

Xenophon's Arkadian Anabasis

Xenophon wrote his *Anabasis* late: although the expedition of Cyrus took place in 402-401 B.C.E, references to Xenophon's home in Scillus (Xen. *Anab.* 5.3.7-13) make it clear that the work was published no earlier than 392 B.C.E. Beyond this *terminus post quem*, however, there is little certainty (Dillery 2013, 59, 264 n.1; Stronk 1995, 8-10). Debates over the *purpose* of the *Anabasis* and the interpretation of its contents must often deal first with the question of its nebulous date, yet Dillery (1998) 9 concludes, "all that can be said with confidence is that [it] was written late in Xenophon's life, not earlier." This paper argues that we can date the composition of the *Anabasis* more firmly as at or near 369 B.C.E. by looking at Xenophon's portrayal of the Arkadian *ethnos* within the work. The Arkadians, who not only made up the largest contingent of Cyrus' forces (Lee 2007, 61) but were important in Epaminondas' dismantling of Spartan hegemony after the Battle of Leuktra of 370 B.C.E. (Roy 2007, 292) hold a special and unexamined position in the *Anabasis*. While Xenophon's work has been read with an eye towards an understanding of Arkadian ethnicity (Nielsen 1999, Roy 1972) or ethnicity itself more broadly (Ma 2004), there has yet to be a reading of the work that looks for Xenophon's typical didacticism in reference to this important and influential group. Three aspects of Xenophon's treatment of the *Arkadians* in particular are decisive in shaping our understanding and dating of the work:

- 1) the centrality of Arkadians within Xenophon's narrative, as shown in the expedition's halt to celebrate the Lykaion (1.2.10), the frequency and manner in which Xenophon presents Arkadian individuals (e.g. *Anabasis* 2.1.10, 2.5.33, 2.5.39, 2.6.30, 4.1.18, 4.1.27, 4.2.21, 4.4.22, 4.6.20, 4.7.9, 4.7.13, 5.2.15, 6.6.7, 7.6.40, 7.8.19), and the general attitude

of these mercenaries towards Sparta, particularly towards the end of the journey (e.g. *Hellenica* 6.1.30, 6.2.10, 6.6.5-11), all of which assign a centrality and import to Arkadia that is anachronistic prior to the creation of the Arkadian League in 370 B.C.E.

2) The textual and thematic parallels within Xenophon's work that show a clear linking of the Arkadian past (402-401 B.C.E) and "present" (370 B.C.E.), including parallel speeches in the *Anabasis* (6.2.10-12) and the *Hellenica* (7.1.23-24) about Arkadian ethnic superiority, and Xenophon's lament in the *Anabasis* (5.3.7-13) for his home at Scillus (in Triphylia), which he lost when it was incorporated into the Arkadian League of 370-362 B.C.E.

3) The didactic parables that Xenophon inserts into the text, demonstrating the failings of Arkadian unity and the necessity of Spartan leadership, the most important of which are the actions of Arkadian individuals at the assault on a Taochian stronghold (*Anab.* 4.7.8-12), the disastrous and short-lived splitting of the Ten Thousand upon their arrival at the sea (6.2-3), the abortive sack of Byzantium (7.1.12-33), and the attempts to found a city at Calpe (6.4). Each of these parables against Arkadian unity (with each other) and independence (from Sparta) strongly suggest that Xenophon had a knowledge of either the dissolution of the Arkadian League (362 B.C.E.) or more likely, the founding (369 B.C.E) of Megalopolis, the Pan-Arkadian city that demonstrated, initially, all of the problems of Arkadian disunity of which Xenophon warns (Demand 1990, 111-119).

Xenophon's allusions to the importance of Arkadia, the creation of the Arkadian League, and the foundation of Megalopolis demonstrate a knowledge of the events of 370-369 B.C.E. sufficient to move the *terminus post quem* of the *Anabasis* to these years, when Xenophon had already witnessed already Arkadia's unification and the destruction of the dream of Spartan-led panhellenism.

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