

Translation and Commentary of Xenophon's Anabasis Chapters 1.4.13 to 1.5.4

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Abstract: This Commentary will cover Anabasis by Xenophon Chapters 1.4.13 to 1.5.4. Although the selected passage short, it consists of three distinct parts, the first is Menon's speech to his troops to convince them to cross the Euphrates River in support of Cyrus after the true reason for the expedition is revealed, to de-throne the Cyrus's brother the Persian King Artaxerxes. This is followed by a simple military journal style writing describing locations, places and distances traveled on different legs of the army's journey through Syria and Arabia. Xenophon then narrows in on the hunting experiences during the Greeks passage through Arabia. Throughout the commentary the literary context of passage will be explored. Important allusions for later parts of Anabasis will be explained and woven with with notable grammatical context that is encountered throughout the passage.

Xenophon's Anabasis 1.4.13 to 1.5.4 begins with Xenophon's account of the journey of the Greek mercenaries accompanying Cyrus the Younger into Persia, just after Cyrus announces to the Greek generals that their true mission is to overthrow his brother Artaxerxes the King of Persia. The Greeks now have a pivotal decision, to cross the Euphrates and join Cyrus on the dangerous mission ahead or to abandon the Persians and go back to Greece. Menon, a Thessalian Greek mercenary general who commanded 1,000 hoplites and 500 peltasts, wants to impress Cyrus by crossing the Euphrates River prior to his Greek colleagues deciding whether to continue the journey or not. This would be a win-win situation where if the other Greeks followed suit, Menon's troops would be commended as being trailblazers, and if they did not, they would still garner the high regard of Cyrus as being the first to act.

To convince his troops to continue the journey with Cyrus, Menon relies heavily on conditional statements, using 4 if statements in close proximity, three of which are future indefinite. The first instance is a future indefinite starting with $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ + aorist subjunctive indefinite clause (referring to future time) in the apodosis and future indicative in protasis. "*Men, if you will obey me, although neither having been in danger nor working, you all shall be honored more by Cyrus ahead of the other soldiers.*" The second uses $\eta\nu$, contracted form of $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$, and otherwise is the same future indefinite construction as the first clause. Here Menon explains what upsides of crossing the Euphrates first in the case that the other Greeks vote to continue to travel with Cyrus. The third is an open/simple conditional $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ sentence. The fourth is the same $\eta\nu$ construction as the second future indefinite conditional statement, and explains what will occur if the other Greeks vote to leave Cyrus. There is also an additional $\alpha\tilde{\nu}$ + subjunctive indefinite statement with the relative clause $\omicron\upsilon\tau\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ describing the rewards of Cyrus's gratitude. "he will employ you into watch posts and into rank and whatever else you want". Using so many "if" statements in such close proximity shows that Menon is trying to efficiently lay out the possible scenarios to his troops so they can be the first to appease Cyrus.

This passage is an important allusion to have for later in the Anabasis. Clearchus, the Greek General who takes charge of the Greeks after Cyrus's death later in the work, suspects Menon of secretly spreading slander to the Persians (specifically Tissaphernes, a Persian General) that the Greeks have ill intentions to continue the war against Artaxerxes, despite Cyrus's death. Menon's betrayal of the Greeks is confirmed when the Greek generals are tricked into joining Tissaphernes for dinner, and all Greek generals are executed except (initially) for

Menon. Xenophon gives a **eulogy of sorts** for Menon [Anab. 2.6.21], where he describes Menon as one who was always eager for more wealth and power and was quick to deceive others to his own benefit. The passage selected for this assignment accentuates these qualities of Menon via the multiple conditional statements which show how Menon is able to scheme out his deceptive plans, and attempt to outshine his Greek colleagues to impress a Persian.

Xenophon also writes a eulogy-like passage for Cyrus the Younger after his death later in the Anabasis [Anab. 1.9.1]. He praises Cyrus as the ideal king, and one who outdo any favor that is done for him. This passage not only proves to be an example of Menon's deceptive tactics in to support his eulogy but also of Cyrus's virtues as described in Xenophon's 'eulogy' for Cyrus. Cyrus quickly repays Menon for his perceived loyalty by granting him magnificent gifts. Interestingly this is described with "δῶρα ἐλέγετο πέμψαι μεγαλοπρεπῶς". One would expect an adjective to describe these gifts however Xenophon uses an adverb here, appearing attached to "πέμψαι". *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* by Herbert Weir Smyth states that adverbs "qualifying a verb" may refer to the subject or object and act as an adjective (Smyth, 1920, p. 284). Therefore it is acceptable to consider that in this case the adverb acts like an adjective and modifies object of the sentence "δῶρα".

