Xenophon Athenians: sources for the study of his era, figure and worldview within the genre of intellectual biography

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Abstract. This article analyzes the sources of different historical periods in which the events of the era, character, outlook, influence and reflection of the views of the famous ancient Greek writer and general Xenophon Athenians were studied within the genre of intellectual biography (or biohistoriography).

Keywords: Xenophon Athenians source intellectual biography worldview figure
It should be noted that the genre of intellectual biography (or biohistoriography), as a separate direction of intellectual history, began to take shape in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century due to the emergence of the history of intellectuals and a new biographical history. This genre is engaged in the study of the history, development and influence of the ideas of historical figures of different periods during the existence of mankind, studying their biographies, era and reflection of views in the works of various authors [1] [2, С. 84-88] [7].

In fact, the genre of intellectual biography in this study helps to best reveal the biography of Xenophon Athenians and to thoroughly investigate his works and views: in what conditions did his worldview appear, develop and change in order to be able to analyze how strong his influence was on the development of the military, political, socio-economic, philosophical, historical views and literary trends of figures of different periods and eras (from antiquity to modern times).

The sources themselves will be conditionally divided between two periods - ancient (8th century BC - 476 AD) and postmodern (from the II half of the V century AD), which will be divided internally according to the following criteria: works describing the historical period, figures and events that influenced the formation and development of the personality and views of Xenophon (V - first half of the IV century BC); sources in which the figure of Xenophon Athenians and his views were described; the works of Xenophon of Athens and the works of thinkers who, in their research, based their ideas on the views and works of Xenophon.

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the historical period in the history of Ancient Greece during the lifetime of Xenophon Athenians was full of many events. Large-scale military conflicts between polises (Peloponnesian, Corinthian and Boeotian wars), the consequences of the war with Persia, the beginning of the crisis of the polis management system, the rise of the Macedonian kingdom, and economic crises in the ancient Greek city-states could not help but influence the formation of Xenophon`s personality and views. Therefore, in order to better analyze the figure and ideas of the ancient Greek writer, it is first necessary
to investigate the era during which he developed. For this, the works of ancient scientists were used, which described this period in detail. Among them, the works of such authors as Thucydides, Ctesius, and Xenophon Athenians himself, whose historical works will be discussed in more detail later, are invaluable.

It makes sense to note that all the above-mentioned authors were contemporaries of Xenophon and described events in which they themselves usually participated.

Thus, the famous ancient Greek historian Thucydides (460–400 BC) wrote his work «History» under the influence of his own military and political career during the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC). He commanded the troops on the side of Athens in 424 BC in Thrace (modern Bulgaria and Romania), but was removed due to defeat. In general, Thucydides work is devoted to only part of the events of the Peloponnesian War – from 431 to the winter of 411 BC. The exact date of Thucydides’ work is unknown (modern scientists attribute the historian’s work to the period between 410–400 BC) and has come down to us in fragments [22].

The works of the ancient Greek historian and physician Ctesius Knidians (440–390 BC) should also be singled out due to his certain uniqueness in the presentation of historical data. Ctesius was an ancient Greek physician from Asia Minor who was captured by the Persians during the Peloponnesian War and became a personal physician and advisor to the Persian king Artaxerxes II. The author fully devoted his work «History of Persia» to the history of the Persian state from the 3rd millennium to 397 BC. The uniqueness of this work is that Ctesius provides a large number of historical facts that were not mentioned in other works of that time (with the exception of the events of «Anabasis» by Xenophon), but their authenticity has not been proven even today [16]. For this study, the work is a valuable source that allows you to study the military and political situation on the territory of Persia at the end of the V – beginning of the IV century BC (approximate year of writing by Ctesius 397 BC).

Moving on to the consideration of the works in which the biography and (or) views of Xenophon Athenians were described, it should be noted that at the moment there are no sources in the ancient and post-modern traditions, the subject of which
would be the biography or worldview of Xenophon. However, nevertheless, there were authors who separately devoted sections of their works to the analysis and description of the figure and views of Xenophon. The greatest value for this study are the works of such authors as Strabo, Pausanias and Diogenes Laertius. These people belong to the period of antiquity, but did not live at the same time as Xenophon.

