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## THE BRONZE HORSE AND THE LIFETIME OF SIMON THE ATHENIAN\*

Simon the Athenian was famous for a work about horses, of which a passage entitled *περὶ εἶδους καὶ ἐπιλογῆς ἵππων* and several minor fragments survived.<sup>1</sup> His book appears to be one of the earliest specimens of Greeks' technical treatises and Attic prose; it was highly estimated by Xenophon and remained as an important reference work ever since.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, establishing Simon's lifetime is of particular interest.

The *terminus post quem* is provided by the evidence (Poll. 2. 69; Hierocl. *Corpus Hippiatricorum Graecorum* B 59. 6)<sup>3</sup> that Simon criticized Micon, the famous painter of the Early Classical period,<sup>4</sup> for depicting eyelashes on a horse's lower eyelid, although in fact they did not exist at all.<sup>5</sup>

The *terminus ante quem* has been indicated<sup>6</sup> on the base of Xenophon's work *On Horsemanship* (Xen. *De re equ.* 1. 1):

Συνέγραψε μὲν οὖν καὶ Σίμων περὶ ἵππικῆς ὃς καὶ τὸν κατὰ τὸ Ἐλευ-  
σίνιον Ἀθήνησιν ἵππον χαλκοῦν ἀνέθηκε καὶ ἐν τῷ βάρῳ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ

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<sup>1</sup> See the editions: Daremberg 1853, 169–170; Blass 1864, 49–59; Dindorf 1866, xx–xxiii; Oder 1896a, 52–69; id. 1896b, 311–313; Soukup 1911 (ed., tr., comm.); Rühl 1912, 196–197; Oder–Hoppe 1927, 228–231; Pierleoni 1937, 299–304; Delebecque 1950, 160–163 (ed., tr., comm.); Widdra 1964, 41–44; Sestili 2006 (ed., tr., comm.).

<sup>2</sup> Oder 1896a, 56–57; id. 1896c, 14–20; McCabe 2007, 194–197.

<sup>3</sup> Blass 1864, 51.

<sup>4</sup> For the period of Micon's activity see Lippold 1932, 1557–1558. *OCD* s.v. dates it back to the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the fifth century BC, *DNP* s.v. to 475–440 BC.

<sup>5</sup> A claim that Simon would have criticized his contemporary rather than a master of an earlier period (Lenormant 1856, 52) does not seem convincing: Micon painted the walls of public buildings, so his works could be seen by several generations of Athenian citizens.

<sup>6</sup> Blass 1864, 50–51.

ἔργα ἐξετύπωσεν· ἡμεῖς γε μέντοι ὅσοις συνετύχομεν ταῦτα γνόντες ἐκεῖνῳ, οὐκ ἐξαλείφομεν ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων, ἀλλὰ πολὺ ἥδιον παραδώσομεν αὐτὰ τοῖς φίλοις, νομίζοντες ἀξιοπιστότερα εἶναι ὅτι κακείνος κατὰ ταῦτα ἡμῖν ἔγνω ἱππικὸς ὢν· καὶ ὅσα δὴ παρέλιπεν ἡμεῖς πειρασόμεθα δηλῶσαι.

Simon too has written on horsemanship, the same man who dedicated the bronze horse near the Eleusinion in Athens and had his deeds carved on its base. Nevertheless, I will not remove from my work those parts where our ideas coincide but, on the contrary, I will be happy to transmit them to my friends, considering them still more trustworthy since they are shared by a person so experienced in horsemanship. Those points, which he has not elucidated, I am going to explain.

Most scholars tend to date Xenophon's treatise back to 366–362 BC. It is known that another work of him, *Hipparchicus*, was written earlier than *On Horsemanship*. We can deduce that from Xenophon's reference to the former work at the end of the latter (*De re equ.* 12. 14). In *Hipparchicus*, Xenophon mentions an alliance with Sparta (*Hipp.* 9. 4) and refers to the Boeotians as the enemies of the Athenians (7. 3). Those were peculiar political circumstances which occurred in a rather short period before the Battle of Mantinea (362 BC).<sup>7</sup> It follows that the creation of Simon's treatise preceded 360ies.

