If Thucydides is often regarded as too good a historian to moralise, Xenophon is often regarded as too much of a moralist to be a good historian. Scholarship in the nineteenth century regarded Xenophon as an incompetent historian who wanted to think and write like Thucydides, but was intellectually incapable of doing so.¹ This trend persisted throughout much of the twentieth century;² but at the same time a trickling stream of scholars began to study the Hellenica on its own terms and discuss what its purpose may have been.³ Such discussions have generally concluded that the work’s purpose was to a certain extent moral. Grayson (1975) has even argued that the Hellenica is not historiography at all, but is a purely moral treatise. It is part of the purpose of the present study to show that a work can comfortably be both at the same time, and even that this was, in fact, the norm for Greek historiography. In the following, we shall see how Xenophon’s Hellenica in many ways functions as the link between Classical and Hellenistic historiographical moralising.

There is general agreement that Xenophon wrote the Hellenica in (at least) two instalments, the first (1.1.1–2.3.10) as a continuation of Thucydides⁴ probably shortly after the end of the Peloponnesian War, the second (2.3.11–end) some, perhaps many, years later in a style more his own.⁵ Nevertheless, I shall treat the work as a unified whole, in the belief that

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¹ Niebuhr (1828), Schwartz (1889).
³ Breitenbach (1950), Henry (1967), Krafft (1967), Anderson (1974), Grayson (1975), Higgins (1977), Cawkwell (1979). For the decision to include the Hellenica but not the Anabasis in the present study, see the Introduction.
⁴ However he himself understood that; see Dover (1981: 444).
Xenophon intended it to be read as such, regardless of how many years passed between his writing of the first and second part.

PROGRAMMATIC STATEMENTS

The *Hellenica* has no preface. The fact that the first and last lines of the work make it, in effect, a chapter in a continuous story says much about Xenophon’s view of history; but it does not provide any information about the content or purpose of the work. For such information we need to turn to four brief, programmatic narratorial statements within the narrative. The first one concerns the last words of Theramenes, who pretended to play the drinking game *kottabos* with the last drops of his hemlock and toasted Critias, his former friend, now persecutor. After quoting the joke, the Xenophontic narrator comments:

καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἄγνοι, ὅτι ταῦτα ἀποφθέγματα οὐκ ἀξιόλογα, ἐκεῖνο δὲ κρίνω τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀγαστὸν, τὸ τοῦ θανάτου παρεστηκότος μήτε τὸ φρόνιμον μήτε τὸ παιγνιώδες ἀπολιπεῖν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς.

I know that these witticisms are not worthy of mention, but I judge that this was an admirable quality in the man that on the threshold of death neither reason nor a sense of humour left his mind. (Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.56)

The second programmatic statement comes when the narrative switches from the land war to the war at sea during the Corinthian War:

καὶ ὁ μὲν δὴ κατὰ γῆν πόλεμος οὕτως ἐπολεμεῖτο. ἐν ᾧ δὲ πάντα ταῦτα ἐπράττετο, τὰ κατὰ θάλατταν αὖ καὶ τὰς πρὸς θαλάττῃ πόλεις γενόμενα διηγήσομαι, καὶ τῶν πράξεων τὰς μὲν ἀξιομνημονεύτους γράψω, τὰς δὲ μὴ ἀξίας λόγου παρήσω.

The war on land, then, had been fought in this way. While all of this had been going on, events happened at sea and in the cities by the sea which I shall now narrate. I shall write about those actions that are worthy of remembrance and pass over those not worthy of mention. (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.1)

The third one is a justification for the detailed account of the celebration of the Spartan general Teleutias by his enthusiastic troops:

γιγνώσκω μὲν οὖν ὅτι ἐν τούτοις οὐτε δαπάνημα οὔτε κίνδυνον οὔτε μηχάνημα ἀξιόλογον οὐδὲν διηγοῦμαι· ἄλλα ναὶ μὰ Δία τὸδε ἀξίων μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἀνδρὶ

6 Opening words: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα οὐ πολλαίς ἡμέραις ὑπέρηκεν ἡλίθιον ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν Θυμοχάρης (‘Then, not many days later, Thymochares came from Athens’). Closing words: ἐμοὶ μὲν δὴ μέχρι τούτου γραφέσθω· τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἰσος ἄλλοις μελῆσαι (‘Let the events this far have been written by me. The later ones will perhaps be someone else’s task’).
I know that in this passage I am not talking about any great expense or danger or stratagem worthy of mention; but, by Zeus, this seems to me worthy for a man to think about: what Teleutias had done to make his soldiers feel this way. For this is a job for a man that is much more worthy of mention than any expenses or dangers. (Xen. Hell. 5.1.4)

And the fourth explains the decision to narrate in detail the Phliasians’ steadfast resistance against Argive aggression for the sake of keeping their alliance with Sparta:

For if one of the big cities does something glorious, all the historiographers mention it; but it seems to me that also if some city, although being small, has accomplished many glorious deeds, it is even more worthwhile to give an account of it. (Xen. Hell. 7.2.1)

What these four brief remarks have in common is the fact that they all explain Xenophon’s decision to include certain historical details to the exclusion (we must assume) of others. The details he decided to include are the witticisms uttered by a man about to die for his commitment to moderate government over bloody tyranny (2.3.56); a narrative of naval warfare that focuses on the personalities and leadership styles of a string of commanders on both sides, rather than on any overall picture of strategies or objectives (4.8.1); the honours showered on a talented and likeable commander by his loyal troops (5.1.4); and an extended narrative of the trials and tribulations of a relatively unknown city in its quest to keep its treaty of friendship with a bigger power (7.2.1). These are all details with a moral-didactic bearing. We shall return to the lessons they teach below; here we shall just note that whenever the Xenophontic narrator turns aside from the narrative to comment on his selection methods, these methods turn out to rest on moral-didactic principles.

For placing the Hellenica in its generic context it is significant that in the quoted passages Xenophon repeatedly plays with the word ἀξιόλογος,
‘worthy of mention/noteworthy/important’, in order to show how in every instance he thinks details important which might not be thought so by others. It would be tempting to assume that the main target for his apologetic polemics is Thucydides, but this is not an unproblematic assumption: it is true that the details whose inclusion he defends would not be out of place in Herodotus, so this predecessor is unlikely to be his target, but it is less clear that they would in fact fall outside of Thucydides’ remit: Thucydides narrates the deeds and sufferings of small cities when they are morally significant (e.g. the sack of Mycalessus, Thuc. 7.29; see p. 204), can include witticisms (e.g. the Athenian jibe at the captured Spartans and their very Spartan reply, Thuc. 4.40), and sometimes comments on the likeability of a commander and its practical results (e.g. Brasidas, Thuc. 4.81). We have to remember that we have lost most of the histories that were written as continuations of Thucydides; one of these – perhaps the one now known as the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia, which seems to have been less morally focused than Xenophon and Theopompus, as we shall see in Chapter 7 – may well have set out explicit rules for what did and did not belong in a proper work of history, inspired by Thucydides, but going beyond his practice.

**MORALISING TECHNIQUES**

Some of the types of moralising employed in the Hellenica are types pioneered by Thucydides. Juxtaposition is used to great effect, for instance between the oath-breaking of Tissaphernes and the pious oath-keeping of Agesilaus (3.4.6 with 11), between the leadership qualities of the Athenian Iphicrates and the Spartan Mnasippus (6.2.27–32), and between the Spartans’ trumped-up accusations of Ismenias at 5.2.35–6 and the narrative of their own previous shady actions. There is also an instance, and a very effective one, of moralising by abstract summary, namely the final two chapters of the work (7.5.26–7).

9 As has been done by Breitenbach (1950: 17–22), Rahn (1971) and Grayson (1975). Breitenbach recognises that the juxtaposition of Xenophon and Thucydides is not straightforward.

10 Gray (2010) argues that Xenophon’s ‘interventions’ were not intended as polemics against any other historiographer, but were meant to address his readers’ expectations of the content and moral judgements of his work. She is no doubt right about their function as reader guidance, but he must have had some reason for thinking that his practice was diverging from reader expectations, and it is simplest to assume that this reason was its difference from one or more of his influential rivals.

11 See also the contrast between Agesilaus’ treatment of Lysander in 3.4.7–9 and Pharnabazus’ of Spithridates in 3.4.10 (see Krentz 1995: ad loc.), between the god-like honours awarded to a bellicose king at 3.3.1 and the ignominious death of a peace-loving king at 3.5.25, and between the Spartan and Theban cavalry at Leuctra (6.4.10–12).
Moral History from Herodotus to Diodorus

Most of the moralising in the *Hellenica*, however, points clearly towards the kind of moralising we see in Polybius and Diodorus. There are a number of moral-didactic digressions, such as 5.3.7 on the dangers of acting in anger and 6.1.2–3 on the upright character of Polydamas.\(^{12}\) Likewise, there are numerous instances of both introductory and concluding moralising, such as 4.4.2, which tells the reader that the Corinthian revolutionary party 'made the most unholy plan imaginable' (τὸ πάντων ἀνοσίωτάτον ἐβουλέυσαντο), and 7.3.1, which rounds off the story of the Phliasian resistance against Theban aggression with the statement that 'I shall move on now from the story of the Phliasians, how loyal they were to their friends, how steadfast they remained in the war, and how despite lacking everything they maintained their alliance.'\(^{13}\) This guiding moralising works exactly like its Hellenistic counterpart in telling the reader how to read certain episodes in a moral way. In contrast with the guiding moralising of Polybius and Diodorus, however, it is never prescriptively didactic; the reader of Xenophon has to make the leap from admiring the Phliasians to applying the same virtues in his own life without help from the narrator.

