



# **Xenophon's Anabasis, or The Expedition of Cyrus (Oxford Approaches to Classical Literature)**

*Michael A. Flower*

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Xenophon's *Anabasis*, or *The Expedition of Cyrus*, is one of the most exciting historical narratives--as well as the most important autobiographical work--to have survived from ancient Greece. It tells the story of Cyrus, a young and charismatic Persian prince, who in 401 BC enlisted more than ten thousand Greek mercenaries in an attempt to seize the vast Persian empire for himself. Cyrus was killed in a great battle, most of the Greek commanders subsequently fell victim to treachery, and an Athenian aristocrat by the name of Xenophon found himself in the unexpected position of taking charge and leading the Greeks from the vicinity of Babylon in modern Iraq back to the Greek cities in Turkey. This book both places the *Anabasis* in its historical and literary context and, by employing a variety of critical methods, opens up for the reader different ways of interpreting its major themes. Interrelated chapters investigate Xenophon's self-representation as a model leader, his possible didactic and apologetic purposes for writing, the generic expectations of his contemporary audience, the factual accuracy of the *Anabasis*, and the ways in which the gods are depicted as intervening in human affairs. This book unveils the literary artistry and narrative strategies that have gone into shaping one of the greatest survival stories of all time.

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