An opinion worth taking into consideration is the one of É. Delebecque. He claims that the last chapter of *On Horsemanship* which contains the reference to the *Hipparchicus* is a later addition to the main text that was probably drafted in 357/6 BC.<sup>8</sup> Chapters 1–11 are related by him to the period of Xenophon's sojourn in Scillus (387–379/8 BC). Dating of *On Horsemanship* cannot be compelling, since it does not contain any explicit chronological marks. Delebecque's conclusions rest upon analyzing the general mood of the treatise and its educational scope which suits well the period of bringing up Xenophon's sons.<sup>9</sup> Accepting this hypothesis, *terminus ante quem* for Simon's work can be moved from 360ies to 380ies.

Meanwhile, it seems that the timeframe of Simon's activity can be made still narrower by more detailed analysis of Xenophon's evidence. The way Xenophon refers to the statue of the horse makes clear that he had seen the monument with his own eyes and that he considered it to

<sup>7</sup> Christ-Schmid 1912, 515.

<sup>8</sup> Delebecque 1957, 243; 245; 425; 431–432.

<sup>9</sup> Delebecque 1957, 242–245.

be well-known to anyone familiar with the topography of Athens. This is understandable, given that the bronze horse occupied a conspicuous position near the Eleusinion temple above the Athenian Agora on the north slope of the Acropolis,<sup>10</sup> where processions including horsemen passed (Xen. *Hipp.* 3. 3). Thus, Xenophon mentions the famous statue to identify the person he is speaking about.

A question appears: what was the last opportunity left to Xenophon to see Simon's dedication? As we know, Xenophon left Athens in 401 BC and took part in the expedition of Cyrus the Young (Xen. *Anab.* 3. 1. 4–11; Diog. L. 2. 55). He later spent a long time in exile (Xen. *Anab.* 7. 57; 5. 3. 7; Diog. L. 2. 51; Paus. 5. 6. 5). Therefore, if it is possible to prove that since 401 BC Xenophon had not visited Athens (by the time he made a reference to Simon's work in *De re equ.* 1. 1), it would follow that Simon's horse was already erected by 401 BC. Extant evidence shows that this is the most probable situation.

Let us first overview the information at our disposal as to when the exile of Xenophon actually began.<sup>11</sup> The last possible date is 394 BC when he took part in the Battle of Coronea on the Spartan side (Xen. *Anab.* 5. 3. 6; *Agesil.* 2. 9; *Hell.* 4. 3. 16; cf. Plut. *Ages.* 18. 2; Diog. L. 2. 51) against his native polis.<sup>12</sup>

However, Diogenes Laertius (2. 51) relates that Xenophon was convicted for his attachment to the Lacedaemonians as he joined the Spartan King Agesilaus, after meeting with him in Asia (396 BC or later):<sup>13</sup>

Μετὰ δὲ τήν τ' ἀνάβασιν καὶ τὰς ἐν τῷ Πόντῳ συμφορὰς καὶ τὰς παρασπονδήσεις τὰς Σεύθου τοῦ τῶν Ὀδρυσῶν βασιλέως ἤκεν εἰς Ἀσίαν πρὸς Ἀγησίλαον τὸν Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλέα, μισθοῦ τοὺς Κύρου στρατιώτας αὐτῷ παρασχών· φίλος τ' ἦν εἰς ὑπερβολήν. παρ' ὃν καιρὸν ἐπὶ Λακωνισμῷ φυγὴν ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων κατεγνώσθη.

It is noticeable that this evidence is inaccurate:<sup>14</sup> in fact, Xenophon brought the former mercenaries of Cyrus to another Spartan general Thimbron in

<sup>10</sup> Philostr. *Vita sophist.* 2, p. 550 Olearius; see Lenormant 1856, 45–48.

<sup>11</sup> See the overview of opinions on the date and cause of Xenophon's exile in Tuplin 1987, 60.