Moral asides, which are such a defining characteristic of the *Bibliotheke* of Diodorus, are also used by Xenophon, particularly as brief explanations of actions. Thus, Phoebidas decides to take the Cadmea because he is 'more in love with the idea of doing something glorious than with life itself, but not considered particularly rational or sensible' (καὶ γὰρ ἦν τοῦ λαμπρόν τι ποιῆσαι πολλὰ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ζῆν ἐραστής, οὐ μέντοι λογιστικός γε οὐδὲ πάνυ φρόνιμος ἐδόκει εἶναι: 5.2.28), and Stasippus does not pursue the routed enemy in a civil war battle because he is 'the kind of man who does not like to kill his fellow-citizens' (τοιοῦτος ὁ Στάσιππος ἦν οἷος μὴ βούλεσθαι πολλοὺς ἀποκτεινύναι τῶν πολιτῶν: 6.5.7).\(^{14}\)

Of the more implicit types of moralising, evaluative phrasing is used in many passages of the *Hellenica*, although it is by no means universal in the work. Favourite techniques are counterfactual statements and emphasis through negation. Thus, at 5.3.20, Agesilaus ‘did not, as one might have thought, rejoice’ at the death of Agesipolis, but ‘cried and missed his

\(^{12}\) Other moralising digressions in the *Hellenica*: 4.8.22, 5.1.4, 5.1.19–20, 5.1.36, 5.4.1, 5.4.33, 6.2.32, 6.2.39, 6.5.51–2, 7.2.1, 7.5.8, 7.5.19–20.

\(^{13}\) περὶ μὲν δὴ Φλειασίων, ὡς καὶ πιστοὶ τοῖς φίλοις ἐγένοντο καὶ ἄλκιμοι ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ διετέλεσαν, καὶ ὡς πάντων σπανίζοντες διέμενον ἐν τῇ συμμαχίᾳ, ἐφητι: 7.3.1. Other moralising introductions and conclusions in the *Hellenica*: 2.3.56 concluding, 3.4.18 concluding, 4.20–1 introductory, 4.5.4 introductory, 4.8.31 obituary, 5.1.3 introductory, 5.2.6 concluding, 5.4.1 introductory, 5.4.51 introductory, 7.2.1 introductory, 7.3.12 concluding, 7.4.32 concluding, 7.5.16 introductory.

\(^{14}\) Other examples of moral asides in the *Hellenica* are 5.4.65 (μᾶλα θρασύν άνδρα), 6.4.3 (ἦν γὰρ, ὡς ἔοικε, τὸ δαιμόνιον ἦγεν) and 6.4.8 (ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσημβρίᾳ ὑποπινόντων καὶ τὸν οἶνον παροξύναντι σύμτωχος ἔλεγον).
company’; and at 5.4.64 Timotheus wins Corcyra for Athens by not enslaving or killing anyone or changing their constitution.\(^15\)

The fact that evaluative phrasing is only used in certain episodes makes these stand out noticeably as moralising narratives.\(^16\) These are the episodes that are chiefly responsible for Xenophon’s long-standing reputation as a strongly biased historian. Thus, the narrative of the civil war in Corinth and the attempt to unite Corinth and Argos (4.4.1–14) leaves the reader in no doubt about the contempt Xenophon felt for such revolutionary measures and the people responsible for them.\(^17\) Likewise, the narrative of Lycomedes’ efforts to form an Arcadian alliance outside the influence of both Thebes and Sparta (7.1.23–7) shows Xenophon’s aversion to this idea in no uncertain terms. However, to dismiss such passages as political bias is to see only half the picture. As argued in the Introduction, moral and political views are closely intertwined in Classical and Hellenistic thought. Xenophon despised the Corinthian revolutionaries because he saw them behaving in ways he considered impious and lawless (see especially 4.4.2–3), and he considered the Arcadian attempt at hegemony an example of unfounded arrogance led by the selfish ambition of one man (see especially 7.1.23). It is these moral messages that the passionate language of these two passages brings across with crystal clarity to the reader, not any political message about the wrongness of opposing Sparta, although that can be read between the lines by a reader who so wishes.\(^18\)

Correlation between action and result is another common type of moralising in the Hellenica, usually without explicit narratorial guidance. For instance, in the narrative of the Spartan campaign in Asia Minor, the general Dercylidas sacrifices with a view to attacking the fortress of Cebren (3.1.17). The sacrifices are unfavourable for four days, and for four days Dercylidas waits outside the fortress. One of his officers, Athenadas of Sicyon, thinking that Dercylidas is a fool to keep waiting (3.1.18), runs

\(^15\) Other examples are 4.4.15 (the Spartans do not attempt to bring back the exiles to Phlius), 4.5.2 (Agesilaus does not pursue the Argives who were making Corinthian sacrifices, but stays and lets the Corinthians sacrifice), 5.4.55 (Agesilaus reconciles the two parties in Thespiae instead of letting his supporters kill the democrats), 7.1.27 (the Spartans and Thebans do not consult ‘the god’ about how to bring about peace). For Xenophon’s use of such sideshadows see Hau (2013).

\(^16\) Examples of passages with evaluative phrasing in the Hellenica: 1.1.29–31, 2.2.6, 2.3.11–14, 2.4.1, 2.4.26, 3.3.1, 3.4.16–18, 3.4.24, 4.3.8, 4.3.12, 4.3.19, 4.4.6, 4.4.15, 4.5.2, 4.5.11–15, 4.8.18–19, 4.8.36–8, 5.1.3, 5.3.10, 5.3.20, 5.3.21, 5.3.22, 5.4.11–12, 5.4.44, 5.4.55, 5.4.57, 5.4.64, 6.5.12, 6.5.14, 6.2.15–19, 6.2.20–3, 6.2.27–32, 6.2.33–8, 6.4.28–32, 6.4.33–7, 7.1.15–17, 7.1.23–6, 7.1.27, 7.1.46, 7.2, 7.4.3, 7.4.27, 7.4.33–9, 7.5.12–13, 7.5.16.

\(^17\) Gray (1989: 154–7) offers a masterly close reading of this passage, focusing on its literary artistry.

\(^18\) For readings of these two passages in terms of pro-Spartan bias see Cawkwell (1979: notes ad 4.4.4 and 6).
forward with his men in order to cut off the water-supply of the besieged. The people in the city break out, wound him, kill two of his men and drive the rest back. In the next paragraph, Dercylidas is approached by messengers from the city’s garrison, who offer to change sides, and – in a masterful use of delayed disclosure – we are suddenly told that his sacrifices on this day have been favourable; he leads his men towards the city, and the gates are opened to him. We must conclude, without being explicitly told, that piously waiting for the sacrifices to turn out favourably was the right decision.

Moralising by internal evaluation is also common in the *Hellenica*. Thus the Athenians after Aegospotami are allowed to condemn themselves by expecting to be treated by the Spartans in the same way they have treated Melos and Scione (2.2.3 and 10), and the acquittal of Sphodrias is considered ‘by many’ the ‘most unjust decision ever reached by a Spartan court’ (πολλοῖς ἔδοξεν αὕτη δὴ ἀδικώτατα ἐν Λακεδαίμονι ἡ δίκη κριθῆναι: 5.4.24). Many opinions with a moral message in the *Hellenica* stand out from that of any other surviving work of moralising by means of correlation between action and result in contrast with the preceding speech of Autocles, which scolded the Spartans for always acting in their own interest under false pretences, and which was greeted with silence and non-effect (δὲ τούτων καλῶς εἰπεῖν: 6.3.10).

One type of moralising is more characteristic of Xenophon’s style than any other, and, by its prominence and distinct flavour, makes the moralising of the *Hellenica* stand out from that of any other surviving work of

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19 For ‘delayed disclosure’ see Hornblower (1994).

20 Other examples of moralising by means of correlation between action and result in the *Hellenica*: 4.1.17–19 (overconfidence leads to death), 4.5.11–15 (overconfidence and inability to cope with setbacks lead to disaster), 4.8.18–19 (overconfidence and negligence lead to death and disaster), 4.8.36–8 (overconfidence leads to death and disaster), 5.4.64 (good treatment of the defeated leads to loyalty), 6.2.15–19 (bad treatment of subordinates leads to disloyalty and inefficiency), 7.1.32 (arrogance leads to disaffected allies), 7.4.10 (loyalty to allies is respected and rewarded even by enemies).

21 Other examples of internal evaluation in the *Hellenica*: 1.4.13–17, 4.4.3, 4.4.6, 4.4.19, 4.5.10, 4.8.6, 5.2.17, 5.3.16, 6.4.14–15, 6.4.16.

22 Some other speeches with a moral message in the *Hellenica* (in both oratio recta and obliqua): 1.4.13–17, 2.3.15–23, 2.4.40–1, 5.1.13–18, 5.2.32, 6.1.4–16, 6.4.2–3, 6.4.22–3 (gains authority from echoing 6.3.16), 6.5.33–48.
history: the moral vignette. Throughout the *Hellenica*, the discourse often slows down to real-time pace and broadens into scenes, usually with two or three speaking characters, whose utterances are rendered in direct speech, often at length. Some instances are shorter, with only one or two brief utterances, or with just one witty or punchy line. This practice is part of what earned Xenophon admiration for a ‘charming style’ among his ancient readers, but it has also been partly responsible for his nineteenth- and twentieth-century reputation as ‘not a proper historian’. Gray has fittingly called this feature of Xenophon’s style ‘conversationalised narrative’ and has correctly identified it as presenting moral and philosophical lessons (as well as offering variety and pleasure in reading).

What exactly the lesson of each vignette is can be quite tricky to decipher, however, and for some of them different scholars have argued for diametrically opposed interpretations. Such ambiguity is surely no accident: Xenophon was a skilful writer and story-teller and could make his meaning plain without destroying a good story. When he chose not to, we must assume that he had his reasons. Apparently, like Thucydides with the Melian Dialogue, he sometimes wanted to present his readers with a moral dilemma without providing a solution. Showing that such dilemmas are part of human life and that they have no easy solutions is thought-directing didacticism. We shall examine some of Xenophon’s moral dilemmas below.

