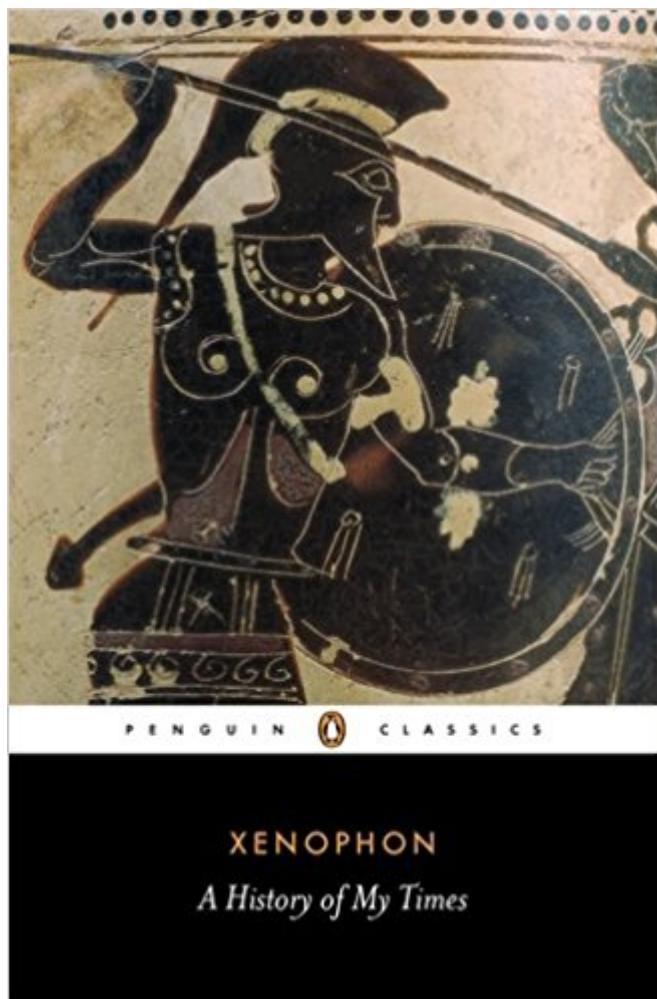


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A History Of My Times (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Xenophon's History recounts nearly fifty turbulent years of warfare in Greece between 411 and 362 BC. Continuing the story of the Peloponnesian War at the point where Thucydides finished his magisterial history, this is a fascinating chronicle of the conflicts that ultimately led to the decline of Greece, and the wars with both Thebes and the might of Persia. An Athenian by birth, Xenophon became a firm supporter of the Spartan cause, and fought against the Athenians in the battle of Coronea. Combining history and memoir, this is a brilliant account of the triumphs and failures of city-states, and a portrait of Greece at a time of crisis.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Greek (translation)

Xenophon was an Athenian gentleman born in the early 420s BC. He was a fine officer and leader for Athens, but his support of Socrates led to his banishment. He lived under the protection of Sparta on an estate near Olympia, where he began to write his histories and memoirs. Rex Warner was a Professor at the University of Connecticut. He taught in Egypt and England and was Director of the British Institute in Athens. He died in 1986. George Cawkwell is a Fellow Emeritus of University College, Oxford. He has specialised in the history of Greece from the sixth to the fourth century BC.

When I rate translations of ancient documents, I tend to do so on the basis of the importance of that work, availability of other translations and the readability of the translation. First, Xenophon's Hellenica is important here for a number of reasons. He covers the later portion of the Peloponnesian War not covered by Thucydides and so it is an important companion to that work. Xenophon also brings out a different perspective on Athenian democracy than is found elsewhere (his sympathies were with Sparta). Hence from a historical perspective, this work is important. Though many of the reviewers have given more negative feedback and they have valid points from the perspective of a general reader, these points don't reduce the overall value of this work from a historical perspective. Secondly, I thought the translation was good, readable, and affordable, and hence made a decent translation for those wanting to read this work. All in all, this is a book that individuals who are interested in classical studies will want to read and this is a good edition of the work.

Recommended with all of this in mind.

Xenophon's History of My Times picks up roughly where Thucydides left off. After finishing the account of the long and exhausting Peloponnesian War, Xenophon continues with stories of intrigues, betrayals, campaigns and bravery up to the year 362 BC. The Corinthian War, Greek incursions in Asia Minor, and Xenophon's Spartan heroes are all depicted in this work. It's not nearly as good as Thucydides, nor nearly as exhaustive. Thucydides devoted about 600 pages (in my edition) to the first twenty years of the Peloponnesian War; Xenophon covers almost fifty years in about 350 pages. And while Thucydides's historical method has earned him the title of "first modern historian" and set the standard for centuries afterward, Xenophon is selective in his detail, sometimes wrong, and often biased. But Xenophon is still a gifted writer and the story he tells is brisk and exciting, if not necessarily the whole picture. The thing I disliked about reading this book, the Penguin Classics edition, was the notes by George Cawkwell. He sets out well enough in the introduction that Xenophon's history is flawed and among the least of his works, being far inferior to something like The Persian Expedition, but Cawkwell litters the text with footnote after footnote pointing out Xenophon's every mistake and omission. It was instructive, at first, to know how Xenophon's account differed with that of other historians, but by the time I was a third of the way through the notes had the exasperating effect of a know-it-all heckler during an admittedly flawed but entertaining speech. That said, Xenophon's history is still worth reading, and this translation by Rex Warner is excellent--fast-paced and very readable. If you're looking for history that Thucydides did not live to write about, this is one good place to find it. Recommended.

Xenophon isn't the greatest historian, but this is a good translation and collection.

Greetings all, This is another Penguin classic, a worthy addition to one's library, but a better gift for a senior in high school or early college. It is a tale about how the world really works, ready for comparison with today. Best regards.

The book is a history/memoir of the end of the Peloponnesian war and the years after that led to the rise of Thebes and Macedonia. The writing is colored by the prejudices and biases of Xenophon but still gives a good basic account of the years that are detailed. The edition details the problems as the text progresses so the reader will not be confused.

Book was highlighted throughout with about 50 post-its stuck for added pleasure of removing. As for content it was an interesting story, as with most history it is a one sided continuation of Thucydides Peloponnesian War but the translator does a good job of pointing out differences in Xenophon's history vs others'. It is a good history if you are interested in the story but may not be if you are in a college course on the subject and are fact finding. You can read between the lines and find the facts but cross referencing would be advised.

I just received the replacement for the "lost" book. Lost by some mistake from the US post office. But the book itself is needed for a class and came in excellent condition. I was a little disturbed at first about all the packing, but looking outside my house I deemed it a great idea. Great Book for a ancient Greek History class or anyone interested in it.

As a continuation of Thucydides it's a little soft. but if you read THE PERSIAN EXPEDITIONS by XENOPHON first you'll feel more comfortable with his lighter reading style...

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