<sup>12</sup> This is the position e.g. of Niebuhr 1827, 467; Grote 1861, 175 with n. 2; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1881, 333; Roquette 1884, 20; Breitenbach 1967, 1575; Lendle 1995, 315.

<sup>13</sup> This leads some scholars, e.g. Letronne [1825] 14 and Croiset 1873, 262, to think that the banishment took place in 394 BC, but before the Battle of Coronea.

<sup>14</sup> Mure 1857, 238; Croiset 1873, 259; Klett 1900, 20.

399 BC (s. Xen. *Anab.* 7. 8. 24; cf. *Hell.* 3. 1. 6). Service rendered to him could hardly cause a charge on behalf of the Athenians, since they were themselves allies of Sparta at those times and sent a cavalry to Thimbron's army (Xen. *Hell.* 3. 1. 4).<sup>15</sup>

The Cyreians next served under Dercylides' command (*Hell.* 3. 1. 8) and then came over to Agesilaus. It is not known what Xenophon was doing in the intermediate period. Some scholars<sup>16</sup> admit that he came back to Athens for a while but was soon disappointed with the situation in his native city and returned to Asia to join Dercylides in a war against Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus. W. Mure<sup>17</sup> argues that he remained absent from Athens at that time, although perhaps visited other parts of continental Greece, such as Delphi (where he made an offering, s. *Anab.* 5. 3. 5). Others<sup>18</sup> suggest that Xenophon did not leave Asia before coming to Boeotia with Agesilaus.

According to Pausanias (5. 6. 5) the reason for the exile was Xenophon's participation in the expedition headed by Cyrus, an enemy of Athens (during the Peloponnesian war he sponsored the Spartan navy and thus deprived the Athenians of their superiority at sea), against the Persian king who was friendly to the interests of the Athenians at that time.

ἐδιώχθη δὲ ὁ Ξενοφῶν ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων ὡς ἐπὶ βασιλέα τῶν Περσῶν σφίσιν εὖνουν ὄντα στρατείας μετασχὼν Κύρῳ πολεμιοτάτῳ τοῦ δήμου.

The same reason is adduced by Diogenes in his epigram cited in 2. 58 (= *Anth. Pal.* 7. 98. 1–2: ... σέ, Ξενοφῶν, Κραναοῦ Κέκροπός τε πολῖται / φεύγειν κατέγων τοῦ φίλου χάριν Κύρου: thus, the biographer contradicts himself as to what exactly Xenophon's crime consisted in). The last version is sponsored by Xenophon himself, who relates Socrates' concern that joining Cyrus' army could cause irritation of the Athenians (*Anab.* 3. 1. 5). Pausanias does not provide a precise date of Xenophon's condemnation, but if it was caused by his engagement with Cyrus, then it was likely to have followed soon after his adventures became publicly known,<sup>19</sup> i.e. after the arrival of the Greeks to Byzantium (spring 400 BC<sup>20</sup>). However, at this time Artaxerxes was hardly "disposing

<sup>15</sup> Mure 1857, 239.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Grote 1861, 174; Croiset 1873, 262.

<sup>17</sup> Mure 1857, 244–246.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Klett 1900, 20; Canfora 1983, 68.

<sup>19</sup> Mure 1857, 238.

<sup>20</sup> On the date see Lee 2008, 40.

goodwill” towards the Athenians since in 399 they sent the cavalry against the king (Xen. *Hell.* 3. 1. 4).<sup>21</sup>

Thus, later sources provide contradictory and doubtful evidence. Apparently, the authors of the Roman times did not possess reliable information. Therefore, the only person we can trust concerning Xenophon’s life is Xenophon himself. *Anab.* 7. 7. 57 has been used to argue that his exile started in 399 BC:<sup>22</sup>

Ξενοφῶν δὲ οὐ προσήει, ἀλλὰ φανερός ἦν οἴκαδε παρασκευαζόμενος·  
οὐ γάρ πω ψήφος αὐτῷ ἐπῆκτο Ἀθήνησι περὶ φυγῆς.