**MORAL LESSONS**

*The Good Leader and His Men*

Several scholars have observed that Xenophon’s *Hellenica* is primarily about how to be a good military leader, and this is certainly one of the major moral and practical lessons of the work. Many have taken Agesilaus...
to be the ultimate *paradeigma* of a good commander in Xenophon, but this assumption is not straightforward: Xenophon’s portrayal of his friend in the *Hellenica* is complex and at times ambiguous. We shall return to Xenophon’s portrait of Agesilaus below; for now, in order to establish the virtues of the good commander which remain the same throughout the work, it is safer to start elsewhere.

The most important aspect of a commander’s virtue in the *Hellenica* is the correct way of treating his soldiers; this will make them loyal in the extreme and therefore efficient as a fighting force as long as the commander makes sound decisions. The most explicit *paradeigma* of a commander and his loyal soldiers is Agesilaus’ brother Teleutias, whose celebration by his men is described in detail at 5.1.3. The extended focus on this aspect of Teleutias’ generalship is then justified by the narratorial remark that ‘this seems to me worthy for a man to think about: what Teleutias had done to make his soldiers feel this way. For this is a job for a man that is much more worthy of mention than any expenses or dangers’ (5.1.4; the Greek has been quoted above). What exactly it was that Teleutias did is demonstrated more clearly at his next appearance (5.1.13–24). Here he is shown to be prepared to share hardship with his men (5.1.14–16), but also to make an effort to get them plentiful supplies, not in the form of gifts from Persia, but by plundering enemy territory (5.1.17) in raids of great daring (5.1.21–4) and, Xenophon is careful to point out, careful planning (5.1.19–20). In other words, the soldiers love him because he is a model of the behaviour he expects from them. (Teleutias will later be shown to suffer from one fatal character flaw, which we shall return to below.) Similar adoration of a commander is displayed by the troops of Hermocrates, because of his ‘consideration, ready kindness, and approachability’ (ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ προθυμίαν καὶ κοινότητα: 1.1.29–31). That is, they love him for being good to them rather than for being a good soldier. We should probably imagine that Teleutias treated his men well too, and that Hermocrates also set a good example on the battlefield, but this is not spelled out.

The correlation between consideration for troops, loyalty and success is exemplified in detail in an extended juxtaposition of the bad Spartan commander Mnasippus and the good Athenian commander Iphicrates, which shows how stinginess and brutality will result in defeat and death whereas proper consideration will bring loyalty and victory (6.2.15–39). Interestingly, however, the good commander Iphicrates (praised by the join in creating an empire ‘based not on force, but on a reputation for fairness and generosity’ (1995: 248–9; this view originated with Schwartz 1889). It will be clear from the following that this interpretation of the *Hellenica* is perfectly compatible with the one offered here, proving that, as in all of the ancient historiographers, the moral and the political messages are closely intertwined.
narrator at 6.5.31), whose troops show an ‘eagerness for battle well worth seeing’ (ἀξία θέας ἡ σπουδὴ: 6.2.35), is not noticeably kind to his men, although he does not display the disregard and brutality of Mnasippos. Rather, he works them hard to make sure that they are always ready for battle and always in peak physical condition. His training methods receive explicit narratorial praise (6.2.32), as does the training camp of Agesilaus at Ephesus in an almost lyrically descriptive passage at 3.4.15–18. What these two training regimes have in common, apart from their effectiveness, is the use of competition and the offering of prizes for performance. The reader is clearly meant to take away from the reading that this kind of incentivisation is the way to get the best out of soldiers.

In his focus on the relationship between military commanders and their soldiers Xenophon is unique among the ancient Greek historiographers. In some other respects, however, his ideal commander is very similar to the paradigm offered by Polybius. Thus, intelligent courage is a major component of what makes a good general in the Hellenica. Courage is a generally praiseworthy quality in the work, but in military commanders it needs to be tempered with intelligence. This is seen most clearly when the narrator digresses from the narrative of Teleutias’ raid on the Piraeus in order to defend his plan against the imagined charge of idiocy (ἀφρόνως) by explaining how it rested on careful calculations (ἀναλογισμὸν: 5.1.19); and even Epaminondas, leading the hated Thebans against Sparta, receives grudging narratorial approval for his combination of foresight and courage. By contrast, Agesilaus’ brave, but risky head-on attack on the Theban centre in the Battle of Coronea receives a ticking-off despite the fact that the Spartans were victorious (4.3.19), and defeat is in store for the excessively daring Nicolochus (μάλα θρασὺν ἄνδρα: 5.4.65).

Like Polybius, however, Xenophon also has time for old-fashioned heroic courage: his implied criticism of Agesilaus’ risky frontal attack is

32 Prize competitions are also used by Dercylidas (3.2.10), another good commander in the Hellenica, as well as by the idealised Cyrus the Great in the Cyropaedia (Cyr. 2.1.22–3).
33 The vignette of the death of Theramenes is explicitly said to be included to show courage, along with a sense of humour, in the face of death (2.3.56). 7.5.15–17 is a beautiful piece of eulogistic writing showcasing the courage of Athenian soldiers, among whom was, according to Diogenes Laertius 2.54, Xenophon’s own son Gryllus.
34 εὐτυχῆ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε φήσαιμι τὴν στρατηγίαν αὐτῷ γενέσθαι· ὅσα μέντοι προνοίας ἐργα καὶ τόλμης ἐστίν, οὐδὲν μοι δοκεῖ ἁνὴρ ἁλιπεῖν (‘I would deny that this campaign was favoured by fortune; but as for deeds of foresight and courage, the man seems to me to have left nothing undone’) (7.5.8).
35 ἐνταῦθα δὲ Ἀχησίλαον ἀνδρέας οὐ ἕξεστιν εἰπεῖν ἀναμφισβητήτως· οὐ μέντοι εἰλετό γε τὰ ἀριστέρατα (‘Then it can undoubtedly be said that Agesilaus was brave; he did not, however, choose the safest course’).
also apologetically admiring (see above, n. 35), and when characters face death bravely, this is duly noted. Some courageous commanders go to their deaths with a witty and/or brave one-liner in a mini-vignette (Callicratidas 1.6.32, Pasimachus 4.4.10); many others are simply noted to have ‘died fighting’ (μαχόμενος ἀπέθανε: Polycharmus 4.3.8, Pisander 4.3.12, Anaxibius 4.8.39, Teleutias 5.3.6, Phoebidas 5.4.45, Polytropus 6.5.14). These battlefield death narratives are clearly the forerunner of the heroic death narratives of Diodorus, although they are rather less standardised in Xenophon. In every case the commander’s death signals the defeat of his troops, for which he often bears a large part of the blame, but his heroic death ensures the preservation of his reputation. Contrast the ignominious death of Thibron, who is surprised while relaxing in the company of a flute-player and is not honoured with the epithet ‘fighting’ (4.8.18–19).

Good Xenophontic commanders also display a very un-Polybian virtue: piety. In the Hellenica, good military leaders always sacrifice before going into battle, crossing the border or completing any other important action. There are no fewer than thirteen instances of such sacrifices in the work, all performed by commanders who function as positive paradeigmata. The action of sacrificing is usually not emphasised, but simply mentioned as a matter of course, in the same way as the commander is said to collect his troops or order them to prepare to move out. The commander’s sacrifices are only emphasised twice. The first time is in the narrative of Dercylidas discussed above (3.1.17–19). The success of the pious commander contrasted with the fiasco of his less scrupulous subordinate leaves the reader in no doubt that sacrificial omens must be taken seriously, and, by extension, that commanders who abort their missions because of unfavourable omens are doing the right thing (Agesilaus 3.4.15, Agesipolis 4.7.7). The other instance of a commander’s sacrificing taking centre-stage is the launch of Agesilaus’ Asian campaign. First the king leaves Sparta ‘having performed all the necessary sacrifices, both the diabateria and the others’ (θυσάμενος ὅσα ἔδει καὶ τἆλλα καὶ τὰ διαβατήρια: 3.4.3). By giving us the name of one particular type of sacrifice and implying that there were others which he could name if he wanted to, the narrator gives the impression of a very pious commander. Agesilaus then decides that he wants to go to Aulis to

36 Agesilaus: 3.4.3–4, 3.4.15, 5.1.33, 6.5.17, 6.5.18; Dercylidas: 3.1.17, 3.1.23, 3.2.16; Agesipolis: 4.7.2, 4.7.7; Archidamus: 6.4.19; Herippidas: 4.1.22; Chares: 7.2.21. Other types of sacrifices also feature prominently: 1.6.37, 2.4.39, 3.2.26, 3.3.4. 4.5.1–2, 4.4.5. By contrast, Thucydides only mentions military sacrifices twice: in a report on Brasidas’ actions to Cleon (5.10.2) and at a point where they turn out so unfavourable that the Spartan army returns home without having crossed the border (5.54.2).

