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# Xenophon and the Athenian Democracy

The Education of an Elite Citizenry

**Matthew R. Christ**

*Indiana University*

This book seeks to understand Xenophon as an elite Athenian writing largely for an elite Athenian audience in the first half of the fourth century BC. It argues that Xenophon calls on men of his own class to set aside their assumptions of superiority based on birth or wealth and to reinvent themselves as individuals who can provide effective leadership to the democratic city and serve it as good citizens. Xenophon challenges, criticizes, and sometimes satirizes the Athenian elite, and seeks to instruct them concerning the values, knowledge, and practical skills they will need to succeed as civic leaders. Xenophon is thus best understood not as an aristocratic dinosaur who is out of place in a democratic setting, as some have assumed, but as a thoughtful and pragmatic reformist who seeks to ensure that meritorious members of the elite step forward to lead within the democracy.

Introduction. Xenophon the Athenian; 1. Athens in crisis in the Hellenica; 2. Politics and the gentleman in the Memorabilia; 3. Work, money, and the gentleman in the Oeconomicus; 4. The education of callias in the symposium; 5. Xenophon as expert, advisor, and reformer in the Hipparchicus and Poroi; 6. Xenophon the democratic orator: the politics of mass and elite in the Anabasis; Conclusions. Elite readers, elite citizens; Bibliography.



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