The passage clearly shows that in March/April 399 Xenophon still felt free to return home. By adding this remark, he anticipates the possible question of his readers who were aware of his condemnation just about the time in question and would possibly wonder how he could plan a journey to Athens. Xenophon explains that at *that* moment he was not yet banished. This may imply that he was sentenced shortly after he made over his army to Thimbron. In this case we can be sure that Xenophon did not have time for even a short visit to Athens in the period between the return of Cyrus’ Greek mercenaries and the Battle of Coronea. However, one must admit that, regarded from the later period when Xenophon was writing the *Anabasis* and his readers knew him as “the Athenian exile” but were not necessarily informed of the details, the words οὐ ... πω could just as well imply a later date of banishment, covering as much as several years.<sup>23</sup>

Another Xenophon’s reference to his exile is *Anab.* 5. 3. 6–7. He relates that in spring or summer 394, before leaving Asia for Greece, he left a certain sum of money to Megabyzus, a priest of Ephesian Artemis, with an instruction to return the money if he survived and to dedicate it to the goddess in case of his death. Next, the text runs as follows:<sup>24</sup>

ἐπειδὴ δ’ ἔφευγεν (ἐπεὶ δ’ ἔφευγεν A, ἐπεὶ δ’ ἔφυγε FM) ὁ Ξενοφῶν,  
κατοικοῦντος ἤδη αὐτοῦ ἐν Σκυλλοῦντι ὑπὸ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων  
οἰκισθέντος παρὰ τὴν Ὀλυμπίαν ἀφικνεῖται Μεγάβυζος εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν  
θεωρήσων καὶ ἀποδίδωσι τὴν παρακαταθήκην αὐτῷ.

<sup>21</sup> Croiset 1873, 119.

<sup>22</sup> Mure 1857, 241–242; Nicolai 1864, 814–815; Klett 1900, 25; Delebecque 1957, 120.

<sup>23</sup> Krüger 1822, 250; Breitenbach 1967, 1575; Rahn 1981, 118; Tuplin 1987, 60; Lendle 1995, 315–316.

<sup>24</sup> The text is cited from Hude–Peters 1971. For the variants see Tuplin 1987, 61–62.

Regardless of reading ἔφευγεν or ἔφυγεν and understanding the conjunction as temporal or casual, it appears that the exile is represented as a new state of affairs originating after Xenophon had left the money to Megabyzus – that is, not earlier than in 394, although possibly before the Battle of Coronea.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, we know that Xenophon spent part of the booty-tithe received in 400 BC for a votive offering to Apollo in Delphi; he had his ἀνάθημα erected in the Athenian treasury (*Anab.* 5. 3. 5), which likely proves that he was still an Athenian citizen while making this dedication.<sup>26</sup> This would put his banishment to some time later than 399. Yet, the dedication itself cannot be dated with any certainty. Some scholars believe that Xenophon could only have had time to come to Delphi soon after the Battle of Coronea, together with Agesilaus in the second part of August 394 (*Xen. Hell.* 4. 3. 21);<sup>27</sup> others argue that he could either have visited the sanctuary in the previous years,<sup>28</sup> or delivered the ἀνάθημα not in person (cf. ἔπεμψεν in *Diog. L.* 2. 51).<sup>29</sup> In any case we are not forced by the evidence to assume that Xenophon visited his native city in 399–397, even if he was not yet banished, and in the following years, 396–394, the probability of such a visit becomes especially small.

Be that as it may, solving this problem is not of decisive importance for the present inquiry, since it can only result in the determination of the moment when Xenophon got the last look at Athens, before leaving it for several decades, eight years earlier (401) or later (394). It is more significant to establish whether Xenophon had ever returned to Athens after the amnesty and if he did, when exactly.

The alliance of Athens with Sparta which resulted in Xenophon's amnesty followed in 369.<sup>30</sup> The view that he had still never come back to his homeland is based on two assertions of ancient authors. Diogenes Laertius says that he *sent* his two sons to Athens to take part in the Battle of Mantinea (2. 53: ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ψηφισαμένων Ἀθηναίων βοηθεῖν Λακεδαιμονίοις ἔπεμψε τοὺς παῖδας εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας στρατευσομένους

<sup>25</sup> Tuplin 1987, 61–63. Schwartz 1936, 144 considered *Anab.* 7. 7. 57 and 5. 3. 6–7 to be contradicting one another and thus proposed eliminating 7. 7. 57 as an interpolation.