37 The word διαβατήρια is found only eleven times in Classical Greek literature: three in Thucydides and eight in Xenophon’s Hellenica. This is the only instance when it is coupled with other, unnamed sacrifices.
sacrifice, ‘like Agamemnon’, an expression that has caused some scholarly debate. The easiest reading is to take it as a continuation of Agesilaus’ piety: Agamemnon, after all, was victorious in Asia, and no doubt Agesilaus is planning to be less extreme than the mythical king in his choice of sacrificial victim. The fact that the planned sacrifice is foiled by the Thebans (3.4.4) marks them as impious (and functions as a bad omen for Agesilaus’ campaign), but it does not make the king’s plan to sacrifice any less pious. 38

Beside sacrificing and obeying the sacrificial omens, a commander’s piety is demonstrated by his willingness to keep oaths scrupulously. This quality is also exemplified by Agesilaus in a deliberate contrast with the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. When Agesilaus arrives in Asia, the two exchange oaths on a truce until the satrap can receive orders from his king. Although Tissaphernes immediately proceeds to break his oath, Agesilaus continues to be true to his (3.4.6), and when hostilities begin, he informs Tissaphernes that ‘he was very grateful to him because by breaking his oath he himself had made the gods his enemies and allies of the Greeks’ (πολλὴν χάριν αὐτῷ ἔχοι, ὅτι ἐπιορκήσας αὐτὸς μὲν πολεμίους τοὺς θεοὺς ἐκτήσατο, τοῖς δ’ Ἐλλησι σωμάτως ἐποίησεν: 3.4.11). This internal evaluation underlines the message, and when Tissaphernes is subsequently beheaded by his king for incompetence (3.4.25), it seems that the Spartan king’s confident words have come true.

When we turn to the flaws of the bad commander, some of them are simply the opposites of the virtues of the good one: poor treatment of subordinates (Mnasippus), excessive daring (Nicolochus), impiety (Athenadas). The worst mistakes, however, seem to be committed under the influence of various strong emotions. Thus Phoebidas is ‘in love’ with the idea of doing some glorious deed, but is neither rational nor intelligent (καὶ γὰρ ἦν τοῦ λαμπρόν τι ποιῆσαι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ζῆν ἐραστής, οὐ μέντοι λογιστικός γε οὐδὲ πάνυ φρόνιμος ἐδόκει εἶναι: 5.2.28). His blind ambition is what leads him to commit the one most criticised act in all of the Hellenica, namely the occupation of the Theban Cadmea. And Teleutias falls from grace in his fourth and final appearance in the Hellenica by giving in to anger and launching a blind attack on Olynthus, only to get himself killed (5.3.3–6), sparking a moralising digression on how dangerous and wrong it is to do anything at all in anger (5.3.7). The vice that most often leads commanders to disaster in the Hellenica, however, is overconfidence and complacency. The danger is demonstrated by the dire fates of numerous bad commanders (unnamed polemarch 4.5.11–15, 39 Thibron 4.8.18–19, Anaxibius 4.8.38–9,

38 Contra Tuplin (1993: 56–7) and Krentz (1995: ad loc.).
39 This is the hapless Spartan who loses his entire regiment at Lechaeum. In addition to overconfidence he showcases the flaw of lack of resourcefulness and imagination: when things start to go wrong, all he can do is repeat the same ineffectual actions over and over,
Alcetas 5.4.57). Xenophon offers no explicit moralising in the manner of Polybius on the dangers of trusting good fortune to last, but the pattern is clear.\footnote{For a detailed examination of the dangers of overconfidence, complacency and arrogance in all of Xenophon’s works, see Hau (2012).}

**Lessons of Phlius: Loyalty and Friendship**

The longest explicit paradeigma in the *Hellenica* is the Phliasians’ resistance against aggression in order to stay faithful to their alliance with Sparta (7.2). It is introduced by the justification that even small cities should rightly be praised for their ‘many glorious deeds’ (εἴ τις μικρὰ πόλις οὖσα πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἔργα διαπέπρακται: 7.2.1) and rounded off by a transitional statement labelling it a narrative about ‘the Phliasians, how loyal they were to their friends, how steadfast they remained in the war, and how despite lacking everything they maintained their alliance’ (ὡς καὶ πιστοὶ τοῖς φίλοις ἐγένοντο καὶ ἀλκιμοὶ ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ διετέλεσαν, καὶ ώς πάντων σπανίζοντες διέμενον ἐν τῇ συμμαχίᾳ: 7.3.1). These qualities are richly demonstrated in the narrative between the two bookends. Xenophon’s admiration seems to be inspired not primarily by the Phliasians’ plucky courage, although that clearly impressed him (7.2.4, 7.2.8), but by their ability to endure hardship (7.2.16, καρτερίας: 7.2.17) and for the right reasons: in order to keep faith with their allies, often designated by the more personal and emotional word ‘friends’ (φίλοι: 7.2.17, 7.3.1).

The passage has often been used to exemplify Xenophon’s pro-Spartan bias, but it might equally well be used to demonstrate his moral didacticism: if he chose to give these events such extended treatment because Phlius remained loyal to Sparta in difficult times, we misread the passage if we focus only on Sparta and not on loyalty. The qualities of loyalty – to allies and to friends – self-discipline and courage were so important to Xenophon’s purpose with the *Hellenica* that he decided to compose a special chapter showcasing them. It is only natural that the paradeigma also corresponds to his political ideals; it would be a strange thing to choose as a model of morality a city, country or individual whose politics one profoundly disagrees with. The chapter becomes more didactic because the glorious deeds are performed not by one of the major players in Greek history, but by a comparatively small and unknown city. By stressing this fact in the introduction to the narrative Xenophon makes it clear with disastrous results (ποιοῦντες δὲ καὶ πάσχοντες τὰ δύοια τούτοις καὶ αὐθίς: 4.3.11–15), in deliberate contrast with Agesilas’ resourcefulness and efficiency when he arrives on the scene (4.6.9–12). Cawkwell (1979: 38) argues convincingly that Xenophon knew the Spartan’s name but deliberately withheld it as a means of censure.
that loyalty, self-discipline and courage can be shown by anyone, no matter how insignificant, and that such qualities are always καλά.

The narrative of Phlius is contrasted with that of Euphron, tyrant of Sicyon. The contrast is signalled by a μέν–δέ construction which concludes the Phlius story and begins the narrative of Euphron’s assassination. The theme of the story of the end of Euphron is his disloyalty: he has previously betrayed Sicyon’s alliance with Sparta, but now, under the influence of fear, he pretends that he has, in fact, been a paragon of loyalty, using his tyrannical powers to exile anyone hostile to Sparta. The narrator comments, with typical Xenophontic understated humour: ‘many people heard him say these things; it is less clear how many believed him’ (ἠκροῶντο μὲν δὴ πολλοί αὐτῶν ταῦτα· ὁπόσοι δὲ ἐπείθοντο οὐ πάνυ κατάδηλον: 7.3.3). Beyond this, there is no narratorial comment on Euphron’s dishonesty and disloyalty; the point is made by the contrast with Phlius. There is also a lesson in the fact that the story ends with Euphron’s assassination (7.3.5), and the acquittal of his assassins by the Thebans, in whose city the murder has taken place (7.3.12).

So far, so simple. However, many passages in the Hellenica show a didactic interest in split loyalties. The most famous instance is a beautifully written vignette in book 4 (4.1.29–38). Here Agesilaus meets the satrap Pharnabazus, whose country he has invaded, and they recline in the grass, Pharnabazus eschewing the ornate trappings of Oriental nobility to match the Spartan simplicity. The satrap then reproaches the Spartans for repaying his ‘friendship and alliance’ (φίλος καὶ σύμμαχος ἐγενόμην: 4.1.32) in the Peloponnesian War not with gratitude, but with ravaging his land. The Spartans are ashamed at this (ἐπῃσχύνθησαν: 4.1.34), and Agesilaus has to explain that they are treating Pharnabazus as an enemy because he is a subject of the Persian king, with whom they are at war. He offers Pharnabazus an alliance if he will secede from the king, but when Pharnabazus refuses, Agesilaus praises him for his loyalty (4.1.38). It is possible to read the episode as reflecting badly on Agesilaus for not reciprocating the favours Pharnabazus has done for Sparta, or to think Pharnabazus naive for expecting such reciprocation in a post-Thucydidean world. Xenophon, however, does not take sides. Instead, the vignette

41 περὶ μὲν δὴ Φλειασίων, ὡς καὶ πιστοὶ τοῖς φίλοις ἐγένοντο καὶ ἄλκιμοι ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ διατέλεσαν, καὶ ὡς πάντων σπανίζοντες διέμενον ἐν τῇ συμμαχίᾳ, εἴρηται. σχεδὸν δὲ περὶ τούτων τὸν χρόνον Αἰνέας Στυμφάλιος, στρατηγὸς τῶν Ἀρκάδων γεγενημένος, νομίσας οὐκ ἀνεκτῶς ἔχειν τὰ ἐν τῷ Σικυῶνι, ἀναβὰς σὺν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ στρατεύματι εἰς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν συγκαλεῖ τῶν Σικυωνίων τῶν τε ἔνδον ὀντῶν τοὺς κρατίστους καὶ τοὺς ἀνευ δόγματος ἐκπεπτωκότας μετεπέμπετο: Xen. Hell. 7.3.1.

42 Similarly, Corinthian ambassadors are admired by Thebans for showing loyalty to Sparta and refusing to join Thebes against them (7.4.10).

