76 gives the sources; add Jerome, *Epistles* 60.5.2). Fictional letters sent by or to X. can be found in Hercher, *Epistolog. Graec.* For modern treatments of X.'s life, see *CCX* 15–36; Breitenbach 1967: 1571–8; Anderson 1974; Badian 2004; the most detailed treatment, Delebecque 1957, is unfortunately marked by circularity, in that it infers the dates of (different parts of) X.'s various works from their supposed political leanings.

²⁴ At Athens 30 was the age-limit for holding some offices and for jury service ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 30.2, 63.3), but Xenophon is not thinking of formal offices at 3.1.25 (n.). Falappone 1979 supports an early date for X.'s birth, but her attempt to dismiss the evidence of 3.1.14 (as relating to age in comparison with the other soldiers rather than the appropriate age for generalship) is not convincing.

²⁵ Str. 9.2.7; Diog. Laert. 2.22–3; the story was perhaps in turn inspired by the story that Socrates saved Alcibiades at Potidaea (Pl. *Symp.* 220d5–e7).

general lowering of X.'s reputation as both philosopher and historian in the course of the nineteenth century) has been rebutted by recent work on *Memorabilia*.²⁶

It is generally assumed that X. served in the Athenian cavalry in the final stages of the Peloponnesian War and that he stayed on in Athens during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants (404–403), the junta imposed by the Spartans after Athens' defeat. It is also possible that he was among the small cavalry contingent that supported the exiled Athenian democrats (*Hell.* 2.4.25). He certainly offers a negative image of the Thirty in both *Hellenica* and *Memorabilia* and a positive image of the lasting reconciliation achieved after their overthrow (*Hell.* 2.4.43); his presentation of the civil war could equally reflect disillusion with the direction taken by the Thirty, gratitude to the democracy for the amnesty, and a consistent commitment to the democracy.

Xenophon's decision to sail to Asia is presented in *Anabasis* as a response to a promise that he will become a φίλος of Cyrus. It was not his aim to leave Athens for good: he asks the Delphic oracle about how he can return safe and successful (3.1.6); Cyrus promises to send him back home after the supposed Pisidian expedition (3.1.9(n.)); and he is still planning to return home during the later stages of the expedition.²⁷ Attempts to uncover X.'s actual motivations must bear in mind the possible ideological and apologetic undercurrents of his self-presentation. An aristocratic ethos underlies the insistence that Xenophon wants a relationship with Cyrus defined by reciprocity rather than by service for cash (X. insists that he was not serving as a general, company commander or soldier, 3.1.4n.). And Xenophon's professed desire to return to Athens after joining Cyrus may reflect X.'s later desire to show his civic commitment to Athens.

Modern scholars often suggest instead that X. left Athens because he was disenchanted with the Athenian democracy or even (assuming he served in the cavalry under the Thirty) because he feared for his own safety despite the amnesty.²⁸ Like many attempts to reconstruct X.'s life, however, these suggestions run the risk of circularity: X.'s decision to leave

²⁶ In particular the edition by Bandini and Dorion, the introduction to which offers a valuable overview of the reception of X. as a Socratic; see also Dorion 2013.

²⁷ 7.7.57; cf. 6.4.8, discussed above. At 6.2.15, 7.1.4, 8, 38 Xenophon wants to sail off, but where is not specified; in speeches at 7.6.11, 33, however, he specifies home as his destination. Even at 7.2.37–8, where he is at least tempted by Seuthes' offer of some strongholds on the Thracian coast, his thoughts are largely on a place of refuge from the Spartans at a time when returning to Athens would have been difficult.

²⁸ See *CCX* 338–59 for a general account of X.'s relationship with Athens.