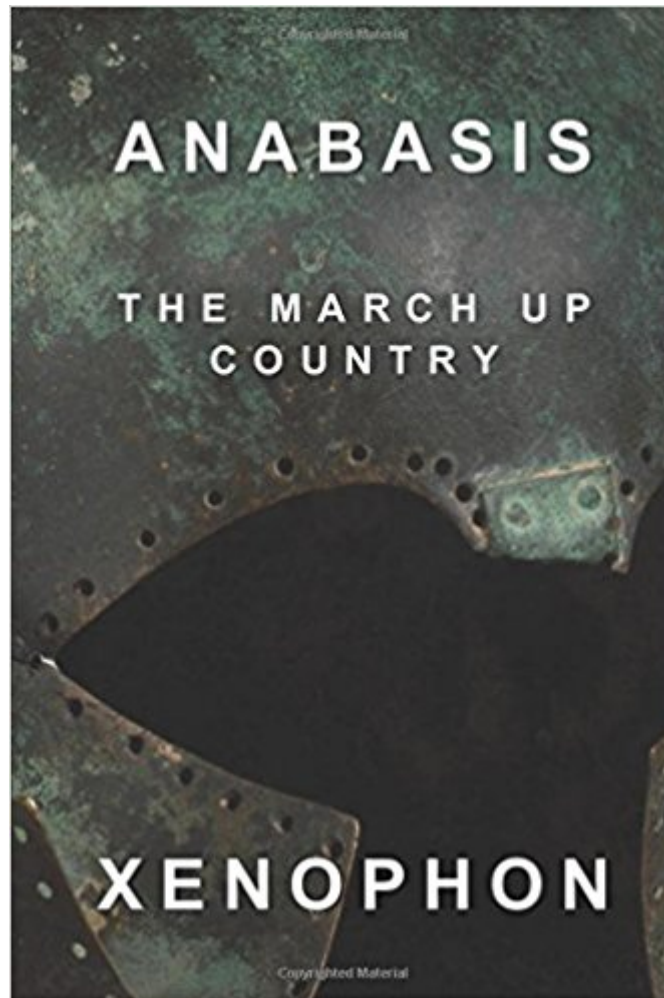




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Anabasis: The March Up Country



Synopsis

The text was composed around the year 370 BC, and in translations, *Anabasis* is rendered *The March of the Ten Thousand* or *The March Up Country*. Xenophon accompanied the Ten Thousand, a large army of Greek mercenaries hired by Cyrus the Younger, who intended to seize the throne of Persia from his brother, Artaxerxes II. Though Cyrus' mixed army fought to a tactical victory at Cunaxa in Babylon (401 BC), Cyrus was killed, rendering the actions of the Greeks irrelevant and the expedition a failure. Stranded deep in Persia, the Spartan general Clearchus and the other Greek senior officers were then killed or captured by treachery on the part of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. Xenophon, one of three remaining leaders elected by the soldiers, played an instrumental role in encouraging the 10,000 to march north across foodless deserts and snow-filled mountain passes, towards the Black Sea and the comparative security of its Greek shoreline cities. Now abandoned in northern Mesopotamia, without supplies other than what they could obtain by force or diplomacy, the 10,000 had to fight their way northwards through Corduene and Armenia, making ad hoc decisions about their leadership, tactics, provender and destiny, while the King's army and hostile natives barred their way and attacked their flanks. Ultimately this "marching republic" managed to reach the shores of the Black Sea at Trabzon (Trebizond), a destination they greeted with their famous cry of exultation on the mountain of Theches (Madur) in Sarmene: "Thálatta, thálatta", "The sea, the sea!". "The sea" meant that they were at last among Greek cities but it was not the end of their journey, which included a period fighting for Seuthes II of Thrace and ended with their recruitment into the army of the Spartan general Thibron. Xenophon related this story in *Anabasis* in a simple and direct manner.

