

when he found that they had crossed and he sent Glous to Menon's army with the following message: 'Soldiers, I am pleased with you now. But I shall see to it that you too are pleased with me, or my name is not Cyrus.'

The soldiers on their side, with their great expectations, prayed for his success, and he was said to have sent presents on a very handsome scale to Menon. After this he crossed the river and the whole of the rest of the army followed him. In the crossing no one got wet from the river-water above the nipples. The people of Thapsacus said that this river had never except on this occasion been passable on foot, but could only be crossed in boats;¹¹ and on this occasion Abrocomas had gone ahead and burned the boats to prevent Cyrus from crossing. It seemed certainly that there was something supernatural about it, and that the river had undoubtedly made way for Cyrus since he was destined to become King.

From here there was a nine days' march of one hundred and fifty miles through Syria until they arrived at the river Araxes. Here there were many villages well supplied with corn and wine. They stayed three days and provided themselves with food.

11. Or 'by a bridge of boats', as rivers were frequently crossed in the Persian empire (cf. I.2.5, II.4.13 and 24). Alexander the Great in 331 found two bridges at Thapsacus, the description of which (in Arrian, *Anabasis* III.7.1f) implies pontoon bridging.

Chapter 5

THE ARABIAN DESERT · QUARREL BETWEEN MENON AND CLEARCHUS

FROM here, with the Euphrates on the right, he moved forward through Arabia. It was a five days' march of a hundred and five miles through the desert. In this part of the world the ground was all one level plain, like the sea. Wormwood was plentiful, and all the other shrubs and reeds which grew there smelt as sweetly as perfume. There were no trees, but there was a great variety of animal life. Wild asses were very common and there were many ostriches; also there were bustards and gazelles. The cavalry hunted all these animals on various occasions. In the case of the wild asses, when anyone chased them, they ran ahead and then stopped still; for they ran much faster than the horses. Then again, when the horses got near, they would do the same thing, and it was impossible to catch them except by stationing the horsemen at intervals from each other and hunting in relays. The flesh of those that were caught was very like venison, only more tender. No one succeeded in catching an ostrich. Indeed the horsemen who tried soon gave up the pursuit, as it made them go a very great distance when it ran from them. It used its feet for running and got under way with its wings, just as if it was using a sail. But one can catch bustards if one puts them up quickly, as they only fly a little way, like partridges, and soon get tired. Their flesh was delicious.

Marching through this country, they came to the river Mascas, which is a hundred feet in breadth. Here there was a deserted city of great size called Corsote. The river Mascas curved right round it. They stayed here three days and provided themselves with food. Then came a thirteen days'

march of two hundred and seventy miles through the desert, keeping the Euphrates still on the right, till he arrived at a place called The Gates.¹² In this march many of the baggage animals died of hunger, as there was no grass or anything else growing. The ground was completely bare. The inhabitants used to quarry by the river and manufacture stones for grinding corn; they took them to Babylon to sell and lived on the food they bought with the proceeds.

On this march the army ran short of corn, and it was impossible to buy any except in the Lydian market among Cyrus's native troops, where one could get a capithe of wheat flour or pearl barley for four sigli. The siglus is worth¹³ seven and a half Attic obols, and the capithe is equal to three pints. So the soldiers lived entirely on meat.¹⁴

Cyrus made some of these marches extremely long, when it was a case of wanting to reach water or fodder. And there was one occasion on which the road got narrow and muddy and difficult for the waggons, when Cyrus halted with the noblest and richest of his company and ordered Glous and Pigres to take a detachment of native troops and help in getting the waggons out of the mud; and when he thought that they were going slow on it, he looked angry and ordered the most important Persians in his company to give a hand with the waggons. Then certainly one saw a bit of discipline. Wherever they happened to be standing, they threw off their purple cloaks and rushed forward as though it was a race, — down a very steep hill, too, and wearing those expensive tunics which they have, and embroidered trousers. Some also had

12. The geography of Babylonia, including the site of the battlefield Cunaxa, is disputed. See R. D. Barnett, 'Xenophon and the Wall of Media', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, LXXXIII, 1963, pp. 1-26.

13. Siglus is modern shekel. There were six obols in an Attic drachma.

14. Roman armies on occasion were reduced to similar straits of having to eat meat. Cf. Caesar, *Gallie War*, VII.17 and Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV.24.1.

chains round their necks and bracelets on their wrists. But with all this on they leapt straight down into the mud and got the waggons on to dry ground quicker than anyone would have thought possible.

