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Xenophon's Anabasis and the Common Greek Mental Modelling of Spaces

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Klaus Geus, Martin Thiering (Eds.)

Features of Common Sense Geography

Implicit knowledge structures in
ancient geographical texts



Antike Kultur und Geschichte

LIT

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CHAPTER 9
XENOPHON'S *ANABASIS* AND THE COMMON GREEK MENTAL
MODELLING OF SPACES

Anca Dan

ENS, Paris & TOPOI, Berlin

... ἀπειχον δὲ τῆς Ἑλλάδος οὐ μείον ἢ μύρια στάδια,
ἡγεμῶν δ' οὐδεις τῆς ὁδοῦ ἦν ...

“... they were distant from Greece not less than ten thousand stadia,
they had no guide to show them the way ...”

Anabasis 3.1.2

Abstract

Xenophon is usually considered the first field reporter of the Western world. This problematic assumption would make his work a first-hand source of information about ‘common sense geography’ in classical times, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the *Anabasis* is a literary work. Its world is a result of spatial narrativization and thematization. Thus, Xenophon’s experience is highly re-worked within the space-time continuum of the narrative, in order to serve his intellectual convictions and personal purposes. The newly introduced categories of ‘naive’/‘intuitive’, ‘scholarly’/‘canonical’ and ‘higher’/‘(fully) reasoned’ geography help us explain how Xenophon manipulated space and spatial knowledge. In order to fulfil the overall intentions of its author, the *Anabasis* offers one of the widest ranges of geographical thinking about one particular space in ancient literature, from the ignorance of the ‘normal’ soldier, through the debates of the military leaders, to complex compilations of distances. It also sheds light on what Xenophon himself and his audience might think of these different degrees of geographical intelligence. Some mental models illustrate the contrast between ‘naive’ and ‘scholarly’ representations of spaces. The catalogues of distances, whose authenticity is contested, complete the picture of ancient history and geography in the making: field data, passed through the filter of tradition, produced new, abstract data, which was afterwards used in the inductive reasoning of common sense.

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From 'lower' towards 'higher' geography in the preserved *Anabasis*: resources and distances

Is there a better testing ground for the heuristic concept of 'common sense geography' in classical literature than the work of Xenophon of Athens, who focused more than any other of his predecessors on his environment, experiences, and opinions?¹

Autobiographer and polygraph, Xenophon blurred the boundaries between the literary genres practiced before him. Many modern treaties of literary history present him as the first author who made extensive use of personal experience:² he documented years of his own life, by staging himself as a character in a reconstructed history, told by an external, omniscient narrator (the *Anabasis*). He expressed his own convictions and re-enacted the experiences of his fellows in philosophical treaties (*Symposium*, *Memorabilia*, and *Apology of Socrates*), in the praising biography of one of his important contemporaries (*Agesilaus*), and in a political dialogue (*Hiero*) as well as in seven books of historiography, where he took over from Thucydides (*Hellenica*). He presented his technical knowledge in some of the first schoolbooks of the western world (*On Horsemanship*, *On the Cavalry Commander*, and *On Hunting*). He reacted

¹ I am most grateful to Prof. Klaus Geus. This paper is inspired by the debates we have had, together with Dr. Kurt Guckelsberger and other members of the Berlin "common sense geography" group, since 2011, during work sessions devoted to theoretical concepts and ancient text translations. The levels of geographical thinking it proposes were put forward by Klaus Geus during these discussions. I thank him for the numerous improvements and corrections of my paper and Dr. Benedict Beckeld for the first reading. All remaining errors are mine.

² Cf. Momigliano 1993: 46–47, for a "pioneer experimenter in biographical form"; Reichel 2005 and 2007; Erbse 1965–2010; Bradley 2001–2010; Gray 2011: 30–34.

to the woes of his contemporaries, by teaching his ideas about the proper administration of a house and a city (*On Household, Ways and Means, and Constitution of the Spartans*).³ Even when writing about the past, Xenophon was dealing with his own world: in the *Cyropaedia*, he projected his own image of the ideal prince, Cyrus the Great, the cosmopolitan conqueror of Asia, whose Socratic wisdom went beyond the limits of the Persians' primitivism and who made the same strategic decisions as Xenophon himself. All these works offer exceptional insights into the spatial and geographical knowledge and reasoning of Xenophon himself and, through his lens, of those with whom he interacted.⁴

The *Anabasis* is the oldest personal travelogue still extant. Modern scholarship has used it as the main source for the historical geography of the Euphrates, Armenia, Pontus, and Aegean Thrace.⁵ However, another feature of this text merits special attention: Xenophon is a unique source for the Greek mental modelling of space and consequently for the different levels of spatial thinking among Greeks. The isolation of the Ten Thousand, symbol of the Panhellenic community in the making, in the middle of Barbarian Asia and their desperate search for return offer us the image of an exceptional experience at the scale of the classical world.⁶ What did Greeks of the late 5th century BC, from various regions and social classes, know about remote lands and peoples and how did they react to new situations in foreign environments?

Of course, when trying to find out precise information about real people and gestures in the *Anabasis*, one must not forget that Xenophon was a 'man of letters', with an acute interest for public life.⁷ Born in an Athenian aristocratic family, he was a student of Socrates, eager to be a friend of Cyrus the Younger, best mercenary chief and, finally, glorious saviour of the Ten Thousand. In modern times, his critics have emphasized the bias of his narratives, which goes far beyond the degree of subjectivity that one already expects from ancient historiography. This concerns not only events and moments in time, but also spaces: it is a well-known fact that unlike the space of modern abstract, homogeneous, scientific maps or GPS, the itinerary of a travel story

³ Cf. Azoulay 2004: 15f.

⁴ I distinguish between 'spatial' and 'geographical'. The adjective 'spatial' (like in German compound words of '*Raum*') relates to the 'layout', i.e. the position and size of objects in space; 'geographical' involves a conscious effort, sometimes even methodical analysis of space. Also, I refer to 'spatial/geographical knowledge' when factual data are discussed and to 'geographical thinking' for reflection, mental constructions, and representations of spaces. For Xenophon's historical context, see Higgins 1977; Dillery 1995.

⁵ Hewsen 2001: *passim*.

⁶ Cf. Cawkwell 2004. For the Panhellenic ideas and audience addressed by Xenophon, see Perlman 1976–1977; Dillery 1995: 41–98. This ability to persuade and seduce the widest audience can also be seen as the first reason of his success during Antiquity and later times: see Münscher 1920: 2f.

⁷ After Pédech 1985 and Sordi 1988, in a narratological perspective on Xenophon's characters, time, and space, see Gray 2004; Dorati 2007; Rood 2007 and 2012; Tsagalis 2009; Grethlein 2012; Ferrario 2012.

is not a linear continuum, but a succession of zooms, determined by how the author wants to tell *his* story. Thus, an author may put forward a fact, a character, but also a place or a description of a place; at the same time, he ignores other elements, which seem less useful for the image he wants to create. In other words, when reading the *Anabasis*, we do not have before our eyes the exact places the Ten Thousand or Xenophon the soldier himself saw, but what Xenophon the author wanted us to see in the space-time continuum of his *diegesis*.⁸ For the modern historian, this is not a reason of despair, but a source of information richer than one could imagine. With an appropriate methodology, one can read into Xenophon's mirror, at the same time, Xenophon's world, Xenophon's personality, Xenophon's contribution to the classical tradition of geography.

The aim of this paper is to explain what answer can bring the *Anabasis* to a fundamental question in the history of geography: how ancient people dealt with large spaces, inaccessible under normal circumstances, at the scale of the *oikumene*? Of course, we are first tempted to look in this text for what the Greeks knew about the Asian interior and how they reacted to this new spatial experience. Xenophon, however, appears to be willing to give us more: he suggests how widespread particular data were among his fellow soldiers and how different persons of different ranks of the Ten Thousand envisioned familiar and less familiar lands. But the way the historian presents this information depends on his narrative ability to warp space and spatial representations in accordance with his interests. Furthermore, the work of Xenophon and of his editors with this exceptional data compiled upon the return of the Greeks from Asia shows how common sense geography was 'made' in ancient times. From this perspective, the *Anabasis* is a complete illustration of all the stages at which spatial information could be brought together and manipulated until it was finally integrated into a 'higher', more reasoned geographical thinking.

Throughout the *Anabasis*, one reads about the anxiety of soldiers lost on their way back to Greece, the discussions of the leaders, and the erudite catalogues of distances – which give an idea of the greatness of the Persian Empire and of the achievement of the Ten Thousand.⁹ Three categories of 'common sense' approaches to ancient space are thus documented: the 'lower', 'naive', intuitive geography of the illiterate

⁸ I use the term 'place' for particular 'discrete geographic features' (like landmarks, points, areas) or 'locations', including 'spatial frames' and 'settings'; I understand 'space' as the articulation of several places mentioned in the flow of the narrative as embedded frames and settings: see Ronen 1986, Herman 2002: 263–299, Ryan 2003, and Bal 2009: 183–184, 219–222; cf. Zoran 1984. Both are subcategories of the story world, which, in turn, is included in the narrative universe: Ryan 2013. For a first attempt to study the relationship between space and time in the ancient narrative, see Clarke 2002.

⁹ For the composition and identity of this group, after Nussbaum 1967, see Tuplin 1999, Stoll 2002, and Ma 2004–2010.

persons; the canonical knowledge shared by the educated elites, narrator and readers; the ambition of a scholar to offer a more reasoned image of the world, which was experienced by Xenophon.

The first part of this article explains the methodological problems for the use of Xenophon's work in a discussion about 'common sense'. Accordingly, it deals with the contrast between objective space (expected in a modern analysis of mental modelling and geographical information) and subjective space, characteristic of literary texts in general and ancient evidence in particular. The second part discusses examples of mental modelling (of implicit or common knowledge structures) in the *Anabasis* and the degrees of geographical knowledge and thinking taken into account by Xenophon. The last part explores Xenophon's 'reasoned' look at spaces as well as the hints at a 'higher', more ambitious geographical knowledge, in passages that are generally considered interpolations.

1. Individual and common space perceptions and representations in the Anabasis

1.1. Objective vs. subjective space in literary texts

Antiquity may and, in some cases, must be explained to the modern public through contemporary concepts and terms. But one problem in applying recent tools to old perceptions and representations is that these were not created for the analysis of the classical tradition. The main part of so-called 'theoretical' bibliography, dealing with mental constructions and verbal expressions of geographical information, focuses on sentences registered in modern times in real, i.e. non-fictional contexts. From antiquity, however, we mostly have literary compositions, which involve fiction and therefore are not objective firsthand records of how different people represented spaces.

Moreover, these texts were written by scholars about whom we know next to nothing. Any text refers the reader to a model of external reality which is a key for the comprehension of the world reconstructed in the text. Yet, we have lost the external field of reference of the author and of the audience for which the work was intended. As a consequence, we cannot reconstruct all of the original space of which the narrative space was a part: we can only look at landscapes that we take as identical to those of ancient times and try to reconstruct, with the help of other historical and anthropological data, how these landscapes could have been understood, used, and represented. This reconstruction can be considered satisfactory when applied to detailed descriptions of spaces (like the *periploi* or the *periegesis*), or, at least, to historical works in which the author reproduced his absolute frame of reference for the mental map of the

oikumene (like Herodotus, Polybius, and Strabo). The task is more difficult when dealing with authors who say next to nothing about their absolute geography (like Thucydides and Diodorus). Finally, it is almost impossible to obtain complete and reliable geographical data when dealing with someone like Xenophon, who has a strong preference for relative spaces, in the *Anabasis*, the *Cyropaedia*, and his schoolbooks. Unlike Herodotus, Xenophon did not consider it necessary to describe the absolute location of a space in order to construct the complete picture of a historical event: he only draws the most general contours of landscapes, involving such factors as shapes, resources, and historical contexts. The absolute location of those landscapes is mentioned exclusively for well-known spaces of the Greek Mediterranean, never for the remote spaces of the *oikumene*.

Furthermore, the ancient texts were transmitted by anonymous intermediaries and reused during centuries in order to reconstruct and reinvent ancient and modern worlds. Even if we are not always conscious of it, the reception of an ancient text through medieval and modern times determines our own interpretation. In other words, when we read the *Anabasis* we do not receive the mental map intended by Xenophon for his contemporaries, but rather a new mental construct on the basis of our own knowledge of the margins of Anatolia (in the present and in antiquity), of our appreciation of Xenophon as a writer, and of the history of his text.

To clarify how readers understand a literary space in general, we can compare Xenophon with a contemporary writer. Trying to extract Greek ‘common sense geography’ from the *Anabasis* is like deducing modern approaches of space in general and of north-eastern Anatolia in particular from a description of the city of Kars in Omar Pamuk’s novel *Snow* (translation Maureen Freely 2004):

“He’d boarded the bus from Erzurum to Kars with only seconds to spare. He’d just come into the station on a bus from Istanbul – a snowy, stormy, two-day journey – and was rushing up and down the dirty wet corridors with his bag in tow, looking for his connection, when someone told him the bus for Kars was leaving immediately.