43 So e.g. Krentz (1995: ad loc.).
foregrounds the civilised and eloquent conversation, the mutual sympathy between Pharnabazus and Agesilaus, and the impossibility of overcoming the hostility between their two countries.\footnote{The dialogue fulfils much the same function as the coffee-shop conversation between Al Pacino’s hardened cop and Robert de Niro’s career criminal in Michael Mann’s 1995 film \textit{Heat}: the charmingly unexpected setting (grass, coffee shop); the eloquent, philosophical dialogue; the wistfulness of two sympathetic protagonists who feel mutual sympathy, but have to return to being enemies after this peaceful interlude.}

The repeated application – in the \textit{Hellenica} and in much of Greek literature – of the terminology of friendship to the topic of alliances makes it natural to think about personal friendship in much the same way as about political alliance.\footnote{Indeed, Gray (1989: 52–8) interprets the scene between Agesilaus and Pharnabazus as an example of Agesilaus as a friend, along with 4.1.3–15 and 3.4.7–10. Her analysis is pertinent and excellently brings out the qualities the reader is supposed to admire in both protagonists.} Here too, loyalty is a complex issue. Thus, in an extended vignette, Sphodrias, a Spartan who was bribed by Thebans to invade Attica in order to provoke war between Athens and Sparta, is tried in Sparta and acquitted because of the love between his son and the son of Agesilaus (5.4.25–33). The focus of the vignette is on Agesilaus’ son Archidamus, his love for the beautiful Cleonymus, his commendable shyness and respect for his father, and his mixture of grief and pride when Cleonymus eventually repays his favour by dying heroically at Leuctra. The episode presents a moral dilemma between loyalty to friends, family and lovers and the demands of international politics.\footnote{It has been interpreted in diametrically opposite ways as a statement about the importance of helping friends (Gray 1989: 59–63) and as a satirical glimpse into Spartan corruption (Tuplin 1993: 126–8).}

And again Xenophon does not take sides: the love and friendship between Archidamus and Cleonymus are portrayed in a rosy light (5.4.25 and 33), and Cleonymus’ heroic death in battle adds the ultimate validation; but the vignette is framed by a statement about the perceived injustice of the acquittal (5.4.24) and a brief narrative of how it resulted in Athens joining the Thebans against Sparta (5.4.34). The didactic point is not the solution, but the dilemma, much as in Thucydides’ Melian Dialogue.

Friendship as a theme figures much more prominently in the \textit{Hellenica} than in any of the other extant Greek works of historiography, Classical or Hellenistic. The ability to make friends is presented as a positive trait: the statement, with emphasis through negation, that Agesilaus did not rejoice at the death of Agesipolis, his rival, but missed his friendship (5.3.20, quoted above) is surely meant to reflect positively on Agesilaus. Likewise, the brief narrative of the impulsively formed guest-friendship between Pharnabazus’ son and Agesilaus and the way the latter honoured
it functions as a contrasting vignette at the end of Agesilaus’ conversation with Pharnabazus, demonstrating the way friendship can work straightforwardly if there are no political obstacles (4.1.39–40). That a sociable personality can also be useful for the military commander is shown by the brief vignette of Lysander dining with Cyrus and obtaining by means of friendly banter what impersonal diplomacy could not (1.5.2–7), as well as by the much more detailed scene in which Agesilaus arranges a marriage connection between two friends/allies (4.1.4–15). This latter vignette has been interpreted variously as showing Agesilaus as a true friend and as a selfish manipulator. 47 I would argue that the point is exactly the combination: like Lysander with Cyrus, Agesilaus uses his likeable personality and social skills to make friends and benefit Sparta at one stroke. In a military commander, such a combination of patriotism and friendliness is meant to be a quality worthy of emulation.

In didactic terms, then, the Hellenica demonstrates the universality and importance of friendship, both personal and political. It sets up those characters who are good at making friends as positive paradeigmata, but it also shows that friendship is not uncomplicated, and that it can lead to situations of split loyalties. 48 The moralising is purely descriptive; there is no solution offered, but the reader is taught to be aware of the possible dangers and be ready to make his own moral choices.

Agesilaus and Jason: The Ideal Hero and the Ideal Villain?

It used to be considered a self-evident truth that the Agesilaus of the Hellenica was meant to represent the epitome of ideal leadership: in real life he had been a personal friend of Xenophon’s, and he was the protagonist of Xenophon’s encomium, the Agesilaus. More recently, some scholars have claimed to see subversive strands in Xenophon’s representation of Agesilaus, not just in the Hellenica, but even in the encomium. 49 The encomium does not concern us here, but in order to uncover the moral-didactic lessons of the Hellenica it is necessary to come to a decision about the character who functions as the main protagonist of this latter work from 3.3.1 onwards.

48 The universal need for friendship and the challenges this poses for the great and powerful are also a major theme of Xenophon’s philosophical dialogue Hiero. The issue was clearly close to his heart.
Let it first be stated clearly that Agesilaus is primarily intended as a positive paradeigma: he is considerate towards his soldiers (4.5.4) and gets the best out of them (3.4.15–18), he is brave (4.3.19), resourceful and efficient as a commander (4.6.9–12), but also intelligent (3.4.7–9, 4.1.4–15) and sociable (4.1.39–40, 5.3.20), and he piously obeys omens (3.4.15) and keeps oaths (3.4.6 and 11). To deny any of this or the fact that such behaviour is supposed to encourage emulation is to read the Hellenica against the grain in a way that would have been entirely foreign to Xenophon’s intended readers. Having said that, Agesilaus (like his brother Teleutias) is not flawless, and there are times when the reader is encouraged to question his behaviour.

Thus, several vignettes show him in situations of moral dilemma, as we have seen above, and leave it open for the reader to decide whether Agesilaus is prioritising correctly. Implied criticism is offered in the statement that Agesilaus’ frontal attack at Coronea was undoubtedly brave, but not very safe (4.3.19 discussed above). More critical is a vignette that uses Agesilaus to demonstrate the folly of acting arrogantly in success. Here, the satisfaction of having won a military victory makes the Spartan king treat envoys from the defeated with disdainful arrogance, which is ruptured when a messenger arrives to tell him that an entire Spartan regiment has been wiped out at Lechaemum. Finally, Agesilaus’ speech in defence of Phoebidas after the latter’s unauthorised occupation of the Theban Cadmea directly contradicts the Xenophontic narrator’s stand on the issue: Agesilaus claims that the question boils down to whether Phoebidas has done ‘good or bad deeds’ (ἀγαθὰ ἢ κακὰ) for Sparta, using moral vocabulary to designate political interest (5.2.32), whereas the narrator has used the occupation as an example of impious deeds (τῶν ἀσεβοῦντων, τῶν ἀνόσια ποιοῦντων: 5.4.1) and presented it as the transgression that brought divine vengeance on Sparta in the form of defeat at Leuctra (5.4.1). In none of these cases is the criticism or the moralising explicit, but they are there by contrast and by correlation between action and result. By these means Xenophon juggles his own split loyalties between friendship and moral-didactic history writing.

50 For a detailed analysis of this passage see Gray (1989: 157–60) and Hau (2008: 128–9). Breitenback (1950: 4) uses it as an example of the absence of moralising in the Hellenica, but this relies on a definition of moralising as explicit statements in the narratorial voice.

51 The brief account of Agesilaus’ Sardis campaign in the Hellenica has been adduced as evidence of Xenophon’s critical attitude to the Spartan king (e.g. Tuplin 1993: 56–60). Xenophon’s narrative treats the potentially glorious details perfunctorily (3.4.12 and 3.4.20–4) and dwells instead on a dearly bought victory against Pharnabazus (3.4.13–14) and the fact that a sinister sacrificial omen makes Agesilaus turn back before any significant victory could be achieved (3.4.15). Xenophon’s motivation for this negative treatment has been much discussed. I would venture the explanation of his personal disappointment both that the magnif-
Only slightly less than Agesilaus, the role of Jason of Pherae in the *Hellenica* has divided scholars. On the one hand he seems to be presented as the ideal commander in terms of his relationship with his soldiers and his ability to endure harsh conditions, on the other hand he can be considered a tyrant who gets his comeuppance.\(^{52}\) I would come down firmly on the side of the latter interpretation. When Jason’s magnificent leadership abilities are described by Polydamas of Pharsalus, a character who seems to have been included in the narrative for the sole purpose of introducing the Thessalian warlord, the purpose is to place his power, resources and physical and mental abilities firmly and vividly in the reader’s mind. The speech (6.1.4–16), in its terrified admiration of Jason, functions as an elaborate description of his potential for destruction. Offering the description as internal evaluation in direct speech allows Xenophon to express urgency and terror much more acutely than if he had described Jason’s power in his narrator’s voice.\(^{53}\) It is true that the qualities attributed to Jason by Polydamas are qualities which characterise the good leaders of the *Hellenica* — endurance, ability to get the best out of soldiers (6.1.6 and 15), efficiency and resourcefulness (6.1.15), self-discipline (6.1.16) — but any outstanding ability which can be used for good can also be used for evil; this is what makes the description of Jason so terrifying.\(^{54}\) That we are not supposed to be fooled into thinking Jason a hero is shown by the fact that the description of his magnificent abilities frames a conversation between him and Polydamas, which Polydamas claims to quote word for word. In this conversation Jason boasts of his power (6.1.5 and 7), predicts that it will soon become greater still (6.1.9–12) and threatens Polydamas with taking over his city by force if they do not yield voluntarily (6.1.5 and 7). These threats show up Jason’s imperialistic ambition;\(^{55}\) and overconfident

\(^{52}\) Many scholars have remarked that Jason seems to possess the same qualities as Xenophon’s ‘ideal leader’: Breitenbach (1950), Krafft (1967), Westlake (1966–7), Soulis (1972), Pownall (2004: 83–4), who argues that the victory is meant to be the crowning achievement of Agesilaus’ pious campaign, and that it is narrated so summarily because the preparations are more important than the battle from a moral point of view. The latter is true, but surely it is no coincidence that the outcome is shown to fall so far short of the morally and practically magnificent preparations. See also below, p. 242.

\(^{53}\) His reasons for conveying much of the information about Jason in this speech instead of in the narrative have been much discussed, e.g. Westlake (1966–7), Soulis (1972: 182–5).

\(^{54}\) Cf. Sallust’s description of Catiline (*Cat.* 5.1–8) and Livy’s of Hannibal (21.4.2–9) as well as Tacitus’ of Poppaea Sabina (13.45).

\(^{55}\) Tuplin (1993) has shown that all imperialistic plans in the *Hellenica* fail.
boasting is always a dangerous activity in the works of Xenophon. Polydamas is also careful to point out that Jason’s subjects are loyal to him out of fear and would revolt if they had Spartan support (1.6.14) – and ruling by fear is, of course, the hallmark of a tyrant. Moreover, there is one important quality of the good commander which Jason does not possess: piety. This absence contributes in no small way to his downfall.

