Moral History from Herodotus to Diodorus Siculus

Hau, Lisa Irene

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7. Fragmentary Classical Historiography

In Chapters 1–3 we examined the form and content of moral didacticism in what remains of Hellenistic historiography until Diodorus Siculus. In Chapters 4–6 we have seen that the three extant Classical historiographers also moralised, and we have traced many of the moralising techniques of Hellenistic historiography back to them. However, it has also become clear that the Classical historiographers’ primary means of moral didacticism were different from those of their Hellenistic successors in that the moralising took place partly on the macro-level of structure, partly in a less explicit form than what is mostly seen in Hellenistic historiography. In this final chapter we shall examine the fragmentary remains of three famous works of the late Classical period and ask how this development from Classical to Hellenistic moralising happened. We have already seen that the moralising of Xenophon in some ways points towards the works of Hellenistic historiography; now we shall see whether the trend continues throughout the late Classical period or the development is less straightforward.

Three once famous universal and/or continuous histories from the fourth century survive only in fragments: those of the so-called Oxyrhynchus Historian, Ephorus of Cyme and Theopompus. We shall look at the remaining evidence of their works in turn. The methodological issues involved in interpreting fragments which were discussed in the introduction to Chapter 3 are equally relevant for the fragments of Classical historiography, but will not be repeated here.

The Oxyrhynchus Historian

The Oxyrhynchus Historian (also known as P) was probably contemporary with Xenophon, although we cannot know for certain. His work is known from three papyrus fragments named after the places where they are kept: the London fragment (P Oxy 842, published in 1909 by Grenfell and Hunt),
the Florence fragment (PSI 1304, published in 1949 by Bartoletti) and the Cairo fragment (published in 1976 by Koenen). This makes the text of the Oxyrhynchus Historian especially interesting because, unlike the other fragments of historiography looked at in this study, it represents the actual text written by the author (as closely as any second-century papyrus can be said to represent the exact words of a fourth-century writer) rather than a string of quotations, paraphrases and references by later authors.

Scholars have argued for the identification of the Oxyrhynchus Historian with one or other of the historians whose names we know, the preferred candidates being Theopompus (the papyrus would then be a piece of his otherwise all but lost Hellenica) and Cratippus. As the question of authorship is not of great importance for this study, we shall not enter into the discussion, except to note that, in terms of moral didacticism, what remains of the Oxyrhynchus Historian bears little resemblance to the glimpses we get of Theopompus’ work through its fragments in covertexts, as will become clear from this chapter. In fact, in contrast with the fragments of Theopompus’ Philippica, the narrative of the Oxyrhynchus Historian seems bland. This has made scholars claim that the Oxyrhynchus Historian does not moralise, and to line him up along with Thucydides against the more obviously moralising Xenophon. However, we have seen that Thucydides does offer moral lessons in his History, and we shall soon see that the same may well have been true of the Oxyrhynchus Historian.

The most explicit instant of moralising in the papyri is a heavily fragmented passage which seems to have formed part of a positively phrased character sketch:

[He showed himself] to be the best at handling [affairs]. For he was not, like [most of the other] rulers [before him], eager to steal other people’s money, but most public-minded . . . (Hell. Oxy. London fragment C2 column 10)\(^2\)

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2. This corresponds to XIV.2 in McKechnie and Kern, 27.2 in Behrwald.
The passage is too fragmentary for us to be able to tell whom it describes, but there can be little doubt that – even if we disregard the restorations – it compares one ruler favourably against someone else, using the moral adverb ἄριστα; and if we accept the restorations, the passage makes a moral generalisation about rulers, who are said normally to be eager to appropriate the wealth of others, and the person in question is praised for being an exception. Another, slightly less fragmentary, passage is an evaluative conclusion to a narrative of how Conon quells a mutiny in the city of Caunus:

τὸ μὲν οὖν βασιλικὸν στρατόν πεδινὸν οὔτως εἰς μέγαν κίνδυνον προελθὼν διὰ Κόνων[α καὶ] τὴν ἐκείνου προθυμίαν ἐπαύσατο τῇς ταραχῆς.