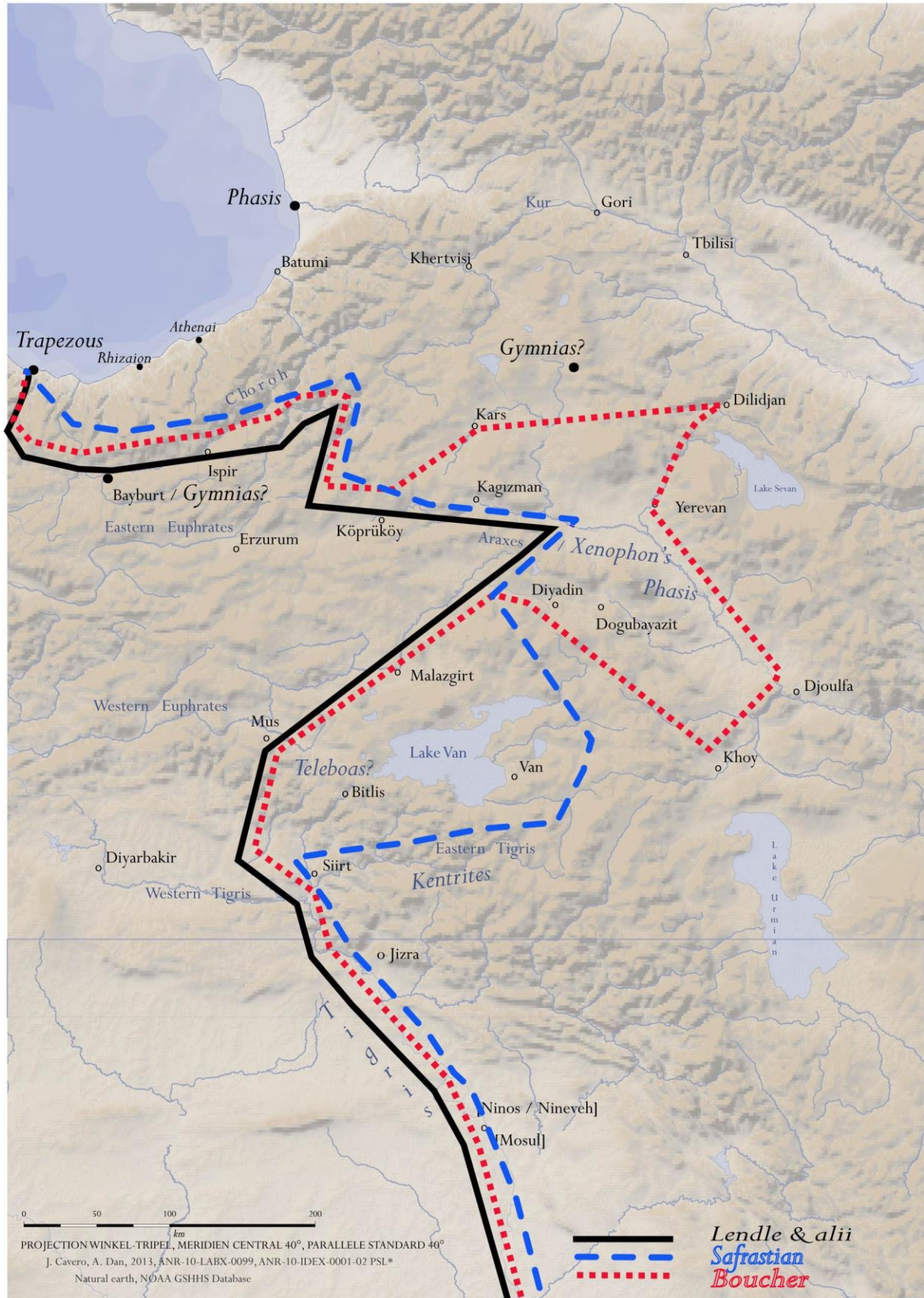
He’d managed to find it, an ancient Magirus, but the conductor had just shut the luggage compartment and, being ‘in a hurry’, refused to open it again. That’s why our traveller had taken his bag on board with him. [...]

As soon as the bus set off, our traveller glued his eyes to the window next to him; perhaps hoping to see something new, he peered into the wretched little shops and bakeries and broken-down coffeehouses that lined the streets of Erzurum’s outlying suburbs, and as he did it began to snow. It was heavier and thicker than the snow he’d seen between Istanbul and Erzurum ...”

A reader looking for a realistic description of the place where the novel begins has every reason to be disappointed: except the city-names (Istanbul, Erzurum, Kars) and the snow, the narrator focuses on the third person ('he', Pamuk's almost autobiographical character KA) and on the public but indefinite space through which he passes (little shops and bakeries and broken-down coffeehouses). We understand that he uses a hodological framework, which meets the narrative expectations of a travel story. But he constructs this space with his own spatial choices and analogies, intrinsic to his *diegesis*¹⁰. Thus, it is useless to compare a modern panorama, a map, or what a guide could tell strangers travelling from Erzurum to Kars, with this narrative. Even if the novel is inspired by travels, the places to which the narrator refers can be identified neither with objective, Euclidian spaces, nor with the space experienced by the author and his readers in other occasions.¹¹ From this text alone, we cannot properly qualify the author's knowledge of the absolute space or his practical orientation. We only know that he has a certain amount of information about the region; following his own convictions as a man and as an author, he chooses impressions – and not a geo-referenced system – in order to recreate a landscape which fits the state of mind of his character and the fictional atmosphere he wants to evoke in his novel.

¹⁰ For *diegesis* (the space-time of a narrative) and the status and focalization of the narrator, we follow Genette 1972. In formalist terms, we would emphasise here the distinction between the discourse or *sujet*, and the *fabula* (the story as it might have occurred).

¹¹ For this phenomenological distinction between objects with their places, 'experienced space' ('erlebter Raum', space of *histoire*), and 'narrative space' ('erzählter Raum', space of *discours*, with its levels mentioned supra n. 8), see: Petsch 1975 (first published in 1934); Hillebrand 1975 (first published in 1971); Lotman 1993–2006; Würzbach 2001; Dennerlein 2009: 54–59, 92–98, 119–163; cf. Locatelli 2006. For the constructed character of the fictional world, I follow Doležel 1998.



The *Anabasis*, as a literary work, can be compared with *Snow*, not only because the two stories are about travels in eastern Anatolia and because they are supposed to re-

late autobiographical experiences in the third person. From a geographical point of view as well, just like in the case of Pamuk's KA, there is no certain reconstruction of the Ten Thousands' route (*see* map on previous page).¹² There are not enough absolute locations mentioned in the text to reconstruct a complete itinerary on the map. It is true that the literary space is full of gaps; any author makes choices from his material between patterns of space, of characterisations, of ideas. This corresponds to the process of narrativization, through which the constructed, spatial outline becomes the setting of an action that the characters perform in time. Of course, this is not the way some of us would represent the same space if they would want to offer an objective, unambiguous description. Xenophon thinks of space as an educated Greek of the end of the 5th century BC and he looks at it as a military and political leader: he is convinced that natural environment determines human life.¹³ Accordingly, in the *Anabasis*, the narrator focalizes on the difficulties, emotions, and solutions of those who took part in the expedition. The background is constructed in order to re-enact the feeling of how the Ten Thousand experienced their misfortune: the hostile environment is the source of fearing for an impossible survival.¹⁴ Its inner narrative function is to bring out the intentions assigned to the various characters in general and to the character corresponding to the author in particular. One cannot speak here of 'geographical space', but of narrative thematized space, used for psychological and literary reasons.

From the perspective of the modern reader, the difference between *Anabasis* and *Snow* is significant: in the case of Pamuk, our contemporary, we have direct access to his original text. Even if we are not Turks and even if we have never been to Kars, thanks to other sources we have a general idea about how the places he described in 2002 look like; we may find out what Pamuk thinks of eastern Anatolia when he does not identify himself with the narrator of *Snow*. More generally, by comparing him with other authors and with what we know from literary theory, we understand how he encodes spaces. By contrast, we know almost nothing about the region which Xenophon crossed between 401 and 399 BC. Even if Xenophon referred to several lands crossed by the Ten Thousand also in his *Cyropaedia*, the *Anabasis* remains a unique report about these regions. In addition, we have almost no parallels for Xenophon's testimonies about how different categories of people of his time might think of spaces. How

¹² For a recent attempt to reconstruct a coherent route, see Lee 2007: 18–42.

¹³ This appears clearly when one compares Xenophon's *Anabasis* and his depiction of the ideal leader in the *Cyropaedia* with the situation of Athens in *Ways and Means*, and with his pedagogical treatises: *On Hunting*, *On the Cavalry Commander*, and *On Household*.

¹⁴ For examples of comments on Xenophon's space in today bibliography, see Purves 2010, 18: "narrative labyrinth where it is easy to become lost"; 161: "...the story of the *Anabasis*, although ostensibly a simple one, increasingly meanders and wavers as it progresses through alien territory".

common was the ‘common sense geography’ of the *Anabasis*? Is it really the expression of Xenophon’s and his companions’ empirical discovery of spaces that we read in the text? Or are there any data of scholarly or canonical geography present, more familiar to Xenophon’s audience? How genuine are the spatial descriptions and geographical reasoning assigned to different characters: were they real or just invented for narrative purposes?

1.2. *The Anabasis and Xenophon’s autobiographical experience*

Even if one agrees that the *Anabasis* is inspired by personal experience, one has to admit that this is not an autobiography *stricto sensu*. It does not contain the ‘autobiographic pact’, as defined by Philippe Lejeune.¹⁵ There is no common identity between author, narrator, and the character representing the author. Xenophon wanted to convince his readers of the objectivity and reliability of his information: thus, in his text, he intentionally cut all the links between these three agents. Most likely, he presented at least a part of his work under the name of the otherwise unknown Themistogenes of Syracuse.¹⁶ As a result, even if his audience knew that the author of the *Anabasis* related first-hand events – as expected in Greek historiography, according to Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ principle of autopsy – it was always impossible to distinguish between Xenophon’s personal experience and external knowledge.

So in order to avoid anachronism, it is better to define the work as belonging to a genre of war memoirs or, more generally, of *autohistoire*. The author, participant in some episodes, reconstructs the full events in a narrative presumed to be objective. The story, however, was known to have a fully subjective purpose: to justify Xenophon’s misconduct at certain moments. In fact, when compared with Thucydides, his immediate predecessor in Greek historiography, Xenophon’s history appears at the same time more objective and more subjective: it creates the impression of neutrality, of an unmediated truth, because the text bears no *sphragis* of an internal narrator and, as a consequence, there are no explicit hints for identifying the author or the narrator with one of the characters. At the same time, Xenophon is more personal because the story of the campaign embodies the whole story of his own accession to and exercise of the supreme command.¹⁷

¹⁵ Lejeune 1975 and 2005. See also his internet page <http://www.autopacte.org/> (accessed on 04-07-2012).

¹⁶ Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.1.2; Plutarchus, *On the Fame of the Athenians* 345e; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 7.929–933 Leone. See the commentary of F. Jacoby (*FGrHist* § 108–109, Themistogenes von Syrakus and Sophainetos von Stymphalos); cf. Bux 1927, Roy 1968. See also the interesting hypothesis of Prentice 1947, refuted especially in positivistic studies, who considered this citizen of Syracuse to be a real person and his work different from that of Xenophon: e.g. Høeg 1949.

¹⁷ For the difference between the two narrators, see also Rood 2004b and Gray 2004.

One of Thucydides' initial motives for writing his history was probably similar to that of Xenophon: to explain his personal point of view about his participation in the war. Yet the treatment of space in these two *Histories* is quite different, and Xenophon was fully conscious of this distinction. On the one hand, the historian of the Peloponnesian war, like his predecessors, constructed his work on an implicit mental map of the whole *oikumene*; this general frame was known by his audience, as we see by comparing it with the mental map of the Athenians familiar with the political debates of the time and attending comedy and tragedy in the theatre. Thucydides introduces descriptions of particular places only at some points, as absolute, static frames for precise events.¹⁸ In his *Hellenica*, Xenophon adapts the Thucydidean frame of the Greek *oikumene* by reducing the spatial data to simple toponyms. The *Anabasis*, on the other hand, is not built inside a space-container, with an absolute, geometrical structure. Its story does not record the Greek past in general, but it follows the destiny of a group of people and Xenophon's career. Thus, the work focuses on a 'dynamically functioning space', which is an 'acting place rather than the place of action':¹⁹ thoughts and actions are directly shaped, over time, by the landscapes. The main part of the text, represented by the narrative of the *κατάβασις*, settles on the impossibility of the army to cross the Tigris and the Euphrates in order to come home to Europe, while being attacked by the Barbarians. From this crucial moment, when the Greeks were forced to take the route to the unknown north, the historian indicates the gradual discovery of defined and undefined spaces, which determined emotions, decisions, deeds, and, accordingly, events. As a consequence, places and peoples are mentioned only if they interacted with the Ten Thousand and if Xenophon considered these adventures and misadventures worthy of being mentioned in his version of the story. The reader cannot reconstruct the absolute chronology and the precise itinerary from the text, because the author does not make enough references to any absolute or relative timetable and to the stages of the expedition.²⁰ He focuses on subjective time and space and this subjectivity alone explains the logic of the events, from Xenophon's perspective. This is particularly obvious in the case of the march to the Phasis: Xenophon did not write whether they tried to find the mouth of the Phasis on the Euxine and, if so, how they could identify this Armenian river (modern Pasin Su, Bingöl Su, and now Aras), flowing from west to east, with the Phasis (modern Rioni), about which they knew that it

¹⁸ Cf. Van Paassen 1957: 212–213; Rood 2012a and 2012b.