The downfall comes a few chapters later (6.4.28–32), in an impressively structured narrative which perfectly balances a description of Jason’s over-confidence and his punishment. In the first paragraph, 28, the greatness of Jason is stressed in a tricolon stating first that he was a great man (μέγας), then that he became even greater (μείζων) and thirdly that he was the greatest man of his time (μέγιστος δ’ ἦν τῶν καθ’ αὑτὸν). In paragraph 29, the greatness of Jason is shown visually by the impressive number of sacrificial animals he is able to produce from his subject cities for the Pythian festival and the lavishness of his offered prizes. Then, in paragraph 30, the narrator slips subtly from the description of the festival processions to the subject of Jason and the Delphic Oracle. We are told that there were rumours (ὡς ἔφασαν) that Jason was planning to make himself head of the Amphictyonic Council and the Pythian games, and ‘what he was contemplating about the Delphic treasure is still to this day unclear’ (περὶ μέντοι τῶν ιερῶν χρημάτων ὅπως μὲν διενοεῖτο ἐπὶ καὶ νῦν ἄδηλον). ‘It is said’ (λέγεται), the narrator continues in unusually Herodotean style, that when asked about Jason, Apollo claimed to be able to take care of himself (ἀποκρίνασθαι τὸν θεὸν ὅτι αὐτῷ μελήσει). Considering the ostensible lack of reliable information on this subject it is remarkable that Xenophon has decided to mention it at all: the Xenophontic narrator, as opposed to the Herodotean one, is usually not keen to reproduce rumours. We shall return to this point shortly.

The structure of the sentence that tells of the murder is designed to bring out the paradox of Jason’s peripeteia from the height of power to ignominious death in a split second: first Jason is described emphatically as ἀνὴρ τηλικοῦτος ὢν καὶ τοσαυτα καὶ τοιαυτα διανοούμενος (‘being so great a man and making plans of such a magnitude and quality’); secondly we are told

57 Pownall (2004: 102–3) argues that Xenophon shows Jason as having changed from a ‘good moral leader’ in Polydamas’ description to being now ‘corrupt with power’. She sees the change mainly in the difference between Jason’s ‘humane’ treatment of Polydamas, as reported in the speech, and his cynical playing off of the Thebans and the Spartans against each other in 6.4.22–5. However, Jason’s behaviour towards Polydamas and towards the Thebans and Spartans is equally cynical, in that it springs from the same knack for diplomatic manipulation and in both cases furthers his own interests without regard for those of others. The only vice he does not already show when he puts pressure on Polydamas is impiety.
that he was in the process of passing judgement in judicial questions among his subjects, an activity which places him in the position of a king or tyrant; thirdly the murderers are introduced, not named but called simply and dismissively νεανίσκοι (youths); and only then, in the very last words of this for Xenophon very long sentence, is it revealed that they killed him. Explicit moralising would have ruined the effect, and there is none.

What moral lessons is the reader supposed to extract from the death of Jason? The fact that there is no moralising conclusion to tell us what the narrator considers to be the reason for his death allows for at least three interpretations, all encouraged by the text. Firstly, the structure of the narrative of the murder brings out the shock of Jason’s sudden fall and reminds us of the instability of human success and power and the importance of not becoming overconfident. This message has been signalled on a smaller scale by the string of military commanders who come to grief through overconfidence (see above), but here it is writ large. Secondly, Jason was a tyrant, and an imperialistic one, as demonstrated by Polydamas’ speech and by Jason’s actions between the end of the speech and the beginning of the narrative of his death. Tyrants generally come to bad ends in the Hellenica, as evidenced by the bloody fates of Jason’s successors, related in the two paragraphs immediately following upon his murder (6.4.33–5), and by the murder of Mania of Aeolis by her son-in-law (3.1.14) as well as Pharnabazus’ sworn revenge on the latter (3.1.15). Thirdly, Jason may have been planning to commit an act of gross impiety. The narrator remains uncommitted to the truth of this rumour, but the fact that Xenophon reports it must mean that he wants it to stick in the reader’s mind. Apollo said that he could look after himself, and so he did – perhaps. In the assassination of Jason Xenophon has created a story with Herodotean elements, including overdetermination of causes. Perhaps the fate of Jason seemed to him to follow so closely the Herodotean success–overconfidence–disaster pattern that a Herodotean presentation felt natural.

58 For an analysis of this passage as a peripeteia, but centring on its prose rhythm, see Gray (1989: 163–5).
59 Higgins (1977: 110–11) and Dillery (1995: 171ff.) have argued that Jason’s death in the Hellenica is meant to show that autocratic rulers always come to bad ends. However, the Cyropædia shows that Xenophon was not opposed to autocratic rule per se, but thought it could work with the right person in charge. Furthermore, nothing in the Hellenica shows hatred of autocratic rulers as such: Pharnabazus is treated as a sympathetic character (cf. 1.1.6, 1.1.24, 1.4.6–7, 4.1.30–8), and Mania is described very positively, her murder reflecting badly only on her murderer. Jason’s crime (apart from impiety) is that he rules tyrannically, i.e. by fear, and that he wants to conquer the rest of Greece.
60 Cf. Tuplin (1993: 119–21), who notes that ‘the impression one is left with in the end is that it is the sum total of Jason’s achievements and aspirations which caused his downfall’.
61 See also the parallels between Apollo’s assertion that he can look after himself and Hdt. 8.37–8.
How the World Works: Divine Justice and Changeable Fortune

This leads us finally to the question of the role of divine justice and changeable fortune in the *Hellenica*. At 5.4.1 this world-defining piece of introductory moralising occurs:

πολλά μὲν οὖν ἄν τις ἔχοι καὶ ἄλλα λέγειν καὶ Ἑλληνικὰ καὶ βαρβαρικά, ὡς θεοὶ οὔτε τῶν ἀσεβοῦντων οὔτε τῶν ἀνόσια ποιοῦντων ἀμελοῦσι· νῦν γε μὴν λέξω τὰ προκείμενα. Λακεδαμιώνοι τε γὰρ οἱ ὁμόσαντες αὐτονόμους ἐάσειν τὰς πόλεις τὴν ἐν Θήβαις ἀκρόπολιν κατασχόντες ὑπ' αὐτῶν μόνων τῶν ἀδικηθέντων ἐκολάσθησαν πρῶτον οὐδ' ὑφ' οὗτος τῶν πώποτε ἀνθρώπων κρατηθέντες, τούς τε τῶν πολιτῶν εἰσαγαγόντας εἰς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν αὐτοὺς καὶ βουληθέντας Λακεδαμιώνοις δουλεύειν τὴν πόλιν, ὡστε αὐτοὶ τυραννεῖν, τὴν τούτων ἀρχὴν ἑπτὰ μόνον τῶν φυγόντων ἤρκεσαν καταλῦσαι. ὡς δὲ τοῦτ’ ἐγένετο διηγήσομαι.

One might adduce many examples, both Greek and barbarian, as evidence that gods are not indifferent to those who commit impious deeds, and I shall now mention the instance that lies before me in my chain of events. The Spartans who had occupied the Theban acropolis despite having sworn to leave the cities autonomous were punished by the very people alone who they had wronged, being defeated for the first time in history. And those citizens [of Thebes] who had led them into the acropolis and had plotted with the Spartans to enslave their own city so that they should become tyrants, their rule it only took seven exiles to shatter. How this came to pass I shall explain. (Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1)

This is the introduction to the narrative of the revolution in Thebes that brought the Cadmea back into Theban hands and toppled the Spartacollaborating oligarchs. The narrator says explicitly that this will be an example of the fact that ‘gods’ (θεοί) punish impious actions. There is no definite article, let alone indication of personality. This makes the expression very impersonal and probably the equivalent of τὸ θεῖον, another common denominator of divine power in the *Hellenica*. The actions punished are described in religiously charged vocabulary (ἀσεβοῦντων, ἀνόσια), which fits both Spartan oath-breaking and the Theban conspirators’ crime of letting an enemy into the most sacred place in their city.

The punishment for the Spartans is the Battle of Leuctra. In the build-up to the battle, the narrator is careful to remind the reader that it will be decided by divine intervention: the Spartans ‘seem already to be led to their wrong decisions by a divine force’ (ἠδὴ γὰρ, ὡς ἔοικε, τὸ δαιμόνιον ἤγεν: 6.4.3), and the Thebans are supported by *tyche* (6.4.7–8). He ignores any

62. This clearly refers back to 5.4.1, as noted by Tuplin (1993: 134) and Pownall (1998: 256–7). *Contra* Bowden (2004: 243–4), who argues that it is a ‘hint of divine involvement,’ but not a suggestion that the Spartans were being punished for earlier crimes.
military explanation for the Spartan defeat, with the effect that the battle seems to be decided purely by divine favour or disfavour.63 There is no doubt that the hour of reckoning has come for the Spartans.

The punishment for the Theban oligarchs is the counter-revolution. Xenophon’s narrative of this has often been criticised as historically inept, but can be explained by his desire to drive home the unexpectedness and unlikelihood of the liberation: he focuses on the secretary of the Theban polemarchs, Phillidas, to the extent of almost excluding the other conspirators, thus crafting a story of how one man overthrew the Spartan-imposed tyranny: divine intervention indeed.64 Two features of this narrative are interesting for our purposes.65 The first is the nature of the crime of the polemarchs. As we saw above, the crime of the Thebans has so far been described in exclusively religious vocabulary; now, however, when we meet them in person, their wrongdoing is entirely secular: we see them celebrating a festival and getting drunk, and then expecting their secretary to bring them the ‘most respected and beautiful’ (σεμνοτάτας καὶ καλλίστας: 5.4.4) women in the city for their pleasure. While getting drunk is not always a crime in Xenophon’s universe (see e.g. Xen. An. 7.3.26–33), the fact that it is in this case accompanied by the desire to debauch citizen women brands the polemarchs as true tyrants, unable and unwilling to keep their sexual desires under control.66 The narrator makes this clear by his acid comment ‘for they were that sort of men’ (οἱ δὲ ἦσαν γὰρ τοιοῦτο: 5.4.4). When they are killed by men disguised as the women they coveted, they are punished not just for the religious crime of letting the enemy into the sacred Cadmea, but also for the moral crime of intended abuse of free people.