[Th]us, when the king’s arm[y] had come into great danger, it ceased from confusion because of Conon and his zeal. (Hell. Oxy. London fragment D column 20) 4

This is the kind of minimalist evaluation we find in Thucydides. From the context it seems that we are supposed to admire and potentially emulate Conon in his zeal (προθυμία); but it would also be possible to read the statement ironically, as a criticism of the Athenian Conon for working with the Persian army. Then the conclusion would be a sharp reminder of the political realities after the rousing narrative of Conon’s efforts against the mutineers, a kind of sting in the tail known from both Thucydides and Xenophon.

Beside these two instances of moral evaluation, the narrative of the Oxyrhynchus Historian often uses restrained evaluative phrasing. Positive vocabulary is used, for instance, in an interesting narrative about how the Athenian Council secretly sends a messenger to Conon. We are told that the ‘well-born and well-bred’ ([δοσιν γνόμαι]μαι χαρίεντες ήσαν) disapproved, two positively loaded terms for what was essentially the social elite. Negative vocabulary is used most prominently to call political murders in Rhodes ‘slaughter’ (τὴν σφαγήν), and to label one side in the Theban civil war as ‘ready to do evil’ (κακῶς ποιεῖν ἑτοίμους). 5

3 Jacoby (1926b: 14), Bruce (1967: 93–5), McKechnie and Kern (1988: ad loc.), Behrwald (2005: 118). Jacoby argues that we cannot know who the protagonist of the passage is; but Bruce and McKechnie and Kern make good cases for either Agesilaus or Cyrus the Younger. Earlier suggestions have been Euagoras and Dionysius I (Bruce 1967: 93). Behrwald (2005), interestingly, suggests Tissaphernes.

4 This corresponds to XX.6 in McKechnie and Kern, 23 in Behrwald.

5 The three passages are: London fragment A column 1 (= McKechnie and Kern VI.2 and Behrwald 9.2), London fragment D column 11 (= McKechnie and Kern XV.2 and Behrwald 18.3) and London fragment D column 13 (= McKechnie and Kern XVII.1 and Behrwald 20.1).
This is the kind of subtle moralising employed by Thucydides and Xenophon, who were probably close contemporaries of the author of this text. As with Thucydides and Xenophon, such cases of evaluative phrasing in the Oxyrhynchus Historian are usually discussed only in the context of the author’s political bias; but, as we have seen in the other historiographers of this study, political opinion and moral conviction go hand in hand. The Oxyrhynchus Historian is giving the reader moral guidance and a political steer at the same time. With the text in this fragmentary state it is impossible to know whether its moral didacticism overall was as subtle as these examples suggest, or whether there were occasional bursts of moralising passion as in Thucydides, Xenophon and most probably the otherwise ‘sober’ Hieronymus, just as we cannot know whether he engaged in macro-level moralising, but it seems clear that the moralising of the Oxyrhynchus Historian resembled that of his Classical near-contemporaries.

Ephorus of Cyme (FGrH 70)

Perhaps the most famous Classical historian whose work has not survived down to our time is Ephorus (FGrH 70), who was Xenophon’s younger contemporary (c. 405–330 BC). He wrote several works, including a treatise on style and a local history of his native city of Cyme, all of which are now lost. His History (or Histories; both the singular and plural are attested in the tradition) is praised by both Polybius (5.33.2) and Diodorus (5.1.4) as the first work of universal history, and was used as a source by both of these historiographers.6 Diod. Sic. 5.1.4 (= T 11) states that Ephorus organised his material in books kata genos. Much discussion surrounds the exact meaning of this phrase, but the most likely interpretation is that he focused on one event at the time, for instance one war, rather than proceeding annalistically and cutting up series of events in order to preserve a strict chronological framework.7 Ephorus also seems to have been the

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6 Diodorus is often assumed to have taken over large stretches of Ephorus’ work with very little editing (see e.g. Stylianou 1998, Parker n.d.). It is certainly true that Diodorus stuck very close to his sources when writing his Bibliotheca, but the sheer length of Ephorus’ Hellenica compared with the space into which Diodorus compressed it necessitates a certain amount of selection and pruning. For this reason, in addition to the ones stated in Chapter 2, I treat as Ephorus fragments only those passages of Diodorus which explicitly mention him as a source (discounting passages where he compares numbers given by Ephorus and Timaeus, which can be shown to depend on the latter; see Parker n.d.: ad F 201). For a good and detailed argument against reading Diodorus as if it were Ephorus, see Parmeggiani (2011: 357–90).