¹⁹ For this narratological difference, see Bal 2009: 142–152.

²⁰ For the problems with the absolute chronology, see, e.g., Brennan 2008 and 2012.

flowed from east to west. No modern reader can understand what directions they took and what their purpose was at that precise moment.²¹

How did Xenophon invent this elusive space, made of contrasts and analogies more than of absolute locations? In order to uncover some of the elements Xenophon could have had at his disposal and which he could have assumed would be known to his audience, one must consider all surviving evidence about the space Xenophon narrated in his *Anabasis*; this involves all the stories about the Ten Thousand available in antiquity.

1. 3. *The Writing of the Anabasis*

1. 3. 1. Xenophon and the Return of the Ten Thousand

Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about the literary context in which the final *Anabasis* was elaborated. It is likely that Xenophon wrote it after the battle of Leuctra (371 BC, marking the end of the Spartan hegemony, which is regarded as belonging to the past: *Anabasis* 6.6.9, cf. *Hellenica* 3.1.5). He was then exiled from Athens (*Anabasis* 7.7.57) and lived with his family in Lacedaemon, at Skillous, near Olympia, where he consecrated a temple to the Ephesian Artemis (*Anabasis* 5.3.7–13, cf. 7.6.34).²²

It is likely that, at this point in his life, the historian had access to private and foreign documents, which may have helped him in fleshing out his memories and putting them in the form he wanted for ‘publication’. These may already have been written down when things happened or shortly after. Nonetheless, it is impossible today to distinguish between what Xenophon knew before, what he learned during the campaign, from guides and other contact persons familiar with the realities of foreign lands, and what he found out later, from Greek oral and written sources. It is also hard to say what could have been known by his Greek audience. Scattered references suggest that the original knowledge of many of his fellow comrades-in-arms about the geography of inner Asia and about how one was supposed to conduct oneself when left alone in a completely unknown space was virtually inexistent. This is at least what Xenophon wants to suggest. Even if he recognises the importance of spatial knowledge and geographical thinking in military education, we must not forget that he formulates

²¹ *Anab.* 4.6.4; see Garzetti 1955, 131–136, and Lendle 1995 ad loc.

²² See Breitenbach 1967; more generally, Delebecque 1957. This private real is the object of one of the very rare space descriptions in the *Anabasis*: this is surprising if we compare Xenophon, once again, with his predecessors, who had treated Greece proper in their histories (see Van Paassen 1957; Shahar 2004, 7–129). It is consistent, however, on the one hand, with Xenophon’s view of spaces, through the resources they can offer to the military leader and the civil owner; on the other hand, Xenophon’s transparency regarding his fate, several years after the expedition is one more way of strengthening his defence.

his teaching in a context in which a Greek and a Barbarian army currently used ‘specialists’ of spaces known by experience.

If the *Anabasis* was the answer to a geographical question, this question would be: What happens in exceptional situations, when an army cannot rely on an organised system of guides and spies? The impossibility of surviving in an unknown and hostile environment was the reason for which the Greeks, deceived by their Persian employer, continued the campaign with him beyond Tarsus.²³ After the death of Cyrus the Younger at Cunaxa (401 BC), the first leader of the Ten Thousand, the Spartan Clearchus acknowledged the difficulty of all the roads, for the Greeks who were totally unaware of what an army should never neglect: the nature of places, their resources, and the natural and human dangers. Clearchus knew that the environment – that is to say the distances, the resources, and the obstacles – was the main advantage of the Great King Artaxerxes II.²⁴ He explained the geographical basis of the Ten Thousand’s inferiority in a speech addressed to his men (2.4.6) and in another one before Tissaphernes, the king’s representative (2.5.9):

2.4.6 (translation Carleton L. Brownson, Loeb, 1922)	
<p>ποταμὸς δ' εἰ μὲν τις καὶ ἄλλος ἄρα ἡμῖν ἐστὶ διαβατέος οὐκ οἶδα· τὸν δ' οὖν Εὐφράτην ἴσμεν ὅτι ἀδύνατον διαβῆναι κωλύοντων πολεμίων.</p>	<p>Then remember the rivers – there may be others, for aught I know, that we must cross, but we know about the Euphrates at any rate, that it cannot possibly be crossed in the face of an enemy.</p>
2.5.9	
<p>σὺν μὲν γὰρ σοὶ πᾶσα μὲν ὁδὸς εὐπορος, πᾶς δὲ ποταμὸς διαβατός, τῶν τε ἐπιτηδείων οὐκ ἀπορία· ἄνευ δὲ σοῦ πᾶσα μὲν διὰ σκοτόυς ἢ ὁδός· οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς ἐπιστάμεθα· πᾶς δὲ ποταμὸς δύσπορος, πᾶς δὲ ὄχλος φοβερός, φοβερώτατον δ' ἐρημία· μεστή γὰρ πολλῆς ἀπορίας ἐστίν.</p>	<p>For, with you, every road is easy for us to traverse, every river is passable, supplies are not lacking; without you, all our road is through darkness – for none of it do we know – every river is hard to pass, every crowd excites our fears, and most fearful of all is solitude – for it is crowded full of want.</p>

Tissaphernes, in turn, recalls the difficult situation of the Greek army in the unknown and unfriendly environment:

²³ *Anab.* 1.3; the dangers of the uncontrolled space also appear when Clearchus decides to stop the pursuit of the enemy: 2.2.3

ὡς γὰρ ἐγὼ νῦν πυνθάνομαι, ἐν μέσῳ ἡμῶν καὶ βασιλέως ὁ Τίγρης ποταμὸς ἐστὶ ναυσίπορος, ὃν οὐκ ἂν δυναίμεθα ἄνευ πλοίων διαβῆναι· πλοῖα δὲ ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχομεν. οὐ μὲν δὴ αὐτοῦ γε μένειν οἶόν τε· τὰ γὰρ ἐπιτήδεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἔχειν / “ as I now ascertain, between us and the King is the Tigris, a navigable river, which we could not cross without boats and boats we have none. On the other hand, it is not possible for us to stay where we are, for we cannot get provisions”.

²⁴ E.g. *Anab.* 1.5.9; 2.1.11.

2.5.17–19	
<p>ἀλλὰ χωρίων ἐπιτηδείων ὑμῖν ἐπιτίθεσθαι ἀπορεῖν ἄν σοι δοκοῦμεν; οὐ τοσαῦτα μὲν πεδία ἃ ὑμεῖς φίλια ὄντα σὺν πολλῷ πόνῳ διαπορεύεσθε, τοσαῦτα δὲ ὄρη ὁρᾶτε ὑμῖν ὄντα πορευτέα, ἃ ἡμῖν ἔξεστι προκαταλαβοῦσιν ἄπορα ὑμῖν παρέχειν, τοσοῦτοι δ' εἰσὶ ποταμοὶ ἐφ' ὧν ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν ταμιεύεσθαι ὅποσιν ἂν ὑμῶν βουλόμεθα μάχεσθαι; εἰσὶ δ' αὐτῶν οὐς οὐδ' ἂν παντάπασι διαβαίητε, εἰ μὴ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς διαπορεύοιμεν. εἰ δ' ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ἠττώμεθα, ἀλλὰ τό γέ τοι πῦρ κρεῖττον τοῦ καρποῦ ἐστίν· ὃν ἡμεῖς δυνάμεθ' ἂν κατακαύσαντες λιμὸν ὑμῖν ἀντιτάξαι, ὃ ὑμεῖς οὐδ' εἰ πάνυ ἀγαθοὶ εἴητε μάχεσθαι ἂν δύναισθε.</p>	<p>do you think that we should not have places suitable for attacking you? Do you not behold these vast plains, which even now, although they are friendly, it is costing you a deal of labour to traverse? and these great mountains you have to pass, which we can occupy in advance and render impassable for you? and have we not these great rivers, at which we can parcel out whatever number of you we may choose to fight with some, in fact, which you could not cross at all unless we carried you over? And if we were worsted at all these points, nevertheless it is certain that fire can worst crops; by burning them up we could bring famine into the field against you, and you could not fight against that, however brave you might be.</p>

These threats became reality when the main leaders were killed and the old allies of Cyrus openly became enemies of the Greeks; it was the moment when Xenophon entered the scene:

3.1.2	
<p>Ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ στρατηγοὶ συνειλημμένοι ἦσαν καὶ τῶν λοχαγῶν καὶ τῶν στρατιωτῶν οἱ συνεπόμενοι ἀπωλόλεσαν, ἐν πολλῇ δὴ ἀπορία ἦσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες, ἐννοούμενοι ὅτι ἐπὶ ταῖς βασιλέως θύραις ἦσαν, κύκλω δὲ αὐτοῖς πάντη πολλὰ καὶ ἔθνη καὶ πόλεις πολέμια ἦσαν, ἀγορὰν δὲ οὐδεὶς ἔτι παρέξεν ἔμελλεν, ἀπεῖχον δὲ τῆς Ἑλλάδος οὐ μείον ἢ μύρια στάδια, ἡγεμῶν δ' οὐδεὶς τῆς ὁδοῦ ἦν, ποταμοὶ δὲ διεῖργον ἀδιάβατοι ἐν μέσῳ τῆς οἴκαδε ὁδοῦ, προυδεδώκεσαν δὲ αὐτοὺς καὶ οἱ σὺν Κύρῳ ἀναβάντες βάρβαροι, μόνοι δὲ καταλειμμένοι ἦσαν οὐδὲ ἰπέα οὐδένα σύμμαχον ἔχοντες, ὥστε εὐδηλον ἦν ὅτι νικῶντες μὲν οὐδένα ἂν κατακάνοιεν, ἠττηθέντων δὲ αὐτῶν οὐδεὶς ἂν λειφθεῖη...</p>	<p>After the generals had been seized and such of the captains and soldiers as accompanied them had been killed, the Greeks were naturally in great perplexity, reflecting that they were at the King's gates, that round about them on every side were many hostile tribes and cities, that no one would provide them a market any longer, that they were distant from Greece not less than ten thousand stadia, that they had no guide to show them the way, that they were cut off by impassable rivers which flowed across the homeward route, that the barbarians who had made the upward march with Cyrus had also betrayed them, and that they were left alone, without even a single horseman to support them, so that it was quite clear that if they should be victorious, they could not kill anyone, while if they should be defeated, not one of them would be left alive.</p>

Was Xenophon himself in this state of complete spatial ignorance and fear of death? What was his level of geographical knowledge? Xenophon studied maybe geometry

and astronomy in the school of Socrates. The map used in this school was famous enough to become a topic of parody for Aristophanes.²⁵ Isocrates confirms the public debates about Socrates' new curriculum: the young men delighted themselves in the study of geometry, astronomy, and eristic dialogues more than they should, although among the older men not one would not declare them insufferable.²⁶ As such, the 'geometry' Xenophon might have learned was probably too abstract to be used in a foreign environment, and its scale perhaps smaller than the practical information that Xenophon would need on the field.

Leaving aside Socrates' theoretical teaching, what really could a young Athenian aristocrat at the end of the 5th century BC know about a military campaign in which he wanted to enrol? Did he have an idea about the lands he was supposed to cross, at least in the initial stage of the campaign? How trained and prepared were the officers and their soldiers for field orientation and estimation of distances and environmental conditions? To what extent were they dependent on 'specialists' of foreign spaces, on military surveyors and guides, on professional travellers – such as merchants, mercenaries – or on foreigners?

Sources from Roman times inform us about young Athenians drawing sketchy maps of the Mediterranean, before the expedition to Sicily (415–413 BC).²⁷ This geographical knowledge, however, focused exclusively on maritime spaces, which Athenian citizens discussed in public assemblies and courts. From Carthage and Sardinia in the west, to the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean shores of Egypt and Cyrene, the mental map of the Athenian theatre audience reflected the entanglements of the Athenian military and commercial network.²⁸

²⁵ *Clouds* 200–217. See Dan/Geus/Guckelsberger in this volume.

²⁶ *Panathenaicus* 26: ... λέγω δὲ τὴν τε γεωμετρίαν καὶ τὴν ἀστρολογίαν καὶ τοὺς διαλόγους τοὺς ἐριστικούς καλουμένους, οἷς οἱ μὲν νεώτεροι μᾶλλον χαίρουσι τοῦ δέοντος, τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων οὐδεὶς ἔστιν ὅστις ἂν ἀνεκτοῦς αὐτοῦς εἶναι φήσειεν.

