

Meno of Thessaly, son of Alexidemus
 [LGPN3B 54 RE 4 PP PX Μένων]
 ±423–400
 student of Gorgias
 mercenary general

Pl. *Meno* speaker
 Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.6–
 3.1. 47, *passim*
 Ctes. *frr.* 27–8
 D. S. 14.19.8–9,
 14.27.2–3

Life. Both Plato (76b) and Xenophon (2.6.28) remark on Meno's physical beauty in the bloom of his youth, and on his several lovers, both noting in particular that Meno is the beloved of Aristippus of Larissa s.v. Xenophon adds what he regards as a curiosity, that the beardless Meno had a bearded beloved, Tharypus. These observations determine the date of birth I estimate above. The *Meno* is set in early 402 (see App. I), when Meno visits Athens and stays with Anytus s.v. before leaving for Persia on the campaign chronicled in Xenophon's *Anabasis* from March of 401. Plato represents Meno as a wealthy and outspoken young man, attended by several slaves (82a), and as recently having been under the influence of Gorgias (70b, 71c), whom Thessaly had especially welcomed. Thessaly itself, Socrates remarks to Meno, is noted for its horses and wealth (70a–b), but Socrates notes elsewhere its lawlessness (*Crito* 53d).

It is Xenophon who depicts Meno as so thoroughly scurrilous as to deserve his end: whereas other generals were beheaded, Meno was tortured alive for a year before being tortured to death (*Anab.* 2.6.29). Having himself been on campaign with Meno, Xenophon goes on for forty-three lines, remarking *inter alia* that Meno

was manifestly eager for enormous wealth—eager for command in order to get more wealth and eager for honour in order to increase his gains; and he desired to be a friend to the men who possessed greatest power in order that he might commit unjust deeds without suffering the penalty. Again, for the accomplishment of the objects upon which his heart was set, he imagined that the shortest route was by way of perjury and falsehood and deception, while he counted straightforwardness and truth the same thing as folly. Affection he clearly felt for nobody, and if he said that he was a friend to anyone, it would become plain that this man was the one he was plotting against . . . he thought he was the only one who knew that it was easiest to get hold of the property of friends—just because it was unguarded . . . those who were pious and practised truth he would try to make use of, regarding them as weaklings. And just as a man prided himself upon piety, truthfulness, and justice, so Menon prided himself upon ability to deceive, the fabrication of lies, and the mocking of friends; but the man who was not a rascal he always thought of as belonging to the uneducated . . . (2.6.21–7).

Military career. Xenophon mentions Meno's generalship under Cyrus only to criticize it, with the exception of specifying, from time to time, whether he commanded the right or the left wing of the advancing army. Meno led from Thessaly 1,500 hoplites and *peltasts* hired by Aristippus and sent at Cyrus' request (*Anab.* 1.2.6). Meno's first reported assignment was to escort home the Cilician queen, Epyaxa (1.2.20), who had met with Cyrus and provided him with sufficient funding

to pay his troops four months' wages (1.2.12). On the way, however, Meno lost some hundred hoplites in circumstances never made clear: either his men were caught plundering and were therefore killed by Cilicians, or they had been left behind and wandered about until they perished (1.2.25–6). In anger, the remainder of Meno's army plundered Tarsus and its palace. (Xenophon later remarks that Meno made his soldiers obedient by participating in their injustices, 2.6.27.)

Cyrus had originally deceived the troops about the aim of their campaign, which was ultimately directed at unseating his brother, King Artaxerxes of Persia, and usurping the throne. When the men began to suspect the real nature of their mission, they rebelled against their commanders (1.3.1). Meno appears again at this point in Xenophon's story, taking his own men aside and promising them special favors from Cyrus, light assignments and promotions, if they will be first to march onward across the Euphrates River, which they do to Cyrus's delight (1.4.13–7).

When Cyrus was killed at the battle of Cunaxa, stranding the army deep in Persian territory, Meno offered to accompany messengers in an effort to persuade Ariaeus, a Persian who had led troops under Cyrus, to accept the crown from the army. Meno was the "intimate and guest-friend" of Ariaeus (2.1.5; cf. 2.6.28, that Ariaeus loved boys in general and Meno in particular); Meno then remained with Ariaeus after the messengers returned to the Greek army to announce that Ariaeus had declined the offer of the throne (2.2.1). Clearchus then met on friendly terms with the Persian leader Tissaphernes, who had opposed Cyrus. Following pledges of mutual friendship, Tissaphernes asked that Clearchus return, accompanied by the other generals and captains, for a public exchange of the names of spies and slanderers on both sides. Knowing that Meno had had meetings with Tissaphernes in the company of Ariaeus, Clearchus assumed that Meno was the slanderer. When five generals and twenty captains, accompanied by two hundred soldiers, reached Tissaphernes' tent, the generals were seized within, the captains killed outside, and soldiers killed wherever they could be found, causing panic among the Greeks (2.5.24–34). Whereas Xenophon says the generals were beheaded (2.6.1), his account is modified in the case of Meno to the torture-death mentioned above (2.6.29). In a departure from the outline of Xenophon's narrative, Diodorus reports that Meno was spared the beheading because, having quarreled with the other commanders, Tissaphernes thought him ready to betray the Greeks (14.27.2). (Cf. the fr. of Ctes., which do not present Meno as the complete scoundrel of Xenophon's account.)

Menon of Athens (tailor) See App. II.

Metaneira, slave of Nicarete (*hetaira*) See App. II. See *stemma Lysias*.

Metrobius of Athens See App. II.