7 The most important studies of Ephorus are: Jacoby (1926b: 22–35), Schwartz (1907), Laqueur (1911), Barber (1993), Meister (1967), Stylianou (1998), Pownall (2004), Parker (n.d.) and Parmeggiani (2011). For good, more recent discussions of the meaning of kata genos with references to older scholarship see Parker (n.d.: ad T 11) and Parmeggiani (2011: 156–64) (who are unfortunately not aware of each other).
first historiographer to divide his work into books and preface each with a proem, which may or may not have been moralising.8

Ephorus is particularly interesting for our project because it has long been common for scholars of Greek historiography to consider him the first moralising historian, who, under the influence of his teacher Isocrates, set history on its downward-spiralling path towards degenerate Hellenism.9 Even after it has become common to distrust the evidence for the relationship with Isocrates, his reputation as the ‘first moralising historian’ still stands.10 It rests largely on a brief passage in Polybius:

ὁ γάρ Ἔφορος παρ᾽ ὅλην τὴν πραγματείαν θαυμάσιος ὢν καὶ κατὰ τὴν φράσιν καὶ κατὰ τὸν χειρισμὸν καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐπίνοιαν τῶν λημμάτων, δεινότατος ἐστιν ἐν ταῖς παρεκβάσεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀφ᾽ αὑτοῦ γνωμολογίαις, καὶ συλλήβδην ὅταν που τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον διατίθηται . . .

For Ephorus is marvellous throughout his work with regard to expression, management of material, and acuity of argument, but he is most powerful in his digressions and in the maxims expressing his own opinion; in short whenever he composes something additional to the narrative. (Polyb. 12.28.10 = Ephorus T 23)

This has since Schwartz’s 1907 RE article been interpreted as admiration for Ephorus’ moralising despite the fact that Polybius seems to be praising Ephorus for all manner of narratorial interventions, not just for ‘expressing maxims’.11 The idea that Ephorus was the one to introduce moralising into historiography for pedagogical reasons has often been coupled with the notion that he preferred praise to criticism, a notion which is based partly on Isocrates’ practice, partly on a remark in Strabo 7.3.9 (= Ephorus F 42).12

8 The evidence for this is Diod. Sic. 16.76.5 (= T 10). Ephorus’ proems have mainly been discussed by scholars who believe that Diodorus took them over more or less wholesale and glued them on to his own narrative; see Laqueur (1911), Kunz (1933), Barber (1993), Stylianou (1998) and, with more nuance, Parker (n.d.: ad T 11) contra Sacks (1990) and Parmeggiani (2011: 148).

9 On Ephorus as representative of ‘rhetorical’ and therefore inferior post-Thucydidean historiography, see Schwartz (1907), Laqueur (1911), Jacoby (1926b: 23 and ad T 11) and Meister (1990: 85–9), with the strong defence of Parmeggiani (2011: 9–80). For a re-evaluation of the evidence for Isocrates’ influence on history writing see Marincola (2014).

10 That Ephorus was a pupil of Isocrates is stated by the Suda (s.v. ‘Ephorus’), but was first doubted by Schwartz (1907) and Jacoby (1926b: 22–3). Their arguments have been taken up by Flower (1994), Stylianou (1998) and, more forcefully, Parmeggiani (2011: 34–66). Contra Laqueur (1911), Barber (1993). The arguments are helpfully reviewed by Parker (n.d.: ad Ephorus T 1). Ephorus as the originator of moralising historiography, with no mention of Isocrates: Meister (1990: 84–9).

11 Interpreting the passage as solely about moralising: Schwartz (1907: 7–8), Jacoby 1926b: ad loc.), Scheppens (1977), Meister (1990: 87), Parker (n.d.: ad loc.).