<sup>26</sup> Croiset 1873, 262; Rahn 1981, 116; Tuplin 1987, 64; Badian 2004, 41; Dreher 2004, 64.

<sup>27</sup> Breitenbach 1967, 1575; Lendle 1995, 314; Badian 2004, 41; Dreher 2004, 63–64.

<sup>28</sup> Croiset 1873, 262 suggests a trip to Delphi in 398–397 BC.

<sup>29</sup> Tuplin 1987, 64–65.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Delebecque 1957, 334.

ὑπὲρ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων) which implies that he himself remained absent from Athens in that period. The same author relates the claim of Demetrius of Magnesia that Xenophon died in Corinth in a very old age (*ibid.* 56: τέθνηκε δ' ἐν Κορίνθῳ, ὥς φησι Δημήτριος ὁ Μάγνης, ἥδη δηλαδὴ γηραιὸς ἱκανῶς).

One cannot but agree with Delebecque<sup>31</sup> that this evidence does not yet rule out Xenophon's reunion with his motherland in some moment between these two periods. However, it is enough to accept that Xenophon remained away from Athens before the Battle of Mantinea and that he had been working on treatise *On Horsemanship* exactly in that period, to make a conclusion that the last time he had seen Simon's bronze horse was before his banishment.

Delebecque heatedly argues that the aged Athenian patriot did not miss the opportunity to return as soon as possible.<sup>32</sup> Yet the same scholar thinks that Xenophon made the reference to Simon in his Scyllus period.<sup>33</sup> Accepting Delebecque's construction as a whole we reach the same conclusion – namely, that the dedication of Simon was already on its place in front of the Eleusinion by the moment Xenophon left Athens about the turn of the fifth to the fourth century BC.

A close link between Simon's book and his monument suggests itself. Many ancient dedications to the gods deal with professional activity: in this way dedicators sought to acquire divine protection for their work or thanked the gods for their success.<sup>34</sup> The statue ordered by Simon clearly shows that he regarded his career as related to the horses. The same is suggested by the wording of Xenophon (*De re equ.* 1. 1): ἵππικὸς ὢν. Nevertheless, there is no way of stating what precisely his professional activity was. Some scholars have considered Simon a veterinarian,<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Delebecque 1957, 334–335.

<sup>32</sup> Delebecque 1957, 334–341.

<sup>33</sup> Identifying the location of the monument in front of the Eleusinion, Xenophon takes trouble to specify that the temple implied is the one located in Athens. According to Delebecque 1957, 244, such accuracy proves that the author himself was absent from Athens, as he wrote these words. However, this impression may be misleading: an author settled in Athens could just as well insert a reference to his own polis, if he hoped to find readers among the citizens of other poleis as well.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., the craftsmen of the Kerameikos dedicated clay plaques with images of their work to Poseidon and Amphitrite (Boardman 1998, 185, Fig. 409. 1–4). Artists dedicated tripods won at the competitions to the gods, e.g. Hesiod to the Muses of Helicon (Hes. *OD* 656–658), aulode Echembrotus to Heracles in Thebes (Paus. 10. 7. 5–6), rhapsode Terpsicles to Zeus in Dodona (*SGDI* 5786).

<sup>35</sup> Gossen 1927, 180.



others a cavalry commander.<sup>36</sup> Xenophon's expression τὰ ἑαυτοῦ ἔργα can be interpreted in the broadest possible sense: as reference to Simon's talents, to anything he knew well how to do.<sup>37</sup> Apparently writing an influential treatise on horses was a consequence of the same professional self-identification.