Chronologically, the first work in our list is the work «Geography» (it was written around 7 year BC) by the Roman scholar of Greek origin Strabo (64 BC – 24 AD), who was primarily a geographer, not a historian. In general, the author devoted his work to stories about a large number of cities, localities and various geographical landmarks that he saw and explored during his travels. However, it should be noted that when writing, the author used and referred to the works of Xenophon («Anabasis» and «Greek History»), to confirm which the author decided to cite an important fact from the life of the ancient Greek writer, which is not found anywhere else. Strabo told about Xenophon`s first meeting with Socrates (about 421 BC) during a battle, where the famous ancient Greek philosopher saves the young writer's life. This fact allows us to guess how old Xenophon was at that time and when he was born [9].

Another work belongs to another ancient geographer Pausanias (110-180) and is called «Description of Hellas» (written in the II century). In general, the author devoted his work to describing the most famous sights of Ancient Greece with a description and added legends, often replacing lost original sources. Pausanias generally only describes what he saw with his own eyes and heard from local residents of certain regions of Greece and adding something new pointing to it. It should be noted that the author also actively used the works of Strabo, Thucydides, Xenophon and many other historians and geographers known to him, to confirm which the ancient geographer provided some biographical data about scientists. It is thanks to his work that we know about the life of Xenophon after the campaign to Persia, as well as about his children, which better allows us to study the personal life of the ancient Greek writer and his military and political activities during the Corinthian and Boeotian wars [8].
The most important and detailed source that sheds light on the life and ideas of Xenophon Athenians is the work «Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers» by the famous ancient historian Diogenes Laertius (180-240). In this work, Diogenes described a large number of biographies of ancient Greek philosophers of various directions and schools, including Xenophon Athenians, who was associated with the Socratics (followers of the famous ancient Greek philosopher Socrates), as he was one of his students. In fact, this is the only existing source (apart from the works of Xenophon himself) that tells an almost complete biography of the ancient Greek writer. It should also be noted that Diogenes Laertius analyzed a large number of works of ancient Greek scholars of the classical and Hellenistic periods of the history of Ancient Greece, most of which have not survived (including the ancient historian paid attention to biographical works dedicated to Xenophon, whose works have not reached our time) [18, С. 534].

Turning to the analysis of Xenophon's works, it should be noted that his works are the most important for this study, due to the fact that they are a reflection of his thoughts and views and continued to influence various cultural and military and political figures in the future. It should also be noted that according to the information provided by Diogenes Laertius, the works of Xenophon began to be used and studied during the lifetime of the ancient Greek writer, and the total number of them was about 40. Now, only 14 of them have survived and they are generally fragmentary, but it can be assumed that some of them could have been combined into one work. The full volume of Xenophon's works known to us is tentatively 37 author's sheets, according to Xenophon's original text.

For the purpose of systematization for the correct construction of the analysis, the currently known works of Xenophon will be considered chronologically (conditionally from the earliest to the last) according to generally accepted dates.

Modern historiography tentatively assigns Xenophon's works to the following literary genres: instructions, military, political, economic treatises, biographical, philosophical and historical works. It should also be noted
that the first attempt to print the works of Xenophon Athenians in the original language (ancient Greek) dates back to the end of the XV – beginning of the XVI century in Venice and belongs to the Italian humanist and book printer Aldus Manutius (1449-1515), the founder of the Aldo publishing house (1494-1597) [3, pp. 70, 77]. The first attempt to translate the works of Xenophon Athenians belonged to the famous ancient Roman figure Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) and the Dutch philosopher and writer Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536). Cicero translated the works of Xenophon primarily as part of his own research, and Erasmus of Rotterdam translated into Latin all the works of the ancient Greek writer known to him («Anabasis», «Greek History», «Cyropaedia», and all philosophical works) as part of his own research, as well as in order to introduce the study of Xenophon`s works into the educational process of Renaissance Italy [21, C. 37].