The second interesting feature of the story is the obvious Herodotean imitation. The narrative of the counter-revolution is introduced by the sentence ‘There was a certain Phillidas, who was a secretary for Archias and the polemarchs’ (ὦν τις Φιλλίδας, ὃς ἐγραμμάτευε τοῖς περὶ Ἀρχίαν καὶ τοῖς δὲ πάντα καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης κατωρθοῦντο). This is strictly true, but the lack of detail in the battle description and the absence of any mention of Pelopidas and Epaminondas do not invite the reader to contemplate Theban tactical skill.

63 Cf. Pownall (2004: 90). Contra Tuplin (1993: 138), who argues on the basis of the καὶ in τοῖς δὲ πάντα καὶ ἕπῳ τῆς τύχης κατωρθοῦντο that Xenophon’s narrative of the battle shows the victory to be due to a combination of tyche and the skill of the Theban commanders. This is strictly true, but the lack of detail in the battle description and the absence of any mention of Pelopidas and Epaminondas do not invite the reader to contemplate Theban tactical skill.

64 The narrative and its focus on Phillidas have been well analysed by Gray (1989: 65–70). Tuplin (1993: 147–8) argues convincingly that Xenophon consciously differs from the tradition preserved by Plutarch, Diodorus and Nepos, and that the effect of the version in the Hellenica is to avoid putting any of the human agents in a positive light while showing the events to be divinely ordained.

65 I leave undiscussed the question of why Xenophon makes no mention of either Pelopidas or Epaminondas, the traditional heroes of the story. For a brief discussion see Tuplin (1993: 147–8).

66 Lack of control of one’s sexual appetites is the hallmark of a tyrant; see Dunkle (1967) and Rosivach (1988) with references.
πολεμάρχοις: 5.4.2), echoing Herodotus’ introduction of Themistocles and other protagonists of individual logoi. Moreover, there are close parallels between Xenophon’s story and the one told by Herodotus of the Persians murdered by men disguised as women after having demanded the company of the female relatives of King Amyntas of Macedon. Xenophon even offers an alternative version (the assassins were masquerading as revellers, not women), a practice extremely rare for him, but ubiquitous in Herodotus. The purpose of the Herodotean ‘feel’ of this narrative is surely to alert the reader to the similarities, at this point especially, between the world of his Hellenica and that of the Histories: in both worlds impiety is punished by superhuman powers, and transgressions against one’s fellow-human beings are more often than not punished by divine powers working through human agents.

Another throwback to the world of Herodotus is the fact that oracles and omens in the Hellenica are generally fulfilled. This is most spectacularly true for the prophecy of the seer before the Battle of Munychia (2.4.18–19) and the good omens observed in Thebes before the Battle of Leuctra (6.4.7–8), but already in 5.4.17–18 Spartans being forced to leave their shields behind because of a violent storm is interpreted as an omen for the future.

Interestingly, however, divine punishment for wrongdoing is much more consistent in the world of the Hellenica than in the world of Herodotus’ Histories. In all of the Hellenica only two instances of impiety and one unjust murder are not said or shown to lead to disaster for the perpetrators. In two of the cases this narratorial silence can be put down to Xenophon subsequently focusing on a different storyline and not following the future fate of the impious. Thus, we hear no more of the Thebans who desecrate Agesilaus’ sacrifice at Aulis (3.4.4) because Xenophon is

67 Themistocles; Hdt. 7.143.1. See also Hdt. 3.4.1. Xenophon famously uses the expression to introduce himself in the Anabasis (Xen. An. 3.1.4).
68 Gray (1989: 66–7) draws out the Herodotean parallels nicely, but then argues that Xenophon’s story carries a different message from the one of Herodotus: Herodotus’ message is that ‘custom is king’ (the Persians were breaking Macedonian custom by demanding the company of women at dinner), and Xenophon’s is that it only took a few men to overthrow the Theban tyranny. Dillery (1995: 229–30) also analyses the parallels, but argues that, rather than imitating Herodotus, Xenophon was ‘trying to claim the authority of a historian telling a story with a moral’. I obviously agree that the story has a moral, but I find it unlikely that Xenophon did not intend the reader to notice the Herodotean ‘feel’ of the story and to be led to more or less conscious conclusions from it.
69 Pownall (1998) examines in detail every instance of impiety in the Hellenica and concludes that only the Theban desecration of Agesilaus’ sacrifice (3.4.4) and the Tegean stoning of people hiding in a temple (6.5.6–9) go unpunished. She argues that Xenophon in these cases believed that divine punishment would eventually strike the offenders, even if delayed, but this does not explain why he did not state this explicitly.
too interested in following a different narrative thread, namely Agesilaus’ reaction to the Theban provocation and his subsequent campaign in Asia. Likewise, nothing is said about what happened later to the Theban counter-revolutionaries who killed the children of the toppled oligarchs (5.4.12) because Xenophon is only interested in Theban affairs until the counter-revolution is complete, and then reverts to his focus on Sparta.70 In the third instance of impiety unpunished, which concerns Tegeans stoning their political opponents with tiles from the roof of the temple in which they have sought refuge (6.5.6–9), the episode seems to hold special interest for Xenophon.71 Here his reticence about divine punishment of the perpetrators is harder to explain. Perhaps it is due to historical scruple: perhaps Xenophon did not know what happened to the Tegeans afterwards, or perhaps he knew that they got away scot-free and did not want to put this in his history. All sixteen other instances of impiety in the Hellenica are punished.72

In several cases the divine punishment involves a dramatic fall from power and success, thus corresponding to Herodotus’ pattern of success–overconfidence–disaster. This is true of Sparta, whose great power is described and stressed in the chapter immediately before the peripeteia is signalled (παντάπασιν ἤδη καλω ˆς καὶ ἀσφαλω ˆς ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐδόκει αὐτοῖς κατεσκευάσθαι: 5.3.27), and of Jason of Pherae (see above). It is also the case for Euphron, the tyrant of Sicyon (7.3.1–5; see above), and Lycomedes, the Arcadian almost-tyrant (7.4.3). The consistency of the punishment of the impious along with the absence of generational punishment, jealous gods and predetermined fate make the world of the Hellenica less of an incomprehensible wilderness than the world of Herodotus’ Histories. The bleakness of the ending shows, however, that lasting human happiness is still elusive.

70 Pownall (1998: 258) argues that the killing of those Thebans ‘who had been freed from the prison’ by the troops of Cleombrotus at 5.4.14 is meant to be understood as punishment for the massacre. It is not clear, however, that the children of the oligarchs were murdered specifically by those newly freed from prison; the massacre seems rather to be committed by the Theban ‘cavalry and hoplites’ who join the counter-revolution at 5.4.9.
71 Ultimately the story serves only as the reason for a Spartan campaign against Tegea and Mantinea, so the circumstantial details seem to signal a special interest of Xenophon’s in the events (Pownall 1998).
72 List of instances modified from Pownall’s appendix (Pownall 1998: 276–7): oath-breaking: 3.4.6 and 11, 5.4.1, 5.4.11–12, 6.4.2–3, 7.4.36; violation of sanctuary: 4.4.3, 7.2.6; violation of festival: 4.4.2, 5.2.29; negligence in religious ritual: 3.1.18, 3.2.22, 4.8.36, 7.1.27; temple-robbery: 6.4.30, 7.1.46, 7.4.33.
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Moral didacticism is central to the *Hellenica*. It informs Xenophon’s selection of material, overall narrative structure and crafting of individual episodes. The work is, however, not a ‘purely moral tract’ (Grayson 1975), but a work of historiography: it aims to present a true narrative of historical events from a moral angle.

In the *Hellenica*, it is easy to spot early versions of the types of moralising that become widespread in Hellenistic historiography. Conversely, macro-level moralising and moralising by patterning are a lot less dominant than in Herodotus and Thucydides. Overall, the moralising of Xenophon is more explicit than that of his two famous Classical predecessors, pointing towards Hellenistic moral didacticism. Neither the explicitness nor the transitory nature of the moral didacticism should be exaggerated, however: Xenophon’s moral vignettes are entirely implicit in their didacticism and have consequently been interpreted in diametrically opposite ways by different readers, and his divinely ruled world in which impiety is always punished may foreshadow Diodorus, but it also harks back to Herodotus and has as little resonance with Polybius as with Thucydides. Likewise, Xenophon’s focus on friendship and loyalty is more of an individual quirk than an evolutionary link between one era of historiography and the next.

The most noticeable difference between the moral messages of the *Hellenica* and its surviving predecessors is the degree of practicality. Whereas the messages of Herodotus and Thucydides are largely intellectual and advocate a certain state of mind based on a proper understanding of the world obtained through reading their works, Xenophon offers practical advice on how to live in the world he describes. Although the ending shows that peace and happiness are elusive, the rest of the narrative teaches the reader that by being pious, brave, self-disciplined, a good friend and a good leader of men, you have a fair chance not only of being celebrated by both your contemporaries and history, but also of achieving real, practical success. In this Xenophon stands a step closer to Hellenistic historiography than his two famous predecessors.

Comparison of Moral Didacticism in the Xenophontic Corpus

Xenophon is the only one of the authors considered in this study by whom other works than his historiographical one(s) have survived. This gives us a unique chance to compare moral didacticism between genres, which we shall grasp even if we do not here have the space to develop the comparison in much detail.