After Cyrus army crosses the Euphrates, the text changes to a more military style journal of distances and time spent at certain places. "ἐντεῦθεν ἐξελαύνει...", "From there he (Cyrus) marched..." followed by specific distances traveled in stations and parsangs, and a location, is used twice to describe different legs of the journey in this specific passage. "ἐντεῦθεν..." is used consistently throughout the rest Anabasis in the same fashion, highlighting Xenophons militaristic style of writing and documenting his journey. *From the Tigris to the Sea: The Problematic Geography of Anabasis Book 4* defines a parasang as 30 stadions (5.32 km), and points out inconsistent between Xenophon's stated distances and actual distances between certain landmarks. (Tuplin, Brennan, 2022)

Marching along the Euphrates river they cross through Syria and Arabia, and now in the desert Xenophon becomes more descriptive of his new environment, especially in regards to the preceding hunting trip that his troops undertake. There is a large contrast from the removed overview of the journey in the preceding lines to this detailed description, which may highlight Xenophon's affinity for hunting. As a hunter he would be attuned to the minute details of his setting. **This is highlighted with a Present Contrary to Fact conditional statement** "εἰ δέ τι καὶ ἄλλο ἐνῆν ὕλης ἢ καλάμου, ἅπαντα ἦσαν εὐόδη ὥσπερ ἀρώματα". Interestingly in this line the subject changes from τι καὶ ἄλλο as a 3rd person singular to 3rd person plural as shown by the change in verb from the protasis (ἐνῆν) to apodosis (ἦσαν). In another anomaly, this line appears to be best translated as an indefinite temporal clause "Whatever else was in the flat open country..) except that ἅν + Subjunctive is not found in this clause.

Xenophon describes the wildlife and how his troops attempted to hunt each animal. The four animals mentioned by Xenophon are ὄνοι ἄγριοι, στρουθοὶ αἱ μεγάλοι, ὠτίδες, and δορκάδες. (D.B. Hickey 1839 pg. 110) defines the ὄνοι ἄγριοι literally "wild donkey", as an

onager, or now known as the Asiatic Wild Ass, which is can run over 65 km/hr, thus explaining the difficulty that Xenophon's men had in catching it. D.B. Hickey defines στρουθοὶ αἱ μεγάλοι, literally meaning large sparrow, as an ostrich, ὠτίδες as bustards, and δορκάδες as antelopes.

The wild donkey, which could outrun the Greeks horses, was caught by having multiple horseback hunters spread out and take turns chasing the animal. Some of the few locations in the selected passage where optative is used are in this paragraph, where the optative is employed three times. The first instance is “καὶ οἱ μὲν ὄνοι, ἐπεὶ τις διώκοι, προδραμόντες ἔστασαν”. “διώκοι” is a present optative verb, and appears to be indefinite in secondary sequence which would not make sense here because present is primary sequence. **This sentence would only make sense if διώκοι was in the secondary sequence.** It turns out that according to *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* by Herbert Weir Smyth that the present optative can represent present *or* imperfect, with imperfect being secondary sequence (Smyth, 1920, p. 284). Therefore this line must read “and “whenever someone was chasing the donkeys....” The next optative usage is “καὶ πάλιν, ἐπεὶ πλησιάζοιεν οἱ ἵπποι, ταὐτὸν ἐποίουν” where similarly, the verb appears to be present optative but in order to display its indefinite optative meaning it must be the identical imperfect form. The next verb “ἐποίουν” being imperfect, also hints that the previous verb is an imperfect and not present. The last example of optative in this paragraph is καὶ οὐκ ἦν λαβεῖν, εἰ μὴ διαστάντες οἱ ἵπποι θηρῶεν διαδεχόμενοι. **The main verb λαβεῖν is aorist,** so the sequence of tenses is secondary thus allowing θηρῶεν to appear in optative as opposed to εθύρασεν, the aorist indicative. This paragraph also includes the selected passages only usage of the pluperfect “ἔστασαν” from the same line as “διώκοι” above. This was translated “προδραμόντες ἔστασαν” as **“they were in the position of setting up outrunning (the pursuer)”**. **This is long winded and it would be simpler to use an optative and write “would outrun (the pursuer)”**.

In conclusion Xenophon's *Anabasis* 1.4.13 to 1.5.4 includes an important speech by Menon where he shrewdly wins Cyrus's favor, and Cyrus's gratuitous reaction to the speech. This passage personifies both of these men and reenforces Xenophon's eulogies to them later in *Anabasis*. As the journey continues the passage changes to a military style journal and then goes into detail about the Greeks hunting experiences in Arabia. Particularities Attic are discovered such as adverbs modifying nouns as an adjective would, and the imperfect usage of present optative, and other grammatical features.

Bibliography

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Translation

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[13] Μένων δὲ πρὶν δῆλον εἶναι τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ ἄλλοι στρατιῶται, πότερον ἔψονται Κύρῳ ἢ οὐ, συνέλεξε τὸ αὐτοῦ στράτευμα χωρὶς τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἔλεξε τάδε.