²⁷ Cf. Plutarchus, *Life of Nicias* 12.1–2: ...καὶ νέους ἐν παλαιστραῖς καὶ γέροντας ἐν ἐργαστηρίοις καὶ ἡμικυκλίοις συγκαθεζομένους ὑπογράφειν τὸ σχῆμα τῆς Σικελίας καὶ τὴν φύσιν τῆς περὶ αὐτὴν θαλάσσης καὶ λιμένας καὶ τόπους, οἷς τέτραπται πρὸς Λιβύην ἢ νῆσος. οὐ γὰρ ἄθλον ἐποιούντο τοῦ πολέμου Σικελίαν, ἀλλ' ὀρηκτήριον, ὡς ἀπ' αὐτῆς διαγωνισόμενοι πρὸς Καρχηδόνιους καὶ σχήσοντες ἅμα Λιβύην καὶ τὴν ἐντὸς Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν θάλασσαν. / "... the youth in their training-schools and the old men in their work-shops and lounging-places would sit in clusters drawing maps of Sicily, charts of the sea about it, and plans of the harbours and districts of the island which look towards Libya. For they did not regard Sicily itself as the prize of the war, but rather as a mere base of operations, purposing therefore to wage a contest with the Carthaginians and get possession of both Libya and of all the sea this side the Pillars of Heracles". *Life of Alcibiades* 17.3 (4): ...πολλοὺς ἐν ταῖς παλαιστραῖς καὶ τοῖς ἡμικυκλίοις καθέζεσθαι τῆς τε νήσου τὸ σχῆμα καὶ θέσιν Λιβύης καὶ Καρχηδόνας ὑπογράφοντας. / "Many were they who sat in the palaestras and lounging-places mapping out in the sand the shape of Sicily and the position of Libya and Carthage" (transl. B. Perrin). Cf. Aelian, *Various histories* 3.28.

²⁸ E.g. Aristophanes' *Knights* 173–176, *Wasps* 698–701, Hermippus fr. 63 Kock (*CAF*) *apud* Athenaeus of Naucratis 1.49 Kaibel, 27e–28a: see Olshausen 2000: 114–115 (cf. Olshausen 2009). Such geographical caricatures on the Athenian stage continue through the first half of the 4th century BC: Ehippos (fr. 5 Kock [*CAF*] *apud* Athenaeus of Naucratis 8.38 Kaibel, 346f–347b) represented the maritime interests of Athens, in the age of Timotheus, as a fish, bigger than Crete, cooked in a pan, as large as the eastern Mediterranean.

One has to assume that the level of Greek everyday knowledge of the eastern half of the *oikumene*, inaccessible by sea, was vastly different from that of the Mediterranean. Xenophon, just like Clearchus, was probably unaware of other itineraries connecting the Greek and the Persian worlds, except the so-called Royal Road.²⁹ Hence, the late 5th–early 4th century BC information about the Asiatic isthmus (between the Red and the Black Sea / Caucasus, on the Euphrates-Tigris line, or at the western extremity of Asia Minor, in Cappadocia) was scarce and remained so until Roman times.³⁰

As a consequence, we have to suppose that Xenophon and his fellows-in-arms progressively discovered most of the Asiatic environment during their travel.³¹ If he took notes during that time, they would have barely reflected a rational itinerary, from east to north and then west, as is represented in the *Anabasis* by his third person omniscient narrator. It is thus likely that Xenophon manipulated the travelled time-space continuum while drafting the story. Such a reconstruction was not only a requisite for making a narrative coherent and logical: it was the *sine qua non* of supporting the message conveyed by the author.

1. 3. 2. *The different Anabaseis*

A proof for Xenophon's rethinking of the experienced space in the *Anabasis* could be taken from comparisons with other *Anabaseis*. They have all been lost, probably since Byzantine times. But their residual memory gives some insights about what Xenophon and his audience could know about the storyspace of the *Anabasis*, when Xenophon's text became known in Greece proper.

We probably do not need to look for a distinct *Anabasis* of Themistogenes, because we assume that this name was only a pseudonym Xenophon used probably for the first publication of some of the books of this work. But different versions of the expedition certainly existed in antiquity. Even if we leave aside Ctesias' and Dinon's stories about the beginning of the retreat, Isocrates offers clear narrative variants different from Xenophon's assessments.³²

²⁹ See Briant 1991; Graf 1994; Debord 1995; French 1998.

³⁰ Cf. Dan 2011.

³¹ Xenophon acknowledges the progressive discovery of spaces in 2.2.3 (quoted above: Clearchus refers to the position of the Tigris); 3.5.14–15 (quoted below; the Ten Thousand find out from prisoners about the main roads, which correspond to cardinal directions); 4.5.34 (they find out from a village headman that they are in Armenia); 4.1.23–24, 17–18; 5.1; 6.1–2; 7.19 (the Ten Thousand use local guides for parts of the route).

³² Ctesias 688 F 16 (*apud* Photius, *Bibliotheca* Codex 72, 43b–44a), F 19 (*apud* Plutarchus, *Life of Artaxerxes* 9), F 23 (*apud* Plutarch, *Life of Artaxerxes* 13), F 27 (*apud* Photius, *Bibliotheca* Codex 72, 44a–b), F 28 (*apud* Plutarchus, *Life of Artaxerxes* 18); Dinon 690 F 17 (*apud* Plutarch, *Life of Artaxerxes* 9); Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* (§ 104), *Panegyricus* (§ 145), *To Philipp* (§ 89).

A written *Anabasis* of Sophagenetus existed at least in late antique times: it is impossible to say whether it was a classical story that remained unknown for centuries – Plutarchus does not know it – or whether it was a literary ‘fake’.³³ An Arcadian στρατηγός with this name is mentioned in Xenophon.³⁴ On the basis of four fragments attributed to him by the epitomist of the *Ethnika* of Stephanos of Byzantium, some scholars have proposed to connect this lost *Anabasis* with the ultimate source of the 14th book of Diodorus Siculus, who used Ephorus as a direct source.³⁵ In turn, Ephorus would have used a complete version of what modern philologists call the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*: a text which has been attributed to Ephorus himself, but also, with more conviction in the last years, to Theopompus and Cratippus, among others.³⁶ Another *Anabasis*, maybe the one by Sophagenetus, could have been used as ultimate model.³⁷ In any case, this tradition seems ‘contaminated’ by Xenophon’s own text, because Diodorus (14.37.1–4) quotes him verbatim for the expedition in Thrace.

There is one passage in the preserved texts and fragments that allows us to clarify the possible number of variants of the *Anabaseis* and to make a supposition about how their authors worked with the geographical material. Where Xenophon mentions the people of Τάοχοι (*Anabasis* 4.7.1, *etc.*), Diodorus (14.29.1) and possibly Ephorus give the name of the Χάοι, while Stephanos of Byzantium quotes Sophagenetus as evidence for the name Τάοι (*s.u.* Τάοχοι = 109, F 2). Errors are possible in any of the manuscript traditions of these authors, but all these ethnics are correct. They can be explained by our modern linguistic and historical knowledge: Xenophon’s Τάοχοι may be a doubly labelled plural, of the Sophagenetus’ Τάοι, with the Caucasian suffix of plural *-χο and with the Greek ending -οι.³⁸ The ethnic Τάοι could have been retained by Greek authors thanks to a folk etymology, as derivative of the name for peacocks (ταώς, -ω); this *ethnos* was actually to be found in the vicinity of the Φασιανοί (‘of Phasis’ / pheasants). It should probably be identified with the Dajæni-Diaæuehi of the Assyrian sources³⁹ and associated with the Armenian name of *Tayk’ / Taoq* (*Tao* of the Georgians): this is the general designation of the north-western part of historical Ar-

³³ See the general discussion of F. Jacoby under *FGrHist* 108–109 (Themistogenes of Syracuse and Sophagenetus of Stymphalos).

³⁴ 1.1.11, 1.2.3, 1.2.9, 2.5.37, 4.4.19, 5.3.1, 5.8.1, 6.5.13.

³⁵ Cf. 70 F 208 *apud* Diodorus 14.22.2.

³⁶ See Cataudella 2001; Schepens 2001; Sordi 2001; Behrwald 2005: 9–13.

³⁷ Among the supporters of the survival of Sophagenetus’ *Anabasis* in Diodorus, see, e.g., Barber 1935: 126. Others have also proposed the existence of another work, never attested as such, but which would have been written by one Phalinos, mentioned in the first two books of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* as working for Thissaphernes (cf. Anderson 1974: 83, 111–112). Others believe that Ephorus used Ctesias (e.g. von Mess 1906a and 1906b). See also Westlake 1987, who thinks at some oral sources for the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*.

³⁸ Cf. Bux 1927: 1013.

³⁹ Herzfeld 1968: 121, “§ 102. The Site of the Dajæni – Taochoi”; Sagona/Sagona 2004: 30–37, 73–77.

menia and, in a narrow sense, of northern Vanand (the actual Turkish province of Kars, in the north-western part of the historical Armenian district of Basean), precisely where Xenophon puts the Taochoi in relation to the Phasianoi and with the Chalybians.⁴⁰

On the other hand, the name of the Χάοι must be separate: it could represent the Greek form of the Armenian self-given name of *Hayk*. Some considered it identical with the ethnic Xoί of Hecataeus.⁴¹ Whatever the truth of this conjecture, it has the merit of recalling the importance of tradition in Greek ethnography. We may suppose that Diodorus or his source wrote Χάοι in order to be closer to the ancient logographers, while Sophocles would have used Τάοι, which could have been ‘translated’ into Greek and was perhaps current among the Greeks of the expedition. Xenophon, in turn, would have used the double plural, Τάοχοι, which could have been inspired by what he heard in the field, but which also had the advantage of combining the two other Greek forms. This is only a hypothesis, but it is certain that the two names Χάοι and Τάοι - Τάοχοι do not correspond to contradictory versions of the same story, but to three historiographical traditions based on different sources.

As a result, we can assume that we possess material from at least four accounts of the Ten Thousand’s story: Xenophon’s work; version(s) known to Isocrates; Diodorus, on the basis of unknown sources; Sophocles. These differences also suggest that the geographical and ethnographical information recorded by Xenophon and by other historians do not necessarily correspond exactly to what the Ten Thousand could have learned in the field. The texts probably illustrate different elaborations: their authors took into consideration the spatial framework of the audience, which was firmly rooted in 6th and 5th century logography. The reason is one of the fundamental principles of ancient descriptions of spaces and peoples in particular and of common sense in general: conservatism.⁴² Unlike modern scientific discourse, which gives priority to experimentation, ancient geography can be seen as a continuous revision of a previous map, taking into account new information based on autopsy, but never totally changing the general, ancient outlook of the world. There is no revolutionary breaking-off in ancient geography. Accordingly, there is no place for completely new data. Geographic and ethnographic names were probably passed through the filter of tradition.

In ancient literary texts, like Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, new elements, introduced by ‘naive’ geography, were less valuable than ‘scholarly’ geography, shared by the literate and by what we would call today our ‘well-informed’ authors. This goes hand in

⁴⁰ 4.6.5, cf. 4.4.18.

⁴¹ See Hewsen 2001. Cf. F. Jacoby, *ad* 1, F 207.

⁴² Dan 2009.

hand with the principle of autobiographical writing in antiquity: the author did not express his position directly, but manipulated the common space-time continuum (Bakhtin's *chronotopoi*) and invented a story in order to convince his audience, who judged him on the basis of the tradition. The personal space on which he stages the action is not the description of a space newly discovered: just like in modern times, when the public does not necessarily expect a new story but an original interpretation, the merit of an ancient writer depended on his subjective manipulation of the factual material.⁴³ The limited contribution brought by personal experience to the common geographical knowledge therefore made the geographical canons more stable. It probably also widened the gap between the spatial knowledge of uneducated people and the mental *mappae mundi* transmitted by texts.

There are, however, some geographical elements shared by the people and their leaders. Xenophon's *Anabasis* offers several examples.

2. What is 'common sense' in Xenophon's geography?

If the difference between the geographical culture of the leaders and that of the soldiers was so deep, how did they achieve mutual understanding? Which are the frames chosen by Xenophon in order to illustrate this dialogue? The answer lies not in factual information about absolute locations but in the mental modelling of relative spaces. There was common ground for communication about space, because the characters who were explaining spaces and spatial strategies, in addition to the narrator himself, utilized simple cognitive mechanisms and referred to simple data, familiar to all the people involved regardless of their geographic or social origin.

2.1 The Mental Modelling of Hellas: spatial Realien and myths

Xenophon's *Anabasis* reflects events which happened outside and on the edge of Hellas (ἐπὶ ταῖς θύραις τῆς Ἑλλάδος, *Anabasis* 6.5.23). This spatial construct was well-known to all the participants and readers, who were all speakers of Greek but natives of different πόλεις. Hence, its mental projections and connections are an interesting example of Panhellenic 'common sense'. Indeed, they concern a symbol and an epic theme very dear to the Greek public: the homeland and the return from far away. In the *Anabasis*, two types of analogies – or, in cognitive terms, conceptual metaphors – are important for the implicit definition of Hellenic space by the Greeks themselves: the

⁴³ Cf. Durrbach 1893; Delebecque 1946; Wencis 1977; Grethlein 2012. Even more than in the case of Xenophon, this aspect has been emphasized for Xenophon's follower, Caesar: see Rambaud 1966; Krebs 2006.

sea and the Occident. In the common imagination, each of these is connected with one of the two epic wanderings: Odysseus' and Heracles' travels.