All of Xenophon’s works are moral-didactic, and they all use some
of the moralising techniques we have seen in the *Hellenica*. Even technical treatises such as *The Cavalry Commander* (*Hipparcicbus*) or *Ways and Means* (*Poroi*) have moralising introductions and conclusions and are sprinkled with explicit narratorial moralising throughout. The dialogues *Hiero*, *Oeconomicus* and *Symposium* revolve at least partly around moral themes and the *Memorabilia* (*Memories of Socrates*) is entirely moral-didactic. Moreover, the same moral lessons we have seen in the *Hellenica* are propounded in the other works: divine justice, the importance of piety, the qualities of the good commander and the relationship between a commander and his men, which seems to be a subcategory of the good ruler and the value of a relationship with subjects based on love and respect, friendship as a virtue and a complication, moderation and self-control, and the importance of wit, charm and a sense of humour. In addition, some of the other works include *paradeigmata* of moral topics which do not receive much space in the *Hellenica*, such as education and gratitude, both important virtues in the *Cyropaedia* (*Education of Cyrus*). Throughout all of Xenophon’s works it is common for the good to thrive and the wicked to come to grief (with a few exceptions, the most important one being Socrates).

Three of Xenophon’s works are especially interesting to compare with the *Hellenica* because they belong to neighbouring genres: the *Anabasis*, the *Agesilaus* and the *Cyropaedia*. To begin with the *Anabasis*, this is the work that most resembles the *Hellenica* in terms of moralising, just as it is the one closest to it in genre. Like the *Hellenica*, it mostly engages in implicit moralising by means of evaluative vocabulary and a correlation between behaviour and result (e.g. *An. 4.4.14*). Its only explicit moralising takes place in digressions focused on the characters of individuals (*Cyrus 1.9*, *Clearchus 2.6.1–15*, *Proxenous 2.6.16–20*, *Menon 2.6.21–9*). The differences which make the *Anabasis* and the *Hellenica* such different reading experiences are not in the moralising, but in the scope and focalisation of the narrative.

The encomium *Agesilaus* is moralising from cover to cover, and the treatise on kingship, the *Cyropaedia*, is permeated with moralising. In comparison with these two latter works, the *Hellenica* and *Anabasis* are

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73 E.g. *Eq. mag.* 9.8–9.
74 E.g. *Eq. mag.* 1.1 and 9.8; *Ages*. 1.27–8, 3.2; *Mem.* 1.3.1–4, 1.1.6–9, 4.4.19; *Lac. 8.5*; *Poroi 6.2–3*.
75 E.g. *Eq. mag.* 6; *Cyr. 4.2.9–11*, 8.1.3; *Mem.* 3.1–4, 3.5.21–4; *Ages.* 1.38.
76 *Cyr. and Hier.* in their entirety; *Mem.* 1.2.10–11, 1.2.32; *Oec.* 11.2–12.
77 E.g. *Ages.* 1.17–19; *Mem.* 1.2.51–5; *Cyr. 7.1.30*, 8.3.3; *Ap.* 5; *Mem.* 2.4–6.
78 E.g. *Cyr.* 4.5.1–4 and 7–8, 7.5.78–85, 8.1.50–2; *Ages* 5.1–2, 5.6, 8.6–8; *Mem.* 1.2.14–23, 1.3.5–7, 3.13.2–3; *Hier.* 4.6–11.
79 E.g. *Ages.* 7.3.2, 11.11; *Cyr.* 1.3.4–12, 2.2.1–16; *Symp.* 1.1.
quite restrained in their expressions of moral didacticism. They offer moral
lessons, but they have another purpose beside, namely to narrate factual
events in a truthful (if selective) manner. In doing this, these historiographi-
cal works have a special relationship with historical truth, with the events
that actually happened, which the Cyropaedia and even the Agesilaus do
not. Thus, for instance, the Agesilaus is able to claim that Agesilaus was
chosen as king over Leotychidas ‘because of his birth and his virtue’ (τῷ
gένει καὶ τῇ ἀρετῇ: Ages. 1.5), while the Hellenica offers the more detailed
and less morally satisfying narrative of Lysander’s reinterpretation of an
oracular warning to ‘beware the lame kingship’ to refer not to Agesilaus,
although he had a limp, but to Leotychidas, whose parentage was thus
thrown into doubt (Hell. 3.3.1–4). Similarly, the Agesilaus has Agesilaus
reach and burn down the outskirts of Sardis in his Asian campaign and
then concludes in a tone as moralising as it is triumphalist:

ἔπει μέντοι οὐδεὶς ἀντεξῆι, ἄδεως δὴ τὸ ἀπὸ τούτου ἐστρατεύετο, τοὺς μὲν
πρόσθεν προσκυνεῖν Ἐλλήνας ἀναγκαζόμενους ὀρθὸν τιμωμένους ὑπὸ τῶν ὑβρίζοντο, τοὺς δὲ ἀξιοῦντας καὶ τὰς τῶν θεῶν τιμάς καρποῦσαν, τούτους
ποιήσας μηδ’ άντιβλέπειν τοῖς Ὑλλησί δύνασαι, καὶ τὴν μὲν τῶν φίλων
χώραν ἀδῆσαν παρέχον, τὴν δὲ τῶν πολεμίων οὕτω καρπούσαν ὡστε ἐν
δυοῖν ἐτοῖν πλέον τῶν ἑκατὸν ταλάντων τῷ θεῷ ἐν Δελφοῖς δεκάτην ἀποθῦσαι.

When no one came out to meet him in battle, however, he continued his
campaign fearlessly. Thus he saw the Greeks who had before been forced to
make servile obeisance now being honoured by those who had abused them;
he made those who thought themselves worthy to enjoy divine honours
unable to look the Greeks in the eye; he made the land of his friends unrav-
eged, and he enjoyed the fruits of his enemy’s land to such a degree that he
was able to dedicate in the space of two years more than a hundred talents
to the god at Delphi as tithe. (Xen. Ages. 1.34)

Here, then, the arrogant Persians get their punishment for abusing the
Greeks. In the Hellenica, however, Agesilaus does not reach the suburbs of
Sardis, but strikes a deal with the Persian satrap Tithraustes and marches
towards Phrygia instead (Hell. 3.25–6). There is no moralising conclusion.
The possible reasons for the discrepancy between the narrative of the Sardis
campaign in these two works by the same author, who most probably had
himself taken part in it, have been much discussed. I would venture a
solution based on genre: in the encomium, Xenophon offers an account
‘with amplification’; in the Hellenica, he gives an account that is ‘true

80 For the different relationships of encomia and historiographies with truth see Polyb.
10.21. For an overview of scholarship on this see Farrington (2011).
and demonstrates the reasoning accompanying each action’. Moralising is important for both genres, but supports two different goals: persuasion (of the fact that its protagonist was the epitome of virtue) and didacticism in historiography. This is why the *Hellenica* and the *Anabasis* often offer moral dilemmas for the reader’s contemplation and the *Agesilaus* does not.

The *Cyropaedia* shares the didactic goal of the *Hellenica* and the *Anabasis*, but as historico-philosophical fiction it is even further removed from obligations to the truth than the *Agesilaus* and is thus free to present fully invented moralising paradeigmata for the reader’s edification. The moralising techniques it uses are largely the same as those employed in the *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*, including moral dilemmas, just as its narrative form is modelled on historiography, but, crucially, it lacks the commentary track that characterises historiography (see above, pp. 9–10), and for that reason lacks moralising digressions.

On the basis of this whirlwind tour of Xenophon’s literary output, we can conclude that historiography is not unique in either its moralising techniques or its moral lessons. What makes historiography unique is that it is at the same time committed to offering what the author considers a truthful account of the past and to presenting this past in a way that will be morally useful to the reader.

**CONCLUSION: MORAL DIDACTICISM IN CLASSICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY**

We can conclude not just that the three surviving Classical historiographies do indeed moralise, but that moral didacticism is part of their raison d’être, and has informed every level of their works from the choice of words to the macro-structure. Each of the three works would have looked dramatically different if the author had not had complex moral lessons to deliver, and I would venture the claim that were it not for those lessons, they would not have been written at all.

Most of the types of moralising that characterise the Hellenistic historiographers are found also in the Classical ones, sometimes in embryonic form, sometimes fully developed, but less frequently used. The difference is one of degree, not of kind. In addition, the Classical historiographers use different types of moralising: minimalist moralising and macro-level moralising. Because of the fragmented nature of what is extant of Hellenistic...
historiography it is impossible to see whether macro-level moralising remained a feature of the genre. On the one hand, some authors such as Diodorus may not have expected their readers to read their work from beginning to end and so may not have thought it worthwhile to impose a moralising superstructure on it. On the other hand, Polybius’ theory of the cycle of constitutions may indicate a desire to show the history of Rome as conforming to a preconceived pattern to some extent based on moral premises.

In terms of the behaviour advocated, it is striking how similar Classical moral didacticism is to its Hellenistic counterpart: the instability of human happiness and the dangers of overconfidence, the virtues of courage, intelligence, justice and fair treatment of subjects and subordinates, and the vices of cruelty, injustice and self-interest are universal across both time periods. There are differences, of course. Herodotus, Xenophon and Diodorus present divine justice as a historical force and, correspondingly, have piety as a cardinal virtue whereas Thucydides and Polybius do not. The reciprocity that is a driving force in the Histories of Herodotus becomes an issue of euergetism and appropriate gratitude in the Hellenistic historiographers. Xenophon’s good leader is a lot more sociable than Thucydides’ or Polybius’. Overall, however, Thucydides is the truly odd one out: only in his work does a dissonance exist between the admirable virtues and the results they bring. However, considering that we are looking at a period of 400 years, the similarities in moral messages are more striking than the differences.