The first known written work of Xenophon Athenians is considered to be the treatise «The Hunter», which was created in 393 BC. It should be noted that this work of Xenophon is the first known work in history that was devoted to hunting. In general, the work is devoted to recommendations for the correct hunting of various wild animals with the help of dogs and justification of the benefits of this activity, which are optional. It should be noted that Xenophon`s treatise is a statement of his own thoughts and conclusions and consists of 13 chapters (11 of which are devoted to recommendations for proper hunting, and the last 2 to the benefits of hunting for society and the author's conclusions). In terms of volume, the work conventionally occupies 22 pages (1 author`s sheet) [26].

The second known work of Xenophon Athenians is «The Defense of Socrates in Court», the writing of which is attributed to the period between 390-380 BC, where the author talks about some moments from the biography of the famous ancient Greek philosopher and his teacher – Socrates (469-399 BC), with the aim of showing the scientist's thoughts before his trial and his death. Xenophon's work was written in the form of dialogues and monologues based on the stories of another student of Socrates Hermogenes (440-392 BC) and the author's own memories with some of his conclusions. According to Xenophon's original text, the volume of this work is
conventionally 5 pages (0.2 author’s sheet) [30].

The third work of Xenophon Athenians is considered to be «Hieron», which according to the generally accepted dating, the period of writing is attributed to the period between 385-375 BC and after the creation of the work "Defense of Socrates in court". The work was created in the form of a dialogue between the tyrant of Syracuse Hieron I (500-466 BC) and the famous ancient Greek poet Simonides of Ceos (556-468 BC), where they discuss aspects of tyranny, monarchy and some changes in them. The analyzed work is an exposition of the thoughts and views of Xenophon Athenians himself and consists of eleven chapters. In terms of volume, the work conventionally occupies 14 pages (0.6 author’s sheet) [24].

The next chronologically the work of Xenophon Athenians is «Notes on Socrates», which was written around 371 BC (volume of work - 87 pages, i.e. 3.9 author’s sheets). In this work, the author talks about some moments from the biography of the famous ancient Greek philosopher and his teacher - Socrates, with the aim of rehabilitating his name in public opinion and proving that he was unjustly executed. Xenophon’s work was written in the form of a statement of thoughts, observations and conclusions about Socrates by the author, including a large number of mentioned dialogues on various topics between the famous philosopher and a large number of different people who surrounded him. The work of the ancient Greek author consists of four books with chapters inside them and using some, data from his other work «The Defense of Socrates at Court» [30].

The fifth chronological work of Xenophon Athenians is called «Cyropedia» (it was written between 370-365 BC), which the author dedicated to the famous military and political figure and king of Persia, Cyrus II the Great (?-530 BC). Xenophon’s goal was to show, in his opinion, an ideal example of a ruler and general. The analyzed work of Xenophon is generally a free interpretation of various historical facts by the author himself and consists of 8 books (each of which is internally divided into certain sections). The work itself occupies 202 pages (or 9.1 author’s sheets) [31].

The sixth work of Xenophon Athenians is called «Oeconomicus». This work was written at the end of 360 BC and
is dedicated to the discussion of the arrangement and some economic views of the author himself. The work of the ancient Greek writer consists of 21 chapters and was written in the form of a dialogue, where the author tells about the conversation he heard between the famous ancient Greek scientist Socrates and a wealthy man named Cristobulus [36]. It has a volume of 48 pages (2.1 author's sheets).

The seventh chronological work of Xenophon is called «Banquet» (or «Symposium»), which was written in the same period as the work «Oeconomicus» (the end of 360 BC), but, according to modern scientists, already after it. In the work, the author describes the banquet organized by one of the richest people of Ancient Greece of his time and the Athenian statesman Callius the Wealthy on the occasion of the victory of his favorite Autolycus in a competition during the Panathenaic Games (great holidays and competitions in ancient Athens in honor of the goddess Athena) in 422 BC, and also highlights some points from the biography of his teacher Socrates. Xenophon's goal was to leave in the memory of descendants the mention of virtuous people of his time. An important point is that the ancient Greek writer himself was present at this banquet. Xenophon's work was written in the form of dialogues and monologues based on his own thoughts, observations and memories and consists of 9 chapters. The work conventionally has the volume of 1 author's sheet (23 pages) [29].