2.1.1 The sea, the *Odyssey*, and the discontinuous Hellas

In the 5th century BC, the Greeks reinvented themselves as an ἔθνος by opposition to their common enemy, the Persians.⁴⁴ This antagonism also had geographical grounds: the Greeks, following Plato's famous formula (*Phaedo* 109a–b), considered themselves as οἰκεῖν τοὺς μέχρι Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν ἀπὸ Φάσιδος ἐν μικρῷ τι μὲν ὄσπερ περὶ τέλμα μύρμηκας ἢ βατράχους περὶ τὴν θάλατταν οἰκοῦντας / dwelling between the pillars of Heracles and the river Phasis in a small part of it about the sea, like ants or frogs about a pond". This means that the Greeks saw themselves as numerous as ants and as attached to the coasts of the Mediterranean as the frogs around a body of water. Accordingly, for the common Greek traveller going and coming back from the core of Asia, the sea was a symbol of Hellas – a community of πατρίδες of Greeks, as opposed to the lands of the Barbarians.⁴⁵ In the most ancient periplus of the whole Internal Sea still extant, transmitted under the name of Scylax, Hellas appears as a series of territories on the different coasts of the Mediterranean: the sea alone and its connectivity enable Greek unity.

When thinking of the sea, any Greek imagines Odysseus and the possibility of going home. The hope expressed by one of the Ten Thousand was to complete the final stage of their journey, stretched out on his back like Odysseus on the Pheacian ship.⁴⁶ The idea comes as a sign of relief, after the difficult journey during which many have thought that they might forget the way home, just like the Lotus-Eaters.⁴⁷ The same implicit parallel with the *Odyssey* explains the satisfaction expressed through the famous exclamation of the soldiers who climbed to the top of the mysterious mountain Theches, in the hinterland of Trapezous: θάλαττα, θάλαττα (*Anabasis* 4.7.24).⁴⁸ Paradoxically, this is also the moment when the Panhellenic community of the Ten Thousand begins to disintegrate. Moreover, the joy provoked by the first view of the Black Sea is directly proportional to the pain expressed by Xenophon in the hinterland of the Bithynian port of Calpe. The sea, synonym of the main hope for a return to Greece, be-

⁴⁴ See Hall 1989; Hall 2002.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Anabasis* 4.8.4, 7.1.29.

⁴⁶ *Anabasis* 5.1.2 (cf. *Odyssey* 13.70–92).

⁴⁷ *Anabasis* 3.2.25 (cf. *Odyssey* 9.82–104). For a more detailed discussion of the parallel between the *Anabasis* and the *Odyssey*, see Lossau 1990; Howland 2000; Rehm 2002: 76f.; Marincola 2007.

⁴⁸ The place remains unidentified, despite a huge bibliography on the topic: cf. e.g. Mitford 2000, Manfredi 2004. For the impact of this expression in English-speaking culture, see Rood 2004a.

comes here an impassable ravine: πόσον τι νάπος ὁ Πόντος,⁴⁹ The difficulty of the travel back to the Aegean would have justified the foundation of a Greek colony: if the Ten Thousand had accomplished Xenophon's project, they would have been like all the ancient Greeks who have imagined themselves in the footsteps of Odysseus when establishing their new cities beyond the seas.⁵⁰ However, if Xenophon the soldier failed in his attempt at colonisation, Xenophon the author succeeded in constructing an *Odyssey* in his *Anabasis*: from a narrative point of view, the stops in the Ten Thousand's march are reminiscent of the *loci horridi* of the *Odyssey*, and some speeches of Xenophon the character recall those of Odysseus: both of them were helped by the gods in finding an exit from awful places for their fellows.⁵¹

Yet, the parallels with the Homeric world do not stop at the level of these quotations. Xenophon, his men, and his audience share the same traditional pattern of reading the world. In the Greek mentality, reflected already by the *Odyssey*, the Greek home is connected with the sea and lowlands are connected with Hellenization: the degree of barbarism grows as one moves from the sea towards inland regions, and from the plain to the mountains.⁵² This mental correlation between topography and civilization can be observed, for example, in the portrait of the Carduchians.⁵³ Before their encounter with the Greeks, Xenophon describes them as a mountainous people more barbaric, more dangerous than the Persian Barbarians:

3.5.16	
<p>τούτους (i.e. Καρδούχους) δὲ ἔφασαν οἰκεῖν ἀνὰ τὰ ὄρη καὶ πολεμικοὺς εἶναι, καὶ βασιλέως οὐκ ἀκούειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμβαλεῖν ποτε εἰς αὐτοὺς βασιλικὴν στρατιὰν δώδεκα μυριάδας· τούτων δ' οὐδέν' ἀπονοστήσαι διὰ τὴν δυσχωρίαν. ὁπότε μέντοι πρὸς τὸν</p>	<p>These Carduchians, they said, dwelt up among the mountains, were a warlike people, and were not subjects of the King; in fact, a royal army of one hundred and twenty thousand men had once invaded them, and, by reason of the ruggedness of the country, not a man of all that number came back. Still, whenever they</p>

⁴⁹ *Anabasis* 6.5.20. It is possible that Xenophon's speech at Calpe, to which this phrase belongs, was quite famous in antiquity: it is preserved on papyri of Oxyrhynchos (*PSI* 11.1196 [*P.Cairo* Inv. JE 68899] + *PSI* 15.1485 [Inv. 287], the first available on <http://ipap.csad.ox.ac.uk/PSI.html>, seen on 4th July 2012). It was probably studied as an illustration of the Greek colonial mentality.

⁵⁰ Malkin 1998.

⁵¹ Among the *loci horridi* where Xenophon played an important part in rescuing a part of the army, just like Odysseus with some of his men, are the lands of the Taochoi – which one could compare with the Cyclops (4.7.1–14), the land of honey (4.8.20). For such echoes of the *Odyssey* as *Raummodelle*, see Dennerlein 2009: 178–189.

⁵² See also Brulé 1995: 12–19, who discusses the vertical axis in the human geography of the *Anabasis*.

⁵³ For the Ten Thousand's march in the land of the Carduchians, see Lendle 1984 and 1995, *ad loc.* For a synthesis of this space, see Drögemüller 1987, and Dan 2009: 5.1.1a, with further bibliography. Other savage, warlike Barbarians are connected with an inaccessible environment: the Carduchians in eastern Anatolia (3.5.16); the Chalybians on the Pontic slopes (4.7.15); the Drilai in the hinterland of Trapezous (5.2); the Thracians south from the Balkans, at Salmydessos (7.5.12–14). The Tibarenians, on the other hand, who had fortresses on the coast, were less strong (5.5.2–3).

σατράπην τὸν ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ σπείσαιντο, καὶ ἐπιμυγνύναι σφῶν τε πρὸς ἐκείνους καὶ ἐκείνων πρὸς ἑαυτούς.	made a treaty with the satrap in the plain, some of the people of the plain did have dealings with the Car-duchians and some of the Carduchians with them.
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Therefore, unlike Herodotus and other ancient historians – whose ethnography can be read in terms of centre-periphery, a model with which perhaps all the archaic and classical authors were acquainted – Xenophon offers a more complex ethnographic picture of the world. From an ethical point of view, behind the dichotomy Greek-Barbarian, he knows about good and bad Greeks and about good, bad, and very bad Barbarians.⁵⁴ Geographically, his last category, the ‘more barbarian than the Barbarians’, is not situated on the edge of the world. The *oikumene* of Xenophon the traveller is not two-dimensional: as in the *Odyssey*, the space is not a simple container of the adventures. The space-time continuum is interrelated with the gestures, feelings, and ideas of the heroes on the move and, at the same time, mirrors the character of the enchoric inhabitants. Its hodological form, adapted to the time of the story and of the narrative, joins the extremities and the centre of the *oikumene*. The fluidity of the sea, through all the maritime spaces traversed by Odysseys, makes a certain Greek unity possible.

2.1.2 The Occident, Heracles, and the continuous Hellas

The second geographical emblem associated with Greece by all the Ten Thousand arrived on the shores of the Euxine is the Occident. The sea was the symbol of the discontinuous Greek lands. The sunset corresponded to ‘Hellas’, a continuous Greek space situated south of Byzantium and corresponding to the territories directly involved in the conflicts of the late 5th and early 4th century. This concept was familiar to the common soldier and to Xenophon’s audience: as soon as the Ten Thousand entered Hellas, Xenophon, author of the *Anabasis*, identifies himself with Xenophon, author of the *Hellenica*: the space becomes fluid; its names are known to all the Greek citizens involved in public affairs and, thus, deserve to be mentioned.⁵⁵ The European core was the so-called “continuous Hellas” (Ἑλλάς συνεχής), in the modern Balkan peninsula, south of the imaginary line drawn between the Ambracian and Maliac gulfs.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ On Xenophon’s Barbarians, see Hirsch 1985; Briant 1989; Rzchiladze 1980; Darbo-Peschanski 1989; Lenfant 2001; Boëldieu-Trevet 2010. Examples of the καλὸς κάγαθός Barbarian is Cyrus the Elder, Cyrus the Younger, and the Thracian Seuthes: see Carlier 1984.

⁵⁵ *Anab.* 7.8.

⁵⁶ For the geo-cultural concept of Hellas, see Prontera 1991 and Gehrke 1992–1993; cf. the commentary of Arenz 2006. More generally, for the concept of Hellenism, see, e.g., Stier 1971 and Trédé 1991. For “continuous Hellas”, see Pseudo-Scylax (33 and 65).

This equivalence between the West and the motherland is natural for someone who has a terrestrial view from Asia and takes the sun as principal and absolute marker. A short inventory of other, relative types of orientations confirms the practical advantages of this absolute solar reference system when discussing a unique direction for a great number of men.

The simple, left-right orientation is the one most frequently attested in the *Anabasis*: this is to be expected for a narrative in which the hodological perspective is dominant. When one examines the linear perspective – back and front – of the route, one enters the second dimension: a formula used in different ancient and modern cultures for simple narratives inscribed into space. Xenophon knew that such object-oriented spatial hints were convenient for a travel narrative, when one focused on the traveller and not on the environment. Often, he used them when they were really significant, during specific military actions: for a στρατηγός, having the sea, a river, or open country on one side or the other has direct consequences on the disposition of the soldiers.⁵⁷ Of course, this relative positioning is one of the reasons for which the readers who try to reconstruct the itinerary are quickly lost.

One of the first examples corresponds to one of the first stages of the march after Cunaxa: ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο, ἐπορεύοντο ἐν δεξιᾷ ἔχοντες τὸν ἥλιον, λογιζόμενοι ἥξειν ἅμα ἡλίῳ δύνοντι εἰς κώμας τῆς Βαβυλωνίας χώρας / For when day came, they set out on the march, keeping the sun on their right and calculating that at sunset they would reach villages in Babylonia...” (2.2.13). Modern readers still do not agree whether they went east or north. Moreover, this relative orientation does not reveal much about the sense of space of Xenophon or of the other leaders and soldiers. But it serves the literary purpose of the author: to focus on the Greek army; to present space as a sum of conditions on which the survival of the Greeks depended; to ignore those environmental aspects that had no direct impact on the men.

Also, we do not find much material on winds, leaving aside the episode on the difficult progress north from the sources of the Euphrates, through a snow storm (4.5.3–4). This is not surprising when one considers the local character of the Greek winds and their deities. The only exception – the sacrifice to Boreas – is an interesting case of *interpretatio Graeca*, which tells us more about the origin of the military leaders (Sparta and Athens, in continental Greece, where the cold northern air was

⁵⁷ E.g. 1.5.1, 5 (with the Euphrates on their right); 2.4.28 (Tigris on the left, near the city of Kainai); 4.8.2 (in the land of the Macrones: εἶχον δ' ὑπὲρ δεξιῶν χωρίον οἷον χαλεπώτατον καὶ ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς ἄλλον ποταμόν, εἰς ὃν ἐνέβαλλεν ὁ ὀρίζων, δι' οὗ ἔδει διαβῆναι / “Above them, on their right, they had a country of the sternest and most rugged character, and on their left another river, into which the frontier river discharges itself, and which they must cross”); 6.1.14 (Paphlagonia on their left); 7.5.12 (the Pontus on their right). For rivers as landmarks in the *Anabasis*, see Baslez 1995; Brulé 1995: 7.

brought from Thrace by Boreas) than about the nature of the Armenian wind or the precise direction of the Ten Thousand's itinerary. Of course, this cultural borrowing was within reach of everyone, because, as Xenophon says, every single soldier was able to recognise the Boreas in the Black Sea (cf. 5.7.6–7, quoted *infra*).