Generally speaking, it was obvious that Cyrus was pressing on all the way with no pause except when he halted for provisions or some other necessity. He thought that the quicker he arrived the more unprepared would be the King when he engaged him, and the slower he went, the greater would be the army that the King could get together. Indeed, an intelligent observer of the King's empire would form the following estimate: it is strong in respect of extent of territory and number of inhabitants; but it is weak in respect of its lengthened communications and the dispersal of its forces, that is, if one can attack with speed.

On the other side of the river Euphrates, opposite the desert where they were marching, there was a large and prosperous city called Charmande. The soldiers bought what they wanted from here, and crossed the river on rafts in the following way. They stuffed the skins which they used as tent-coverings with dry grass, and then drew them together and stitched them up so that the water would not reach the hay. They crossed the river on these and got provisions, wine made from the fruit of the date-palm and panic corn, of which there was a great abundance in the country.

At this place there was a quarrel about something between the soldiers of Menon and those of Clearchus. Clearchus, judging that Menon's man was in the wrong, ordered a beating for him. When this man got back to his own troops, he told them of it, and the soldiers, after hearing his story, were in an extremely angry and bitter mood against Clearchus. On the same day Clearchus, after visiting the place where they crossed the river and inspecting the market there, was riding back with a few attendants to his own tent by way of Menon's

camp. Cyrus was still on the march there and had not yet arrived. One of Menon's soldiers who was cutting wood, saw Clearchus riding through the camp and threw his axe at him. He missed him with the axe, but another soldier threw a stone and then another and then many more, and there was a general uproar. Clearchus took refuge among his own troops and immediately gave the call for action. He ordered the hoplites to stay in position with their shields resting on their knees, while he himself moved against Menon's men with his Thracians and his cavalry, of whom he had more than forty (mostly Thracians themselves) in his camp. The result was that Menon's men (and Menon too) were terrified and ran to get their arms, though some stood where they were, unable to cope with the situation. Just at this moment Proxenus was coming up in the rear leading a column of hoplites. So he immediately brought his men into position between the two parties and begged Clearchus not to act as he was doing. Clearchus, however, was furious that, after he had been practically stoned to death, Proxenus should speak without bitterness of what had been done to him, and he told him to get out of the way. At this point Cyrus also came up and found out what was happening. He immediately seized hold of his javelins and rode into the middle of the Greeks with those of his bodyguard who were at hand, and spoke as follows:

'Clearchus and Proxenus, and all you other Greeks here, you do not know what you are doing. If you start fighting amongst yourselves, you can be sure that I shall be finished off on the spot, and you not long afterwards. If things between us go wrong, all these natives whom you see will become more dangerous enemies to us than those on the King's side are.'

Clearchus came to himself after hearing this. Both sides relaxed and piled arms in their positions.

Chapter 6

CYRUS DEALS WITH A TRAITOR

AS THEY went on from here, they came across hoof-marks and the droppings of horses. One guessed that the marks were made by about two thousand cavalry. These had gone ahead and burnt up all the fodder and anything else that might be of use.

Orontas, a Persian whose family was related to the King, and who had one of the best military reputations among the Persians, was scheming against Cyrus. He had actually been at war with him before then, but had become reconciled. Now he said to Cyrus that, if he would give him a thousand horsemen, he would either ambush and wipe out the cavalry who were scorching the earth in front of them, or he would take a number of prisoners and so put a stop to the devastation of the ground on their way and prevent them from having any chance of telling the King that they had seen Cyrus's army.

When Cyrus heard the plan he thought it was a good one and told Orontas to take a detachment from each of his commanders. Orontas, feeling sure of getting the cavalry, wrote a letter to the King saying that he would come to him with as many horsemen as he could get hold of, and asking him to instruct his own cavalry to receive him as a friend. He also put in the letter reminders of his former friendship with the King and his loyalty. He gave this letter to a reliable man, — or so he thought. Actually the man took the letter and gave it to Cyrus.

Cyrus, on reading it, put Orontas under arrest and summoned to his own tent the seven most distinguished Persians on his staff. He ordered the Greek generals to bring hoplites

XENOPHON

THE PERSIAN
EXPEDITION

TRANSLATED BY
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