The next work of Xenophon Athenians is called «Agesilaus» and is dedicated to the famous ancient Greek general, his friend and king of Sparta, Agesilaus II. The work has a volume of 19 pages (0.8 author's sheet). In this work, the ancient Greek writer talks about the activities of Agesilaus II as a commander and politician, and also tries to show the Spartan king as an example of an experienced and intelligent commander and statesman. The work of Xenophon Athenians was written between 358-356 BC and it can actually be considered a panegyric (that is, a work that praises any figure or event). It should also be noted that Xenophon himself is mentioned several times in the work, as he was intimately familiar with the main character of his work (it was Agesilaus II who sent an army of Greek mercenaries on a campaign to Persia, which
was described in another work of Xenophon, «Anabasis») [23].

«Hipparchus», the ninth chronological work of Xenophon Athenians, is dedicated to the instruction of Hipparchus, the commander of the Athenian cavalry. In this work, the author tells how to properly follow horses, how to search for cavalry or how to properly command it during holidays. At the end of each thesis, the author explains why Hipparchus should follow the rules recommended by him. This treatise has a volume of 0.6 author's sheet and was written during 356-355 BC [27].

The tenth work of Xenophon Athenians, entitled «On Cavalry» (written about 355 BC), is generally devoted to advice to the younger generation on the proper upbringing, training, care and purchase of horses. The mentioned work is an exposition of the proposals, opinions and conclusions of Xenophon himself and consists of 12 chapters, but at the beginning of the work, the author mentions another writer with a similar work - Simon, to whom he sometimes refers (nothing more is known about the mentioned author). According to Xenophon`s original text, the work occupies 17 pages, i.e. 0.7 of the author's sheet [25].

Chronologically, the next work of Xenophon Athenians is considered to be «On the Revenues of the City of Athens», which was written as a letter from an Athenian to a Spartan, where the former talks about the crisis in Athens and says that in order to improve the welfare of Attica, peace is needed. In his work, Xenophon tells only positive points about Athens and believes that if they come to an agreement with Sparta, they will have an improvement in the economy and political situation in the entire region. The work was written at the beginning of 355 BC [32].

One of the last works known to us by Xenophon Athenians is the «Lacedaemonian Politics», which was devoted to Xenophon`s interpretation of the main Spartan laws introduced by the famous Spartan politician and reformer Lycurgus of Sparta between the IX-VI centuries BC. Sometimes the author adds his thoughts about the given laws, but in general, Xenophon tells in chapters (the total number of which is 15) that he knew and read about the laws of Lycurgus [28].

One of his most famous works, according to modern scientists, which is called «Anabasis» (it was written in 354
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Before the work «Greek History»), Xenophon devoted to the story of the campaign of 13 thousand Greeks mercenaries to the territory of Persia in order to help the son of the Persian king Darius II (475-404 BC) Cyrus the Younger to win back the royal throne from his older brother, the Persian king Artaxerxes II and about their way back to Greece (401-398 B.C.). This work is directly related to Xenophon, as he was a participant in the military campaign covered by him and actually one of the main actors (after the death of the commander of the troops, Xenophon was appointed strategist and for 5 years he commanded the army until they returned to Greece) [35].

The last known work of Xenophon Athenians is the «Greek History» (written in 354 BC). The work is considered a continuation of Thucydides’ work «History» (as mentioned above), since at the beginning Xenophon says that the ancient Greek historian himself commissioned him to write a continuation of his work. In his work, Xenophon describes the battles and events that took place during the Peloponnesian War from 411 to 404 BC and the Corinthian and Boeotian Wars. It should be noted that there is no chronological order in the work, but according to generally accepted standards, the chronology of the presentation stops at 362 BC (battle of Mantinea). In terms of volume, the work occupies 8 author’s sheets (or 178 pages) [34].

Turning to the last group of sources, it’s necessary to pay attention to the fact that a large number of scientists of different periods and eras (from the IV century BC to the 20th century AD) were interested in using the works and ideas of Xenophon Athenians for their own research. Therefore, in order to systematize the analysis of these sources, the authors and their works will be conditionally divided between four periods: antiquity (IV century BC – second half of the V century AD), the Renaissance (XV-XVII centuries) and pre-modern (XVIII century) and modern (XIX-XX centuries) eras.