The cardinal, global system offered much more appropriate markers for space on a continental scale. Hence, prisoners, soldiers, and leaders seem to have been familiar with the most rudimentary orientation that took into account the movements of the sun. On land (3.5.14–15) as well as on sea (5.7.6–7), precise equivalents between these elementary directions and ethnic and geographic units seem generally accepted by Barbarians and Greeks (that is, by the military leaders, educated soldiers, and Xenophon's readers all together). These equivalents can be seen as 'naive' taxonomic measures through which the world looks smaller, more ordered, and easier to control. At the same time, the names belong to cultural – mythical or historical – geographies, which add supplementary implicit meanings to the text. Following the words of the prisoners at the beginning of their κατάβασις, the Ten Thousand are stuck between the core of the Persian Empire to the east and the Greek world to the west. During the παράβασις, Xenophon the character explains in even more naive terms how one could mark the difference between the eastern extremity of the Greek world, a place concerned by one of the most important myths of Greek colonisation, and Greece proper:

3.5.14–15	
<p>... συναγαγόντες τοὺς ἐαλωκότας ἤλεγχον τὴν κύκλω πᾶσαν χώραν τίς ἐκάστη εἶη. οἱ δὲ ἔλεγον ὅτι τὰ πρὸς μεσημβρίαν τῆς ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα εἶη καὶ Μηδίαν, δι' ἧσπερ ἦκοιεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς ἕω ἐπὶ Σοῦσά τε καὶ Ἐκβάτανα φέροι, ἔνθα θερίζειν λέγεται βασιλεύς, ἡ δὲ διαβάντι τὸν ποταμὸν πρὸς ἐσπέραν ἐπὶ Λυδίαν καὶ Ἴωνίαν φέροι, ἡ δὲ διὰ τῶν ὀρέων καὶ πρὸς ἄρκτον τετραμμένη ὅτι εἰς Καρδούχους ἄγοι.</p>	<p>... (the generals) brought together the prisoners that had been taken and enquired of them about each district of all the surrounding country. The prisoners said that the region to the south lay on the road towards Babylon and Media, the identical province they had just passed through; that the road to the eastward led to Susa and Ecbatana, where the King is said to spend his summers; across the river and on the west was the way to Lydia and Ionia; while the route through the mountains and northward led to the country of the Carduchians.</p>
5.7.6–7	
<p>Ἄκουώ τινά διαβάλλειν, ὃ ἄνδρες, ἐμὲ ὡς ἐγὼ ἄρα ἐξαπατήσας ὑμᾶς μέλλω ἄγειν εἰς Φᾶσιν. ἀκούσατε οὖν μου πρὸς θεῶν, καὶ ἐὰν μὲν ἐγὼ φαίνομαι ἀδικεῖν, οὐ χρή με ἐνθένδε ἀπελθεῖν πρὶν ἂν δῶ δίκην. [...] ὑμεῖς δέ, ἔφη, ἴστε δῆπου ὅθεν ἥλιος ἀνίσχει καὶ ὅπου δύεται, καὶ ὅτι ἐὰν μὲν τις εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα</p>	<p>"I hear, soldiers, that some one is bringing a charge against me, namely, that I am going to deceive you and lead you to the Phasis. In the name of the gods, then, give ear to my words, and if it appears that I am guilty of wrong, I ought not to leave this spot without paying the penalty; ... You doubtless know", he continued, "where the sun rises and where it sets;</p>

<p>μέλλη ἰέναι, πρὸς ἑσπέραν δεῖ πορεύεσθαι· ἦν δέ τις βούληται εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους, τοῦμπαλιν πρὸς ἕω. ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις τοῦτο ἂν δύναίτο ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατῆσαι ὡς ἥλιος ἔνθεν μὲν ἀνίσχει, δύεται δὲ ἐνταῦθα, ἔνθα δὲ δύεται, ἀνίσχει δ' ἐντεῦθεν; ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τοῦτο γε ἐπίστασθε ὅτι βορέας μὲν ἔξω τοῦ Πόντου εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα φέρει, νότος δὲ εἴσω εἰς Φᾶσιν, καὶ λέγεται, ὅταν βορρᾶς πνέη, ὡς καλοὶ πλοῖ εἰσιν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα. τοῦτ' οὖν ἔστιν ὅπως τις ἂν ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ ὥστε ἐμβαίνειν ὅπταν νότος πνέη; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ὅπταν γαλήνη ἢ ἐμβιβῶ. οὐκοῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐν ἐνὶ πλοίῳ πλεύσομαι, ὑμεῖς δὲ τοῦλάχιστον ἐν ἑκατόν. πῶς ἂν οὖν ἐγὼ ἢ βιασαίμην ὑμᾶς ξὺν ἐμοὶ πλεῖν μὴ βουλομένους ἢ ἐξαπατήσας ἄγοιμι; ποιῶ δ' ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατηθέντας καὶ γοητευθέντας ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἢ κείν εἰς Φᾶσιν· καὶ δὴ ἀποβαίνομεν εἰς τὴν χώραν· γνῶσεσθε δὴπου ὅτι οὐκ ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἐστέ...</p>	<p>likewise, that if a man is to go to Greece, he must journey toward the west, while if he wishes to go to the lands of the barbarians, he must travel in the opposite direction, that is, toward the east. Now is there any one who could deceive you in this matter, by maintaining that the place where it sets is the one where it rises? Again, you surely know this also, that the north wind carries one out of the Euxine to Greece, while the south wind carries you within, to the Phasis – indeed, the saying is, ‘When the north wind doth blow, fair voyaging to Greece’. In this matter, again, is it possible that any one could deceive you into embarking when the south wind is blowing? But I am going to put you abroad, you may say, when it is calm. Well, I shall be sailing on one ship, you on a hundred at least; how, then, could I either force you to voyage along with me if you did not choose, or deceive you into following my lead? But suppose you have been deceived and bewitched by me and we have come to the Phasis; we accordingly disembark upon the shore; you will perceive, likely enough, that you are not in Greece ...”</p>
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Xenophon's speech at Cotyora (5.7.6–7) contains two types of orientation markers which are synonyms with Hellas, as opposed to Phasis: Hellas corresponded to the sunset and to the direction into which the northern wind blew. Phasis and, implicitly, Colchis, were the symbol of the rising sun, land of Aietes, son of the Sun.⁵⁸ The end of the Argonautic journey (to which the mythical name of the king was the only allusion) was also the eastern extremity of the Internal Sea in the Greek commonsensical knowledge of archaic and classical times.⁵⁹ The violence of this end of the Greek *spatium mythicum*, corresponds, in the *spatium historicum* of the *Anabasis*, to the Pontic piracy: such are the characteristic of a colonial space, where the Ten Thousand could live well.⁶⁰ For Xenophon, the two spaces are interconnected. North of Armenia, the Ten Thousand wrongly believed that they had found the mythical Phasis. A river in a local, South-Caucasian language could have had this name, or it was deduced by the Greeks from the local ethnic of the Phasianoi. Further to the south, they had already identified the people of the Chalybians and the trace of the mythical Amazons, known to be close

⁵⁸ *Anab.* 5.6.36–37.

⁵⁹ Dan 2009 (with bibliography).

⁶⁰ E.g. *Anab.* 5.6.20.

to the Caucasus.⁶¹ The whole story of reaching the Pontic shore illustrates the mental modelling of a completely foreign space, through such mythical and historical references that were comprehensible to the Greeks – participants in the expedition and readers of the *Anabasis*. There is one recurrent motif, one mythical but also religious experience which conducted the Greeks from one end to the other of their adventure: their land itinerary towards the Greek core followed the footsteps of Heracles. The hero of the Lacedemonians, who occupied an important place among the Ten Thousand, was honored through sacrifices and games; Xenophon found his entry to the Underworld in Heracleia, not far away from the place where he wanted to establish his colony.⁶²

At the level of the narrative, there are other analogies established between directions and countries, which allow the author to re-enact dramatic debates and decision-making in virtual *mises en scène*. These compass readings correspond to real crossroads in the history of the expedition. From these points, the army continues its route, represented by lists of lands and peoples that are presented from a hodological perspective:

3.5.18	
<p>ἐδόκει δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι διὰ τῶν ὀρέων εἰς Καρδούχους ἐμβαλεῖν· τούτους γὰρ διελθόντας ἔφασαν εἰς Ἀρμενίαν ἤξειν, ἧς Ὀρόντας ἦρχε πολλῆς καὶ εὐδαίμονος. ἐντεῦθεν δ' εὐπορον ἔφασαν εἶναι ὅποι τις ἐθέλοι πορεύεσθαι. ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐθύσαντο, ὅπως ἡνίκα καὶ δοκοίη τῆς ὥρας τὴν πορείαν ποιοῖντο· τὴν γὰρ ὑπερβολὴν τῶν ὀρέων ἐδεδοίκεσαν μὴ προκαταληφθεῖν.</p>	<p>The opinion of the generals, however, was that they must make their way through the mountains into the country of the Carduchians; for the prisoners said that after passing through this country they would come to Armenia, the large and prosperous province of which Orontas was ruler; and from there, they said, it was easy to go in any direction one chose.</p>

At the same time, however, at least a part of the Ten Thousand could understand more elaborate mental maps that we should probably relate to a ‘scholarly’ level of spatial thinking. These involved more sophisticated analogies between directions and climates on the one hand and bird’s-eye views and panoptic images of the *oikumene* on the other. We find them in the description of the Persian Empire, from Cyrus’ perspective. This is compatible with what we know about the Persian representations of their world, from Achaemenid inscriptions and Greek historians like Herodotus and Diodorus:⁶³

⁶¹ *Anab.* 4.4.17. For the literary traditions on the Chalybians, see Dan 2012.

⁶² *Anab.* 4.8.25; 6.2; 6.5.24–25.

⁶³ See Dan 2013.

1.7.6–7	
<p>ἀκούσας ταῦτα ἔλεξεν ὁ Κῦρος· Ἄλλ' ἔστι μὲν ἡμῖν, ὃ ἄνδρες, ἀρχὴ πατρῴα πρὸς μὲν μεσημβρίαν μέχρι οὗ διὰ καῦμα οὐ δύνανται οἰκεῖν ἄνθρωποι, πρὸς δὲ ἄρκτον μέχρι οὗ διὰ χειμῶνα· τὰ δ' ἐν μέσῳ τούτων πάντα σατραπεύουσιν οἱ τοῦ ἐμοῦ ἀδελφοῦ φίλοι. ἦν δ' ἡμεῖς νικήσωμεν, ἡμᾶς δεῖ τοὺς ἡμετέρους φίλους τούτων ἐγκρατεῖς ποιῆσαι.</p>	<p>When Cyrus heard that, he answered: “You forget, sirs, my father’s empire stretches southwards to a region where men cannot dwell by reason of the heat, and northwards to a region uninhabitable through cold; but all the intervening space is mapped out in satrapies belonging to my brother’s friends: so that if the victory be ours, it will be ours also to put our friends in possession in their room”.</p>

Unidimensional (a linear, hodological itinerary) and two-dimensional (geographical) space-representations thus appear together in what Xenophon himself assumed to be levels of spatial knowledge and thinking accessible to his contemporaries. From simple directions to correspondences between directions and lands with peoples and even to implicit links between directions and cultures and civilizations, the mental models which characterise the geography of the *Anabasis* were both complex and accessible. They were supposed to be understood, at different degrees, by the different socio-cultural groups that participated in the action and read the narration. A short analysis of these groups, explicitly identified as such in the *Anabasis*, shows the variety of the ‘common’ geographical ideas in Xenophon as well as the ability of the author to re-create them for his particular purpose.

2.2 The social and cultural individualization of the spatial representations

At first glance, the level of spatial knowledge of the participants in the *Anabasis* seems constant: this is to be expected, because when writing down the text, Xenophon took into consideration the scholarly level of his upper class audience. Nevertheless, a careful reading reveals Xenophon’s intention to emphasise if not various degrees of knowledge, then at least different capacities of adaptation on part of the participants to the environmental conditions. These distinctions are not determined by fixed literary constraints, since the ancient historian was not forced by the principle of plausibility to invent believable characters. They only serve the purpose of the work: emphasising Xenophon’s own military and political merit.

2.2.1 The Greek leaders *versus* the mercenary

It is true that the leaders of the Ten Thousand, as portrayed by Xenophon, did not have the necessary knowledge in order to bring the army straight to its destination. We do not know exactly how the route of the army was determined and measured during the proper ἀνάβασις, from the Aegean shore of Asia Minor towards the core of Asia.⁶⁴ But it is clear that the recording of distances during the later parts of the journey has nothing of the regularity and of the precision of the first itineraries, likely to have been measured by Achaemenid bematists.⁶⁵ Xenophon let the improvisation that characterized the return of the Ten Thousand highlight his own merits: on several occasions, he appears as the leader able to read the environment and to seize the opportunities it offered for the survival and prosperity of his men.

