



Cyropaedia Volume 1, books 1-4

Xenophon

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Cyropaedia Volume 1, books 1-4 Xenophon

Xenophon (ca. 430 to ca. 354 BCE) was a wealthy Athenian and friend of Socrates. He left Athens in 401 and joined an expedition including ten thousand Greeks led by the Persian governor Cyrus against the Persian king. After the defeat of Cyrus, it fell to Xenophon to lead the Greeks from the gates of Babylon back to the coast through inhospitable lands. Later he wrote the famous vivid account of this 'March Up-Country' ("Anabasis"); but meanwhile he entered service under the Spartans against the Persian king, married happily, and joined the staff of the Spartan king, Agesilaus. But Athens was at war with Sparta in 394 and so exiled Xenophon. The Spartans gave him an estate near Elis where he lived for years writing and hunting and educating his sons. Reconciled to Sparta, Athens restored Xenophon to honour but he preferred to retire to Corinth.

Xenophon's "Anabasis" is a true story of remarkable adventures. "Hellenica, " a history of Greek affairs from 411 to 362, begins as a continuation of Thucydides' account. There are four works on Socrates (collected in Volume IV of the Loeb Xenophon edition). In "Memorabilia" Xenophon adds to Plato's picture of Socrates from a different viewpoint. The "Apology" is an interesting complement to Plato's account of Socrates' defense at his trial. Xenophon's "Symposium" portrays a dinner party at which Socrates speaks of love; and "Oeconomicus" has him giving advice on household management and married life. "Cyropaedia, " a historical romance on the education of Cyrus (the Elder), reflects Xenophon's ideas about rulers and government; the Loeb edition is in two volumes.

We also have his "Hiero, " a dialogue on government; "Agesilaus, " in praise of that king; "Constitution of Lacedaemon" (on the Spartan system); "Ways and Means" (on the finances of Athens); "Manual for a Cavalry Commander;" a good manual of "Horsemanship;" and a lively "Hunting with Hounds. The Constitution of the Athenians, " though clearly not by Xenophon, is an interesting document on politics at Athens. These eight books are collected in the last of the seven volumes of the Loeb Classical Library edition of Xenophon.

Cyropaedia Volume 1, books 1-4 Details

Date : Published January 1st 1914 by Harvard University Press (first published -370)

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Author : Xenophon

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From Reader Review Cyropaedia Volume 1, books 1-4 for online ebook

10001010001 says

I have been keeping my eyes on the presence (or absence) of the word παρρησία (yup, that "parrhesia" thing), which is the central topic of the lectures by Foucault during the last two years of his life. So far it didn't show up, not even once. Leo Strauss would make a spectacularly skillful close reading fuss on this: "Notice what should have been there but wasn't actually there!" But alas, I'm not as a tenth good a reader as Strauss.

Cyrus is gifted in persuading people (and seriously this book should have a subtitle *the Art of the Deals* — Xenophon is the true expert!). He made so many speeches but if none of them should be counted as parrhesia — then it's fundamentally problematic, as a character of his ruling.

This is merely first half of the book so I'd better say nothing definite yet.

Joe says

Comments:

I know that it is ridiculous to have only Books I-IV of this classic but the 'Loeb Classical Library' books are very small in size (even though they are hardcover) and so I have, over the years, carried them around and lost them. I can really be comically absent-minded at times! Xenophon was taken far more seriously as a thinker by the ancients, and even the medievals, than he is today. Leo Strauss has tried to turn that around but with, I think, little success. Compared with Plato Xenophon is indeed boring. For young people today, or anyone really, looking to start out on Xenophon I would recommend starting with 'Anabasis' which really is a wonderfully exciting account of Greek mercenaries in Persia. This book, 'The Education of Cyrus' really is of interest for the history of Political Philosophy. Machiavelli was aware of it and recognized it as something he wanted to overturn.

David says

Tales of Cyrus the Great of Persia, from a Greek perspective.

Nemo says

Plato writes in Republic that the principle of justice is the same for an individual as it is for a state. Therefore, the person who is eligible to govern a state must be a philosopher, i.e. lover of wisdom. Xenophon has found concrete expression of this ideal in the person of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, who embodied the essential characters of a philosopher-king, shepherd and guardian of the state.

Cyropaedia ("The Education of Cyrus") is a fascinating biography of Cyrus the Great. It integrates seamlessly into one narrative all the interesting aspects of biography, history, romance, war epic, political philosophy, leadership manual and military treatise, and yet, like many other Greco-Roman classics, is written in a simple, elegant, vivacious, humorous and captivating style. Cyropaedia has reportedly inspired Alexander the Great, Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar, Cicero, Machiavelli and Thomas Jefferson among others. I suspect Abe Lincoln also got his leadership lessons (e.g. "Team of Rivals") from Xenophon.

He who rules himself well can rule the world.

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