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Customer Reviews

A modern re-titling could be "The Adventures of Xenophon." I've given this 5 stars because the book is unique. It tells the autobiographical tale of Xenophon, then a twenty-something Athenian, student of Socrates, who joined a grand military campaign of Cyrus, son of Darius. Keeping his intentions secret from his ever-growing body of troops, Cyrus's real intention is to de-throne his brother, Artaxerxes II, king of Persia. In the meantime, as he traverses large stretches of land, he engages in various military skirmishes, still keeping his intentions secret from his troops. Finally, once they're "deep in" over a long period of marching and pillaging, the true intent of Cyrus becomes clear. The Persian satrap Tissaphernes has long suspected Cyrus's intentions and believes he means to harm Artaxerxes. Accordingly, provisions have been made to counter Cyrus. The rout is spectacular, Cyrus is killed, the troops are scattered. Leading the Hellenes home over many treacherous miles and through remarkably varied territory (mountainous, plains, frozen, etc.) falls to the young Athenian Xenophon. This is the long retreat. This book is part travelogue: throughout their long trip home they encounter a variety of cultures, including "the most barbaric and outlandish of people" who entertained visitors with exhibitions of their "fatted children" covered in tattoos, "fed up on boiled chestnuts until they were as white as white can be." Xenophon's men discover that this subculture keeps "slices of dolphin....in narrow-necked jars, all properly salted and picked." Near the end of the book, Xenophon's soldiers suffer frostbite and are said to then understand why the Thracian soldiers wore fox fur caps that covered their ears and long garments. And so on. Three-quarters of the way in the book I began to tire of the military strategy details (if you can find a version of this book with maps and diagrams for the battles, I'd recommend that). But the biggest takeaway is the wisdom and toughness of young Xenophon in encountering amazing odds, even, towards the end of the book, the attempted mutiny of some of his men who wrongly accuse him and seek his death. Highly observant, Xenophon is always ahead of those scheming against him. Xenophon finally completes his journey, and is so poor he is forced to sell his prized horse. That's before a dramatic turn of fortune, which I'll leave to the reader to discover.

A fine, parallel English and Greek Xenophon By Lawrence Woodlock I recently purchased this publisher's Herodotus volume, and was so impressed I gave it a lengthy review, and quickly purchased their Xenophon! I would, indeed, buy anything else they publish. The Anabasis of Xenophon (all seven books) appears in a very nice and scalable Greek font with an accompanying

English translation below, both of which display beautifully on my Paperwhite - an excellent alternative to multi-volume English-Greek printed texts, at a much lower cost and in a much smaller package! It's a pleasure to read these books on the Kindle. In a couple days of reading, I've spotted few obvious anomalies in the text of either language. I did observe near the beginning of Book Five that the translation refers to a certain "Antileon", who is named "Leon" in the Greek text - suggesting that the English translation may be based on a slightly different Greek text from the one actually before us. The English translation in any event reads smoothly, and provides a good crib for those focused primarily on the Greek text. Books Two through Five, and Book Seven, open with a brief summary of what has gone before - inserted in parentheses. This parenthetical material is included in many Greek manuscripts, and is rightly included (in brackets) here. It is thought that these brief introductions were not written by Xenophon, but were added a few centuries later, when the work was divided into the seven books we have today. As I said in my review of the Herodotus volume: "After too many years, we now know that it is possible for ancient Greek texts to come into their own on e-readers. From their website, it appears that the publisher's inspiration for this work was Heinrich Schliemann, who carried his texts with him everywhere, for use whenever he found a moment to read. This is certainly something that Herr Schliemann would have loved!" I certainly hope the publisher will find the stamina to provide us with other volumes like these two.

There is a reason *Anabasis* has long been considered a classic and required reading for military personnel of all ranks: Xenophon's recount of an extended, long-range campaign in hostile country against overwhelming odds illustrates the best and worst behaviors AND resulting effects of generals, rulers, and rank-and-file troops, operating under extremely authoritarian figures - and excessively democratic figures. There is no other book which so clearly encapsulates the lessons of war learned the hard way. My advice: Get a large map of the region, showing terrain and spheres of influence circa 400 BC. It will add significantly to your understanding and appreciation of the work.

This book is a classic in the truest sense of the word! This is a story that has been used to teach an untold number of great men and women throughout history, but sadly is not well known today. Often, it's been used for readers to cut their teeth on the original in Greek, because the language is simple and straightforward, and the story is compelling. This is the true story of an army of Greek warriors and their journey into the heart of the Persian empire, and their struggle to get back home. It's a tale of adventure, intrigue, loyalty, betrayal, and as you read you can't help but gain a better understanding of the ancient Greeks. As you read you'll see the Greeks at war, their democracy in

action, as well as their rhetoric and faith in the gods on display. This is one of the best adventure stories around that none of your friends have heard of. And as of right now, it's free for your Kindle. All those things combine to make this a must-read!

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