And Menon, before it was clear what the other soldiers would do, **whether** they would follow Cyrus or not, he collected his army separately from the others and he said this:

[14] ἄνδρες, ἐάν μοι πεισθῇτε, οὔτε κινδυνεύσαντες οὔτε πονήσαντες τῶν ἄλλων πλεόν προτιμήσεσθε στρατιωτῶν ὑπὸ Κύρου. τί οὖν κελεύω ποιῆσαι; νῦν δεῖται Κῦρος ἔπεσθαι τοὺς Ἑλλήνας ἐπὶ βασιλέα: ἐγὼ οὖν φημι ὑμᾶς χρῆναι διαβῆναι τὸν Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν πρὶν δῆλον εἶναι ὅ τι οἱ ἄλλοι Ἑλλήνες ἀποκρίνονται Κύρῳ.

Men, if you will obey me, although neither having been in danger nor **working**, you all shall be honored more by Cyrus ahead of the other soldiers. So what do I order you to do? Now Cyrus stands in need of the Greeks to follow (him) against the king. Thus I say to you it is necessary to cross the Euphrates River **before it is clear what the other Greeks will answer to Cyrus**.

[15] ἦν μὲν γὰρ ψηφίσωνται ἔπεσθαι, ὑμεῖς δόξετε αἴτιοι εἶναι ἄρξαντες τοῦ διαβαίνειν, καὶ ὡς προθυμοτάτοις οὖσιν ὑμῖν χάριν εἴσεται Κῦρος καὶ ἀποδώσει: ἐπίσταται δ' εἴ τις καὶ ἄλλος: ἦν δὲ ἀποψηφίσωνται οἱ ἄλλοι, ἅπιμεν μὲν ἅπαντες τοῦμπαλιν, ὑμῖν δὲ ὡς μόνοις πειθομένοις πιστοτάτοις χρήσεται καὶ εἰς φρούρια καὶ εἰς λοχαγίας, καὶ ἄλλου οὔτινος ἂν δέησθε οἶδα ὅτι ὡς φίλοι τεύξεσθε Κύρου.

For on one hand if they will vote to follow, you will all seem to be **responsible as having begun the crossing**, and Cyrus will know and he will return gratitude to you, **as on the point of being most eager**. And he knows (how to return gratitude) if anyone. And if the others vote to leave, we shall all go back, **and you all as the most trustworthy who alone are obedient, he will use/employ you into watch posts and into rank** and whenever else you all want, as I know that you will all be friends with Cyrus.

[16] ἀκούσαντες ταῦτα ἐπείθοντο καὶ διέβησαν πρὶν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀποκρίνασθαι. Κῦρος δ' ἐπεὶ ἦσθετο διαβεβηκότας, ἦσθη τε καὶ τῷ στρατεύματι πέμψας Γλοῦν εἶπεν: ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἦδη ὑμᾶς ἐπαινῶ: ὅπως δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐμὲ ἐπαινέσετε ἐμοὶ **μελήσει**, ἢ μηκέτι με Κῦρον νομίζετε.

They, having listened, **were obedient** and crossed before the others answered. And when Cyrus noticed (the army) having crossed (the river), he was both pleased and **he sent Gloon to the Army he said**: Men, now I praise you all, **and see to it that (fut. + infinitive) it is a matter of concern you all will praise me**, or no longer acknowledge me Cyrus.

[17] οἱ μὲν δὴ στρατιῶται ἐν ἐλπίσι μεγάλας ὄντες ἡύχοντο αὐτὸν εὐτυχῆσαι, Μένωνι δὲ καὶ δῶρα ἐλέγετο πέμψαι μεγαλοπρεπῶς. ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσας διέβαινε: συνείπετο δὲ καὶ τὸ ἄλλο στράτευμα αὐτῷ ἅπαν. καὶ τῶν διαβαινόντων τὸν ποταμὸν οὐδεὶς ἐβρέχθη ἀνωτέρω τῶν μαστῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ.

And the soldiers being in great hopes prayed for him (Menon) to have good luck. And it was said that magnificent gifts were sent to Menon. And having done these things he crossed. And all the rest of the army followed with him. And of those who crossed the river, no one was wetted above their **breasts** by the river.

[18] οἱ δὲ Θαψακηνοὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι οὐπόποθ' οὗτος ὁ ποταμὸς διαβατὸς γένοιτο πεζῇ εἰ μὴ τότε, ἀλλὰ πλοίοις, ἃ τότε Ἀβροκόμας προῖων κατέκαυσεν, ἵνα μὴ Κῦρος διαβῇ. ἐδόκει δὴ θεῖον εἶναι καὶ σαφῶς ὑποχωρῆσαι τὸν ποταμὸν Κύρῳ ὥς βασιλεύσονται.