This praise of his strategic talent can be seen clearly when compared with the capacities of the common mercenary. The mercenary who blames Xenophon during the trial of Cotyora is depicted as unable to enunciate the travelled route through Armenia in any other way than through very vague spatial and chronological terms, a mix of physical and mental sensations: Ὅπου καὶ ῥίγει ἀπωλλύμεθα καὶ χιῶν πλείστη ἦν / “In the place where we were perishing with cold and there was an enormous amount of snow” (5.8.2). Of course, his phrase is (re)written by the author who is defending himself during his Lacedaemonian exile, as on the shore of Pontus. But it preserves one of the few hints of what could have been plausibly considered by his audience as the ‘lower’ geography of the Greeks, the more common perceptions and reconstructions of unusual spaces: no orientation, no duration, just physical and mental perceptions of a hostile space. This is how Xenophon wanted to present it, as backstage for his own heroic actions.

2.2.2 Xenophon and the Pontian

The ‘Pontic’ part of the *Anabasis* also contains illustrations of ‘chorographic’ (i.e. regional), not only ‘geographic’ representations. The speech of the Sinopean Hecatonymus before the Ten Thousand at Cotyora, a colony of Sinope, is a unique example in ancient literature of what a Pontic Greek might have said about his motherland:

⁶⁴ Nevertheless, there are some archaeological proofs of the boundary marking of Achaemenid routes. See Callieri 1995, with Bernard 1995; we also have some information about Alexander’s bematists (cf. Matthews 1974) an institution which could have Persian origins.

⁶⁵ See Rood 2010; for the value of the parasang, see Tuplin 1997: 404–417.

5.6.6–10

ἔμπειρος γάρ εἰμι καὶ τῆς χώρας τῆς Παφλαγόνων καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως. ἔχει γὰρ ἀμφοτέρωθεν, καὶ πεδία κάλλιστα καὶ ὄρη ὑψηλότατα. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν οἶδα εὐθὺς ἢ τὴν εἰσβολὴν ἀνάγκη ποιεῖσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἄλλη ἢ ἢ τὰ κέρατα τοῦ ὄρους τῆς ὁδοῦ καθ' ἑκάτερά ἐστιν ὑψηλά, ἃ κρατεῖν κατέχοντες καὶ πάνυ ὀλίγοι δύναιεν· ἄν- τούτων δὲ κατεχομένων οὐδ' ἂν οἱ πάντες ἄνθρωποι δύναιεν· ἂν διελθεῖν. ταῦτα δὲ καὶ δεῖξαμι ἂν, εἴ μοί τινα βούλοισθε ξυμπέμψαι. ἔπειτα δὲ οἶδα καὶ πεδία ὄντα καὶ ἰπείαν ἣν αὐτοὶ οἱ βάρβαροι νομίζουσι κρεῖττω εἶναι ἀπάσης τῆς βασιλέως ἰπείας. καὶ νῦν οὗτοι οὐ παρεγένοντο βασιλεῖ καλοῦντι, ἀλλὰ μείζον φρονεῖ ὁ ἄρχων αὐτῶν. ἦν δὲ καὶ δυνηθῆτε τὰ τε ὄρη κλέψαι ἢ φθάσαι λαβόντες καὶ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ κρατήσαι μαχόμενοι τοὺς τε ἰπείας τούτων καὶ πεζῶν μυριάδας πλέον ἢ δώδεκα, ἤξετε ἐπὶ τοὺς ποταμούς, πρῶτον μὲν τὸν Θερμῶδοντα, εὖρος τριῶν πλέθρων, ὃν χαλεπὸν οἶμαι διαβαίνειν ἄλλως τε καὶ πολεμίων πολλῶν ἔμ- προσθεν ὄντων, πολλῶν δὲ ὀπισθεν ἐπομένων· δεύτε- ρον δὲ Ἴριν, τρίπλεθρον ὡσαύτως· τρίτον δὲ Ἄλυν, οὐ μείον δυοῖν σταδίων, ὃν οὐκ ἂν δύνασθε ἄνευ πλοίων διαβῆναι· πλοῖα δὲ τίς ἔσται ὁ παρέχων; ὡς δ' αὐτῶς καὶ ὁ Παρθένιος ἄβατος· ἐφ' ὃν ἔλθοιτε ἂν, εἴ τὸν Ἄλυν διαβαίητε. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐ χαλεπὴν ὑμῖν εἶναι νομίζω τὴν πορείαν ἀλλὰ παντάπασιν ἀδύνατον. ἂν δὲ πλέητε, ἔστιν ἐνθένδε μὲν εἰς Σινώπην παρα- πλεῦσαι, ἐκ Σινώπης δὲ εἰς Ἡράκλειαν·

For I am acquainted with both the country of the Paphlagonians and their power. Their country possesses these two things, the fairest plains and the loftiest mountains. And, in the first place, I know at once where you must make your entry: there is no place save where the peaks of the mountains rise high on either side of the road; holding these peaks a mere handful of men could command the pass, and if they are so held, not all the men in the world could effect a passage. All this I could even point out if you should care to send some one to the spot with me. Secondly, I know that they have plains and a cavalry which the barbarians themselves regard as superior to the whole of the King's cavalry. Indeed, only now these Paphlagonians have failed to present themselves when the King summoned them, for their ruler is too proud to obey. If you should, after all, find yourselves able not only to seize the mountains, whether by stealth or by anticipating the enemy, but also on the plain to conquer in battle both their cavalry and their more than one hundred and twenty thousand infantry, you will come to the rivers. First is the Thermodon, three plethra in width, which I fancy would be difficult to cross, especially with great numbers of the enemy in front and great numbers following behind; second, the Iris, likewise three plethra wide; third, the Halys, not less than two stadia in width, which you could not cross without boats and who will there be to supply you with boats? And similarly impassable is the Parthenius also, to which you would come if you should get across the Halys. For my part, therefore, I believe that this journey is not merely difficult for you, but a thing of utter impossibility. If you go by sea, however, you can coast along from here to Sinope, and from Sinope to Heracleia; and from Heracleia on there is no difficulty either by land or by water, for there are ships in abundance at Heracleia.

The Pontian mentions the main resources and dangers of the region. The geographical knowledge it shares concerns the natural conditions (landmarks, humans, hydrographic basins) perceptible to the visitors. This text is perhaps an illustration of the average level of spatial knowledge in discussions between local populations and potential immigrants. It contrasts with what Xenophon presents as his immediate perception of Calpe, where he wanted to install a colony:

6.4.1–7	
<p>τὸ δὲ χωρίον τοῦτο ὃ καλεῖται Κάλπης λιμὴν ἔστι μὲν ἐν τῇ Θράκη τῇ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· ἀρξαμένη δὲ ἡ Θράκη αὕτη ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ Πόντου μέχρι Ἡρακλείας ἐπὶ δεξιὰ εἰς τὸν Πόντον εἰσπλέοντι. καὶ τριήρει μὲν ἐστὶν εἰς Ἡράκλειαν ἐκ Βυζαντίου κόπαις ἡμέρας μακρᾶς πλοῦς· ἐν δὲ τῷ μέσῳ ἄλλη μὲν πόλις οὐδεμία οὔτε φιλία οὔτε Ἑλληνίς, ἀλλὰ Θρᾶκες Βιθυνοί· καὶ οὐς ἂν λάβωσι τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐκπίπτοντας ἢ ἄλλως πῶς δεινὰ ὑβρίζειν λέγονται τοὺς Ἑλληνας. ὁ δὲ Κάλπης λιμὴν ἐν μέσῳ μὲν κεῖται ἐκατέρωθεν πλεόντων ἐξ Ἡρακλείας καὶ Βυζαντίου, ἔστι δ' ἐν τῇ θαλάττῃ προκείμενον χωρίον, τὸ μὲν εἰς τὴν θάλατταν καθήκον αὐτοῦ πέτρα ἀπορρώξ, ὕψος ὅπῃ ἐλάχιστον οὐ μείον εἴκοσιν ὀργυῶν, ὁ δὲ ἀρχὴν ὁ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἀνήκων τοῦ χωρίου μάλιστα τεττάρων πλέθρων τὸ εὖρος· τὸ δ' ἐντὸς τοῦ ἀρχένου χωρίου ἰκανὸν μυρίοις ἀνθρώποις οἰκῆσαι. λιμὴν δ' ὑπ' αὐτῇ τῇ πέτρᾳ τὸ πρὸς ἐσπέραν αἰγιαλὸν ἔχων. κρήνη δὲ ἡδέος ὕδατος καὶ ἄφθονος ρέουσα ἐπ' αὐτῇ τῇ θαλάττῃ ὑπὸ τῇ ἐπικρατείᾳ τοῦ χωρίου. ξύλα δὲ πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἄλλα, πάνυ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ναυπηγήσιμα ἐπ' αὐτῇ τῇ θαλάττῃ. τὸ δὲ ὄρος εἰς μεσόγειαν μὲν ἀνήκει ὅσον ἐπὶ εἴκοσι σταδίου, καὶ τοῦτο γεῶδες καὶ ἄλιθον· τὸ δὲ παρὰ θάλατταν πλεόν ἢ ἐπὶ εἴκοσι σταδίου δασὺ πολλοῖς καὶ παντοδαποῖς καὶ μεγάλοις ξύλοις. ἡ δὲ ἄλλη χώρα καλὴ καὶ πολλή, καὶ κῶμαι ἐν αὐτῇ εἰσι πολλαὶ καὶ οἰκούμεναι· φέρει γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ κριθᾶς καὶ πυροῦς καὶ ὄσπρια πάντα καὶ μελίνας καὶ σήσαμα καὶ σῦκα ἀρκοῦντα καὶ ἀμπέλους πολλὰς καὶ ἡδυοίνους καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα πλὴν ἐλαῶν. ἡ μὲν χώρα ἦν τοιαύτη.</p>	<p>Now this place which is called Calpe Harbour is situated in Thrace in Asia; and this portion of Thrace begins at the mouth of the Euxine and extends as far as Heracleia, being on the right as one sails into the Euxine. It is a long day's journey for a trireme to row from Byzantium to Heracleia, and between the two places there is no other city, either friendly or Greek, only Bithynian Thracians; and they are said to abuse outrageously any Greeks they may find shipwrecked or may capture in any other way. As for Calpe Harbour, it lies midway of the voyage between Heracleia and Byzantium and is a bit of land jutting out into the sea, the part of it which extends seaward being a precipitous mass of rock, not less than twenty fathoms high at its lowest point, and the isthmus which connects this head with the mainland being about four plethra in width; and the space to the seaward of the isthmus is large enough for ten thousand people to dwell in. At the very foot of the rock there is a harbour whose beach faces toward the west, and an abundantly flowing spring of fresh water close to the shore of the sea and commanded by the headland. There is also a great deal of timber of various sorts, but an especially large amount of fine ship-timber, on the very shore of the sea. The ridge extends back into the interior for about twenty stadia, and this stretch is deep soiled and free from stones, while the land bordering the coast is thickly covered for a distance of more than twenty stadia with an abundance of heavy timber of all sorts. The rest of the region is fair and extensive, and contains many inhabited villages; for the land produces barley, wheat, beans of all kinds, millet and sesame, a sufficient quantity of figs, an abundance of grapes which yield a good sweet wine, and in fact everything except olives. Such was the country thereabouts.</p>

Beyond any doubt, unlike the chorographic description of Hecatonymus, Xenophon produces a 'scholarly' description which raises doubts whether it was made *in situ*. It is true that he presents himself as tempted by the idea of colonisation already in Asia;

furthermore, the environment of the Euxine convinced him and even some of his fellows that the Ten Thousand were strong enough to live like pirates and to establish themselves there.⁶⁶ The topography in his speech, however, corresponds to the ideal place for a colonial foundation and to the rhetorical *criteria* in Greek eulogies of places. Surely the place had qualities that led Xenophon to propose the installation of his colony here. But even if the geographical discourse remains at the level of the naive 'common sense', its content and the rhetorical laws determining its articulation make it appropriate for a very particular audience: Xenophon's judges in a trial and the erudite readers he wanted to convince regarding the opportunity of this failed colonial foundation.⁶⁷

This link between information which seems available to everyone, by being presented through a common system of reference, and specialized speeches shows how valuable the *Anabasis* is for those who want a complete picture of the circuit of geographical information: from 'lower', 'naive' perceptions and records, to a 'higher', erudite geography, with no practical application, through a 'scholarly' geography, mastered by the commander.

3 From 'lower' towards 'higher' geography in the preserved Anabasis: resources and distances

Throughout the *Anabasis*, the author is consistent: his relative space and time present the same gaps and provoke the same frustration. However, this narrative space perfectly fits the 'reasoned' space, whose knowledge Xenophon recommended to his young, educated audience in his pedagogical works.