The most striking examples of the use of the ideas and works of Xenophon Athenians in the period of antiquity are the works by Aristotle, Cicero and Flavius Arrian.

It should be noted that the famous ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) and the ancient Roman
politician Marcus Tullius Cicero had very similar studies and style of presentation, as they generally devoted them to highlighting their socio-political views and various human virtues. For example, Aristotle's work «Ethics» (written in 349 BC, but according to many scholars was published 22 years after the death of the philosopher by his son Nicomachus) is generally devoted to highlighting the various human virtues, where the author talks about the various highlighted virtues and benefit from them [12, C 2513-2514]. And his other work, «Politics» (written between 335-322 BC), the ancient Greek philosopher completely devoted to his political views, to the construction of an ideal polis and to the discussion of the new type of state management proposed by him – politia (a mixture of oligarchy and democracy). [13, pp. 2883-2884]. It should be noted that in his research, Aristotle actively used the ideas, terms and style of presentation created by Xenophon Athenians, but the author did not distinguish this and in some cases appropriated the views of the ancient Greek writer (for example, comparing democracy and oligarchy, where the author supports the oligarchy, as well as Xenophon, or assigning the term «oecometricos», which was proposed by Xenophon), which was confirmed in the work «On the State» by the above-mentioned Cicero.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, as mentioned above, was also engaged in writing various socio-political treatises, however, it should be noted that Cicero, unlike Aristotle, noted in his writings that he based some of his views on the ideas of Xenophon of Athens or other ancient Greek scientists studied by him. This moment can be clearly traced in Cicero’s writings «On the State» and its continuation «On the Laws» (written between 51-46 BC), where the author talks about different ideas of the state structure, their advantages and disadvantages, theoretical issues of law and state, as well as about an ideal mixed structure (constitution) (according to Cicero, it existed in the Roman Republic) [10]. The ancient Roman author, in addition to paying attention to the works and ideas used by him, in one of the fragments of the text emphasizes that Aristotle, when writing the work «Politia», openly appropriated the ideas of Xenophon Athenians to himself.
Flavius Arrian, in his work «Alexander's Campaign» (another name - «Alexander's Anabasis») (written in the 2nd century) primarily used Xenophon’s work «Anabasis», which he repeatedly mentions throughout his presentation, as he was engaged in comparing the campaign of 10 thousand Greek mercenaries and the military campaign of the famous ancient Greek military and political leader Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) [14, С. 599-600].

Before moving on to the authors of the Renaissance period, it should be noted that there is a colossal chronological gap (about 1,000 years) between the last ancient and subsequent works, where the ideas and works of Xenophon were used in the study. This is explained by the fact that during the Middle Ages, the study of ancient Greek and ancient Roman scientists (including Xenophon) was almost not carried out due to the serious ideological influence of Christianity and Islam on science, politics and society as a whole. Despite this, in this period on the territory of the Byzantine Empire, a large work called «Souidas» (created in the 11th century) was written, and it was devoted to the description of the biographies of ancient Greek and ancient Roman philosophers, among them was also Xenophon [33, С. 645-646].

The first to base his proposals and ideas on the worldview of Xenophon of Athens in many years was the famous Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) in his work «Considerations on the forgery of the so-called Donation Deed of Constantine» (written in 1440). It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that Lorenzo Valla relied on the works of ancient scientists (including the work of Xenophon «Cyropedia») with only one goal. Its purpose was to scientifically prove the inauthenticity of the «Gift of Constantine» (a false deed of gift from the Emperor of the Roman Empire Constantine the Great (274-337) to the Roman Pope Sylvester I (?-335). This document from the middle of the XI century served as one of the main grounds for papal claims to supreme power, both in the Church and on the highest suzerainty in medieval Europe) [4].

