HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Xenophon (450 B.C.-354 B.C.)

Xenophon was born near Athens, of a well to do family, and grew up during the creative and politically tumultuous years of the second half of the fifth century. We know him today largely for his *Anabasis*, or his memoir on the trial of Socrates, and for a text on horsemanship, but he was a soldier general, and man of letters who wrote about many aspects of his own time, from economics to military affairs.

In 401 Xenophon was recruited to lead an expedition to Asia Minor, to support the army of the Persian King Cyrus, who was attempting to overthrow his brother Artaxerxes, who had wrested the throne from him. Xenophon and his men traveled with Cyrus to the interior of Asia Minor where the King and his brother fought a bloody battle—to a standstill. In the battle, Cyrus was killed, with the result that, as it turned out, Xenophon and his men were stranded, unable to advance in their (subsidized) mission, and several thousand miles from their home in Greece. Xenophon and two other leaders were left with the responsibility of shepherding the group—the Ten Thousand as they came to be called—back through the mountains of Asia Minor to the Mediterranean, from where they could reach their homes. The *Anabasi*s—the 'going up' through the mountains toward the sea—is Xenophon's account, written later, of the march he and his men made. Among the best known words of the texts is the cry 'Thalatta, thalatta,' 'the sea,' 'the sea' which the men bellowed when eventually they saw the Mediterranean before them.

Upon return to Greece, Xenophon was exiled from Athens—perhaps for having fought in a national battle on the Spartan side—and then found the time to write the account we discuss here. Ultimately he was pardoned and returned to Athens, and in the course of his later years wrote a *Memoir* of the trial and death of Socrates, a volume on horsemanship—he was a country gentleman—and a treatise on economics.

The true test of a leader is whether his followers will adhere to his cause from their own volition, enduring the most arduous hardships without being forced to do so, and remaining steadfast in the moments of greatest peril.