Of course, we cannot be sure that the edition of Simon's treatise preceded the installation of the statue. However, this is plausible, especially if one considers the bronze horse as a kind of illustration to Simon's work. Indeed, such an idea has been expressed both in ancient and in modern times. Hierocles (fourth or fifth cent. AD), one of the authors featuring in the *Corpus Hippiatricorum Graecorum*, who retells Xenophon's testimony in his own words, interprets his expression τὰ ἑαυτοῦ ἔργα as a reference to Simon's treatise (*CHG* B 1. 11):

τά τε <Σίμωνος> ἀκούεις τοῦ παλαοῦ τοὺς τῆς ἵππασίας αὐτοῦ τρόπους ἐν τῷ παρ' Ἀθηναίοις Ἐλευσινίῳ χαράξαντος καὶ σημήναντος ἐν τοῖς σχήμασι.

You are also familiar with the work of Simon who lived in ancient times, the one who near the Eleusinion in Athens carved and showed with pictures his riding style.

E. Curtius suggested that the bronze statue could embody the ideal proportions of a horse, just like the *Doryphoros* of Polyclitus demonstrated the ideal body shape of an athlete.<sup>38</sup>

Anyway, by the time the statue was dedicated (which is probably before 401 BC) Simon was an adult and successful person with some ἔργα to be proud of. Therefore, the time of his activity could not significantly exceed the second half of the fifth century BC.

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<sup>36</sup> Helbig 1861, 182; Soukup 1911, 34.

<sup>37</sup> Lenormant 1856, 60.

<sup>38</sup> Curtius 1891, 188. This assumption is not very convincing, since accomplishing the ideal would have depended entirely of the sculptor – Simon had but limited possibilities to influence him. Perhaps the artist was Demetrius of Alopece, if the testimony of Plinius, *NH* 34. 76 (*idem* [sc. *Demetrius fecit*] *equitem S<i>monem qui primus de equitatu scripsit*) refers to the same monument, but Plinius relates of a statue of Simon on horseback – probably by mistake.



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The fragment of Simon of Athens entitled *περὶ εἶδους καὶ ἐπιλογῆς ἵππων* is of interest as one of the earliest specimens of Attic prose and the first technical treatise dealing with horses. As the text itself does not contain any evidence which would allow establishing the author’s lifetime, scholars tend to date the passage to ca. 450–362 relying on Xen. *De re equ.* 1. 1, where Simon’s work is mentioned as one of the sources. Xenophon says that his predecessor dedicated a statue of a horse in Athens and had his deeds carved on its base. Simon’s monument seems to be so well-known that Xenophon mentioned it in order to identify the person in question. This paper argues that the timeframe can be made still narrower, the biography of Xenophon accurately analysed from the moment he left Athens for Asia in 401 BC. It is highly likely that he only returned home many years later (if ever), after having written that part of the treatise where Simon was mentioned. Thus, he had the last chance to see the statue as a young man (in 401 and earlier). Therefore, not the time of writing *De re equestri*, but Xenophon’s departure from Athens can be considered as the *terminus ante quem* for Simon’s activity.

Фрагмент Симона Афинского о выборе лошадей интересен как один из самых ранних образцов аттической прозы и как первый известный греческий трактат, посвященный лошадям. Поскольку в тексте не содержится сведений,

которые бы позволили определить время жизни автора, исследователи датируют фрагмент ок. 450–362 гг. до н. э. на основании Xen. *De re equ.* 1, 1, где Симон упоминается как один из источников. Ксенофонт сообщает, что его предшественник установил в Афинах скульптуру лошади, на постаменте которой изображались его деяния. Судя по всему, статуя была достаточно известна, чтобы при ее упоминании читатель понял, о каком Симоне идет речь. Представляется, что временные рамки можно сузить, проанализировав биографию Ксенофонта с того момента, когда он отправляется в Азию в 401 г. Велика вероятность, что, покинув Афины, Ксенофонт если и вернулся на родину, то много лет спустя, уже после написания той части трактата, в которой упоминается Симон, так что последняя возможность увидеть статую была у него еще в молодости (401 г. и ранее). Таким образом, в качестве *terminus ante quem* для времени деятельности Симона можно рассматривать не время написания *De re equestri*, а отъезд Ксенофонта из Афин.

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