Now, it is known about three representatives of the Renaissance era among scientists who built their research exclusively on the works and ideas of Xenophon Athenians. These were Erasmus of Rotterdam, Niccolò Machiavelli and
Antoine de Montchrestien. The first to translate the works of Xenophon Athenians into other languages (Latin) and use them to develop the educational process in Europe during the Renaissance was the famous Dutch philosopher and writer Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536). He also suggested using Xenophon’s works to study the ancient Greek language. The well-known politician completely built his work «Education of a Christian State» (1516) on the study, first of all, of philosophical works and «Cyropedia» of Xenophon. It was from her that he borrowed the style of presentation. The philosopher's work, in general, was devoted to advice on how to be a good Christian and a ruler at the same time [17].

Another famous Renaissance philosopher and writer who drew on Xenophon's writings and ideas is the Italian politician and thinker Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527). He was a contemporary of Erasmus of Rotterdam, but he was primarily interested in the military and political works and views of the ancient Greek author. Thus, the Italian author completely built his famous work «The Ruler» written in 1513 (first published in 1532 and dedicated to the methodology of seizing power and advice on how to become an ideal ruler) on the stylistics of the presentation of the work «Cyropedia» and using the views of Xenophon. He draws attention to this in some points of his book [20].

The last Renaissance scientist known to us who studied the works and worldview of Xenophon Athenians was the famous French economist Antoine de Montchrestien (1576-1621). After publishing his work «Treatise on Political Economy» in 1615, Montchrestien actually became the author of the term «political economy». According to the author's opinion in the text, he introduced the term «political economy» with the aim of creating economic science. According to studies in modern historiography and descriptions of Montchrestien, before him, thanks to the works of Xenophon and Aristotle, the concept of «economy» was identified exclusively with the household [11].

Thanks to the activities of the above-mentioned scientists of the Renaissance, starting from the 18th century, interest in the study of the works and ideas of Xenophon Athenians began to grow rapidly. It should be noted that the works and ideas of the ancient Greek writer in the period from the XVIII-XX centuries were studied not only within the
framework of events and facts related to history or the development of society, political, economic and philosophical thoughts of Ancient Greece. There are a number of philosophers and political figures of the above period who used the works and views of Xenophon in their own research to create and substantiate their socio-political, economic or philosophical ideas. The greatest value in this case are the works of such authors as Charles Louis Montesquieu, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Bertrand Russell.

The famous French philosopher Charles Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755), when writing his work «On the Spirit of Laws» (created in 1748 in France), actively used the works of Xenophon Athenians and other ancient Greek authors to confirm the ideas he expressed (the need to divide power, abolition of slavery in states, introduction of international law). It makes sense to note that within the framework of the study of Xenophon, Montesquieu primarily paid attention to his economic and legislative views [15].

The famous German philosopher, scientist and economist Karl Marx (1818-1883) relied most actively on the works of Xenophon Athenians in his research. It should also be noted that in addition to the works and views of Xenophon, Marx also used the style of presentation of the ancient Greek writer. An example of this is the work «Capital» created by Marx in Germany in 1867 (written on the basis of another of his works – «Essay on the Critique of Political Economy»), where, according to modern historiography, the stylistics that Xenophon used in his military-political and economic treatises [5] [6].

Moving on to the XX century first of all, you need to pay attention to the authors mentioned above - this is the famous German philosopher Max Weber (1864-1920) and the British scientist Bertrand Russell (1872-1970). They studied the writings and views of Xenophon exclusively to analyze the development of socio-political and economic thoughts throughout history, and not to confirm their own ideas. For example, Max Weber devotes his work «The City» (printed in 1922 in Germany) to a deep analysis of the history and development of cities and the influence of religion and democracy in Western Europe, for which he uses only the economic and historical works of Xenophon (in addition to similar works of other ancient Greek authors ) [19, p. 227].
From the above, it can be concluded that the source base of this study is quite diverse and allows for a comprehensive investigation of the historical era before and during the life of Xenophon Athenians, its influence on the formation and formation of the worldview of the ancient Greek writer (V - the first half of the IV century BC). In addition, it should be noted that the active development of scientists’ interest in the history of Ancient Greece, and specifically in the figure and views of Xenophon Athenians, especially in the XVII-XX centuries, had a positive effect on the development of scientific and political thought in various spheres of modern society.

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