Xenophon looks at space through the frame of the military and domestic organizer: space means food for men and animals;⁶⁸ rivers and mountains as well as bad weather conditions are obstacles for crossing; in accordance with contemporaries' medical ideas, environment makes the character of the people with whom the Ten Thousand have to deal.⁶⁹ Therefore, his thematization of space is deeper than in a literary work in which space only mirrors the characters: the *Anabasis* is an equation between space and the attitudes it determines. Thus, in the context of the Ten Thousand's fight for survival, space becomes synonym of chances for life or death.⁷⁰ Only leaders are pre-

⁶⁶ *Anabasis* 3.2.24–25; 5.6.20; 5.6.36.

⁶⁷ For these failed attempts, forgotten by classical history, see Højte 2008. For the 'Greek lens' in the perception and imaginary transformation of Barbarian nature into Greek cultural space at Calpe, see Brulé 1995, 3–4; *pace* Baebler 1998.

⁶⁸ Cf. Brulé 1995, 9; Amigues 1995.

⁶⁹ We think at Hippocrates' treaty *On Airs, Waters and Places*, published around 430 BC.

⁷⁰ Cf. Gabrielli 1995.

sented by Xenophon as able to evaluate spatial changes and issues: among them, Xenophon the character is presented by Xenophon the author as the champion of the reasoned attitude. Xenophon the narrator tells as much as necessarily, but from this perspective.

Nevertheless, some spatial information goes beyond not only the ‘naive’ geography of common participants, but also the ‘scholarly’ geography of Xenophon, the character, omniscient narrator, and maybe also of that of Xenophon the author. The present-day form of the *Anabasis* contains several paragraphs which are suspected of being late interpolations. They include summaries of geographical data, as sums of distances or as lists of toponyms. We have no external evidence supporting their antiquity.⁷¹ But we can be sure that, inside the narrative, they mark important stages of the expedition: the end of the proper ἀνάβασις (Ephesus-Cunaxa), the end of the κατάβασις (Cunaxa-Cotyora) and the end of the story:

2.2.6	
[ἀριθμὸς τῆς ὁδοῦ ἦν ἦλθον ἐξ Ἐφέσου τῆς Ἰωνίας μέχρι τῆς μάχης σταθμοὶ τρεῖς καὶ ἐνενήκοντα, παρασάγγαι πέντε καὶ τριάκοντα καὶ πεντακόσιοι, στάδιοι πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑξακισχίλιοι καὶ μύριοι· ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς μάχης ἐλέγοντο εἶναι εἰς Βαβυλῶνα στάδιοι ἑξήκοντα καὶ τριακόσιοι.]	[The length of the journey they had made from Ephesus, in Ionia, to the battlefield was ninety-three stages, five hundred and thirty-five parasangs, or sixteen thousand and fifty stadia; and the distance from the battlefield to Babylon was said to be three hundred and sixty stadia.]
5.5.4	
[Μέχρι ἐνταῦθα ἐπέξευσεν ἡ στρατιὰ. πλῆθος τῆς καταβάσεως τῆς ὁδοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Βαβυλῶνι μάχης ἄχρι εἰς Κοτύωρα σταθμοὶ ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι δύο, παρασάγγαι ἑξακόσιοι καὶ εἴκοσι, στάδιοι μύριοι καὶ ὀκτακισχίλιοι καὶ ἑξακόσιοι, χρόνου πλῆθος ὀκτὼ μῆνες.]	[As far as this point the army travelled by land. The length in distance of the downward journey, from the battlefield in Babylon to Cotyora, was one hundred and twenty-two stages, six hundred and twenty parasangs, or eighteen thousand, six hundred stadia; and in time, eight months.]
7.8.25–26	
[Ἄρχοντες δὲ οἶδε τῆς βασιλέως χώρας ὅσων ἐπήλθομεν. Λυδίας Ἀρτίμας, Φρυγίας Ἀρτακάμας, Λυκαονίας καὶ Καππαδοκίας Μιθραδάτης, Κιλικίας Συέννεσις, Φοινίκης καὶ Ἀραβίας Δέρνης, Συρίας καὶ Ἀσσυρίας Βέλεσος, Βαβυλῶνος Ῥωπάρας, Μηδίας	[The governors of all the King’s territories that we traversed were as follows: Artimas of Lydia, Artacamas of Phrygia, Mithradates of Lycaonia and Cappadocia, Syennesis of Cilicia, Denies of Phoenicia and Arabia, Belesys of Syria and Assyria, Rhoparas of Babylon, Arbacas of Media, Tiribazus of the Phasians and

⁷¹ Diogenes Laertius (2.57) knew about the existence of *proemia* at the beginning of each book, except the first one. This is confirmed by the Byzantine manuscript tradition, but says nothing about the authorship of these concluding estimations.

<p>Ἄρβάκας, Φασιανῶν καὶ Ἑσπεριτῶν Τιρίβαζος· Καρδοῦχοι δὲ καὶ Χάλυβες καὶ Χαλδαῖοι καὶ Μάκρωνες καὶ Κόλχοι καὶ Μοσσύνοικοι καὶ Κοῖτοι καὶ Τιβαρηνοὶ αὐτόνομοι· Παφλαγονίας Κορύλας, Βιθυνῶν Φαρνάβαζος, τῶν ἐν Εὐρώπῃ Θρακῶν Σεύθης· ἀριθμὸς συμπάσης τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀναβάσεως καὶ καταβάσεως σταθμοὶ διακόσιοι δεκαπέντε, παρασάγγαι χίλιοι ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα, στάδια τρισμῦρια τετρακισχίλια διακόσια πενήκοντα πέντε· χρόνου πλῆθος τῆς ἀναβάσεως καὶ καταβάσεως ἑνιαυτὸς καὶ τρεῖς μῆνες.]</p>	<p>Hesperites; then the Carduchians, Chalybians, Chaldaeans, Macronians, Colchians, Mossynoecians, Coetians, and Tibarenians, who were independent; and then Corylas governor of Paphlagonia, Pharnabazus of the Bithynians, and Seuthes of the Thracians in Europe. The length of the entire journey, upward and downward, was two hundred and fifteen stages, one thousand, one hundred and fifty parasangs, or thirty-four thousand, two hundred and fifty-five stadia; and the length in time, upward and downward, a year and three months.]</p>
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The aim of these texts is clear: underline the significance of the Ten Thousand's exploit and, with it, the importance of Xenophon's role in the story. One would be tempted to think that Xenophon had all the good reason to insert them in the *Anabasis*. The texts that we find in the preserved manuscripts, however, contain clear signs of a foreign authorship. For example, ἐν Βαβυλῶνι μάχη (5.5.4) is a different designation for Xenophon's battle of the Μεδίας τεῖχος (1.7.15, 2.4.12). In fact, it is even a grave historical error, when one remembers that Cyrus was not present at Babylon, which was 360 stadia away from Cunaxa, in Babylonia.⁷² Also, ἐπήλομεν (7.8.25) is the only verb used in the first person, outside the quotation of a speech, by a narrator who considers himself part of the Ten Thousand.⁷³ If Xenophon generally remains a *narrateur extradiégétique* (who sometimes tells of his own experience or judges the actions of the others), this verb is the mark of a *narrateur homodiégétique* (who includes himself among the characters): it is hard to believe that Xenophon himself would have 'betray' himself at the very end of the narration. It is more likely that the phrase comes from another *Anabasis* or from a reader who either forgot Xenophon's precautions or thought at his own intellectual experience of following the Ten Thousand during their expedition. In any case, the sums of distances included in these passages through the different books as well as at the very end of the *Anabasis* do not correspond to the information given in the narrative.⁷⁴ They clearly suppose external, different infor-

⁷² Cf. *Anab.* 1.7.1, 2.2.13. For the battle of Cunaxa, see Ctesias 688 F 18 *apud* Plutarch, *Life of Artaxerxes* 2.8.

⁷³ For the other instances, see Gray 2010.

⁷⁴ Another passage which is generally considered as interpolated presents a similar problem: in 6.2.1, the east-west παράπλους from Sinope to Heracleia includes Jason's Cape, the Thermodon, the Iris, and the Halys, which are all situated east of Sinope. The reader is all the more astonished that in the 5th book of the *Anabasis* (quoted above) this itinerary was correctly described by the Pontian Hecatonymus. The modern editor must conclude that this passage could be an interpolation, from the Argonautic tradition.

mation, added by Xenophon or by later editors and scholiasts, who had other *Anabasis* at their disposal:

From Ephesus to the battlefield	1.1–9	2.2.6
	There is no mention of the distance between Ephesus and Sardis (this must be of 3 days, following <i>Hellenica</i> 3.2.11); one has to add this to the rest of 86 stages = 517 + 10 (?) parasangs which can be obtained by adding up all the given data.	93 stages = 535 parasangs = 16 050 stadia
From Cunaxa (Babylon?) to Cotyora	1.9–5.5	5.5.4
	120 stages = 610 parasangs	122 stages = 620 parasangs = 18 600 stadia
Summing up	7.8.26	
	215 stages = 1 150 parasangs = 34 255 stadia	

Whoever the author of these estimations, they are interesting for the study of ancient geography in the making: they reflect one of the ways through which what could appear as ‘common sense geography’ – based on ‘naive’ and ‘scholarly’ information and thinking – transforms itself into the premises of a ‘higher’ geography, that is, into data which were supposed to illustrate ‘absolute’ and not ‘relative’, ‘abstract’ and not ‘concrete’ space. The purpose is the construction of an objective, geometric image of the world, as framework for the whole *Anabasis*: this is an aim higher than any information a ‘naive’ soldier or a reasonably leader could ever need.

Of course, Xenophon or the later scholars who included these distances in his texts were neither professional geographers nor scientists, by modern or even by ancient standards: nevertheless, their interest for a precise picture of the world was certainly not shared by ‘normal’ people and not even by all ‘canonical’ writers. This research for a ‘higher’ geography probably began in Ionia, with the first attested map, on which Aristagoras of Miletus explained portions of the so-called Royal Road, through the names of peoples paying tribute to the Achaemenids, for Cleomenes of Sparta.⁷⁵ Ctesias, a contemporary of Xenophon who lived at the court of Artaxerxes II, collected distances in stages, days, and parasangs from Ephesus to Bactria and India, at the end of his *Persica*, just before the final list of kings.⁷⁶ Eratosthenes, in his books about the measure of the Earth, took a step forward and used this commonsensical information in a ‘higher’, ‘scientific’ – by ancient criteria – treatise on geometry.⁷⁷ The first two books of Strabo’s *Geography* and the first book of Ptolemy’s *Geography* reflect the most elevated debates about ancient space, beyond the human scale. Xenophon or

⁷⁵ Herodotus 5.49.

⁷⁶ 688 F 33 *apud* Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Cod. 72 45a1–4.

⁷⁷ See Geus 2002: 223–288; Geus/Tupikova 2013; Geus 2013.

scholiasts who could write these supposed interpolations are not representative for this 'higher' geography: they only reflect an attempt to see the world in a more objective way than any uneducated or erudite traveller would have done. Thanks to them, the *Anabasis* is one of the texts who illustrate one of the widest ranges of how one could look at space in classical antiquity.

To conclude: the concept of 'common sense geography' allows a new reading of the *Anabasis* for the modern audience. It highlights the empirical, shared character of its spatial and geographical information and encourages us to reflect upon the manipulation of these 'common' data by the author. At the same time, the auxiliary concepts of 'intuitive' or 'naive', 'scholarly' or 'canonical', 'higher' or 'fully reasoned' geography, presented as 'ideal types' of ancient common sense, help us understand how Xenophon staged the environment and the characters of his narrative. In the end, the *Anabasis* says little about what the Greeks of the 5th–4th century BC could really know about Persia and about how they perceived and represented remote or close spaces. The reason is Xenophon's personal way of seeing space. But his text reveals other, more sophisticated mechanisms for representing space in ancient literature: it illustrates the reworking of an autobiographical experience by the controlled representation of different levels of spatial and geographical thinking.

On the basis of geographical and ethnographical material, we have established that Xenophon was not the only one to write about the return of the Ten Thousand; when doing so, he as well as the others brought no revolution to the quite limited geographical knowledge of inner Asia. They presented themselves as part of the Greek tradition, on the basis of which their audience judged them. Modern readers would consider this as 'intertextuality' and would discuss the problems of applying this concept to oral contexts. The frame of the spatial mental models permits a more precise reading of Xenophon's manipulation of space as a pattern of his narrative. It mentions the spatial settings (of orientation, analogies, and distances) accessible to different social categories. By explaining how familiar models were transposed onto unfamiliar landscapes, and covering the widest spectrum of levels of spatial and geographical thinking, Xenophon shows geography in the making.

How do Xenophon's readers reconstruct the mental map of his story? The answer is different from epoch to epoch and it is certain that we will never know most of how ancient and Byzantine readers understood the expedition of the Ten Thousand. Today we have accurate maps, a vast amount of historical information about the region, and also greater possibilities for going through Xenophon's texts. Nevertheless,

from the amount of geographical information, we will remember probably the same thing as the ancients: a hostile nature, which plays a dynamic role in the narrative and to which Xenophon finds the best solutions.

How could we define the space of the *Anabasis*? The answer is: as an ever-remote horizon, the absence of measure, of balance, of security. This is the mixture of elements which always provide the ideal stage for the adventures of a hero.

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