And the Thapsacins were saying that this river would not ever become passable by foot if not then, but by ships, which Abrokomas, going before them burned down, in order for Cyrus to not cross. Indeed, it seemed that God clearly separating the river beneath Cyrus in order for him to be king.

[19] ἐντεῦθεν ἐξελαύνει διὰ τῆς Συρίας σταθμοὺς ἑννέα παρασάγγας πεντήκοντα: καὶ ἀφικνοῦνται πρὸς τὸν Ἀράξην ποταμόν. ἐνταῦθα ἦσαν κῶμαι πολλαὶ μεστὰι σίτου καὶ οἴνου. ἐνταῦθα ἔμειναν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἐπεσιτίσαντο.

From there he (Cyrus) marched through Syria 9 stadions and 50 parasangs and they arrived to the Araxes River. Here there were many walled villages of grain and wine. Here they stayed three days and furnished themselves with food.

Xenophon Anabasis 1.5

[1] ἐντεῦθεν ἐξελαύνει διὰ τῆς Ἀραβίας τὸν Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν ἐν δεξιᾷ ἔχων σταθμοὺς ἐρήμους πέντε παρασάγγας τριάκοντα καὶ πέντε. ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῷ τόπῳ ἦν μὲν ἡ γῆ πεδῖον ἅπαν ὁμαλὲς ὥσπερ θάλαττα, ἀσπινθίου δὲ πληρὲς: εἰ δέ τι καὶ ἄλλο ἐνῆν ὕλης ἢ καλάμου, ἅπαντα ἦσαν εὐώδη ὥσπερ ἀρώματα:

From there he (Cyrus) marched through Arabia with the Euphrates River to the right, having 5 lonely stadions 35 parasangs, and in this place the land was all flat open country like the sea, and full of wormwood (tree). And if anything else was in (the flat open country), of wood or reed, they were all fragrant like herbs.

[2] δένδρον δ' οὐδὲν ἐνῆν, θηρία δὲ παντοῖα, πλεῖστοι ὄνοι ἄγριοι, πολλὰ δὲ στρουθοὶ αἱ μεγάλοι: ἐνῆσαν δὲ καὶ ὠτίδες καὶ δορκάδες: ταῦτα δὲ τὰ θηρία οἱ ἵππεῖς ἐνίστε ἐδίωκον. καὶ οἱ μὲν ὄνοι, ἐπεὶ τις διώκοι, προδραμόντες ἔστασαν: πολὺ γὰρ τῶν ἵππων ἔτρεχον θᾶπτον: καὶ πάλιν, ἐπεὶ πλησιάζοιεν οἱ ἵπποι, ταῦτόν ἐποίουν, καὶ οὐκ ἦν λαβεῖν, εἰ μὴ διαστάντες οἱ ἵππεῖς θηρῶεν διαδεχόμενοι. τὰ δὲ κρέα τῶν ἀλίσκομένων ἦν παραπλήσια τοῖς ἐλαφείοις, ἀπαλώτερα δέ.

And not a tree was in (the flat open country), but all sorts of wild beasts, many wild donkeys, and many ostriches (large sparrows) . And they were among bustards and antelopes. And the horsemen sometimes chased these wild beasts. And whenever someone was chasing the donkeys, they (the wild donkeys) were in the position of setting up outrunning (the pursuer), for many were running faster than the horses; and whenever the horses were giving chase again, doing this, they were not to seize (a wild donkey), if the horsemen did not spread out and hunt in

turn. And the meats of (the wild donkeys) being caught were about equal to venison, but more tender.

[3] στρουθὸν δὲ οὐδεὶς ἔλαβεν· οἱ δὲ διώξαντες τῶν ἰππέων ταχὺ ἐπαύοντο· πολὺ γὰρ ἀπέσπα φεύγουσα, τοῖς μὲν ποσὶ δρόμῳ, ταῖς δὲ πτέρυξιν αἴρουσα, ὥσπερ ἰστίῳ χρωμένη. τὰς δὲ ὠτίδας ἂν τις ταχὺ ἀνιστῇ ἔστι λαμβάνειν· πέτονται γὰρ βραχὺ ὥσπερ πέρδικες καὶ ταχὺ ἀπαγορεύουσι.

But no ostrich was caught, and the horsemen who chased quickly ceased, for many were separated fleeing on foot, on one hand by (the ostriches) running, and on the other by wing, deployed like a sail. But the bustards, if ever someone is quick to make it rise, can be captured. For they fly briefly like partridges and give up in a short time.

[4] τὰ δὲ κρέα αὐτῶν ἥδιστα ἦν.

And the meat of these was most pleasant.