However, Strabo quotes Ephorus as saying about other accounts of the Scythians that ‘they speak only of those of their customs that are barbaric, seeing only what is striking, marvellous, and shocking; but one should also tell about the opposite and provide paradeigmata’ (τὰ περὶ τῆς ὠμότητος αὐτῶν λέγουσιν, εἰδότες τὸ δεινὸν [δὲ] καὶ τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἐκπληκτικὸν ὄν· δεῖν δὲ τάναντία καὶ λέγειν καὶ παραδείγματα ποιεῖσθαι) – which surely does not mean that Ephorus generally prefers praise to criticism, only that he thinks a historiographer ought to offer a balanced account. It does show, however, that he thought in terms of moral paradeigmata and that he believed he had a duty to provide these in his work. Indeed, this is the first time in extant works of historiography that we see the idea that the historiographer has a moral-didactic duty (δεῖν). It has been thought that Ephorus got this idea from Isocrates, but, having examined the moral didacticism of his predecessors within his own genre, it now seems more likely that he simply made explicit a function of historiography which was already generally accepted. We would know more about how he conceived of this duty if we had his preface, but we do not.

No fewer than 238 fragments of Ephorus’ History were collected by Jacoby. Of these, fifty-five come from Stephanus of Byzantium, forty-two from Strabo. Thus it is unsurprising that seventy-six of the extant fragments are nothing more than brief notices about names or locations of cities or topographical features, and that many more are concerned with geography in some form. However, even from a reading of the remaining 162 fragments the idea that Ephorus was supremely concerned with moralising is not borne out. There is very little explicit moralising in them, and only sparing use of evaluative phrasing.

If we begin by looking for explicit praise and blame, the kind of passages which scholars generally believe that Ephorus was famous for, we find only a few indications. The clearest one is F 42, the Strabo passage referred to above, about the importance of offering both criticism and praise. Strabo goes on to say:

εἶτ’ αἰτιολογεῖ, διότι ταῖς διαίταις εὐτελεῖς ὄντες καὶ οὐ χρηματισταί πρὸς τε ἄλληλους εὐνομοῦνται, κοινὰ πάντα ἔχοντες τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τέκνα καὶ τὴν ὅλην συγγένειαν, πρὸς τε τοὺς ἐκτὸς ἄμαχοι εἰσὶ καὶ ἀνίκητοι, οὐδὲν ἔχοντες ὑπὲρ οὗ δουλεύσοιμι.

Then he [Ephorus] explains that it is because they are simple in their lifestyle and not fixated on money (as they have everything in common including their wives and children and the whole extended family), that they both have good laws governing their internal relationships with each other and are unwarlike towards and unconquered by the outside world because they have nothing for the sake of which they might be enslaved. (Ephorus F 42 = Strabo 7.3.9)
Praiseworthy characteristics, according to Ephorus, then, are a simple lifestyle, lack of greed, and a self-sufficiency that leads to security from attack. Similarly, in F 122a Strabo gives Ephorus as his source for the fact that the Aetolians have never been conquered ‘because of the ruggedness of their land and their training in warfare’ (διὰ τῶν δυσχωρίας τῶν τόπων καὶ διὰ τὴν περὶ τοῦ πόλεμου ἕσκησιν). It is tempting to assume that Ephorus made a causal connection between the ruggedness of Aetolia and the warlikeness of its inhabitants in the vein of Herodotus and, later, Posidonius. This ideal of the simple life is also seen in F 149, which is Strabo’s summary of what Ephorus had to say—probably at much greater length—about the Cretan constitution, and which states that civil harmony is achieved by citizens ‘living in a simple way’ (λιτῶς ζῶσιν) because in this way they avoid the ‘envy, arrogant abuse, and hatred’ (οὐτε φθόνον οὐθ᾽ ὕβριν οὐτε μῖσος) caused by ‘greed and luxurious living’ (πλεονεξίαν καὶ τρυφήν). The use of the word tryphe, which only became common in the first and second centuries AD (see Chapter 3), makes it likely that the phrasing here is Strabo’s, but he seems to be crediting Ephorus with the thought behind it.

Correspondingly, F 183 from Athenaeus gives Ephorus as the source for the information that the Milesians were formidable before they became subject to luxurious living (ἐὼς μὲν οὐκ ἐτρύφων), but again the expression with tryphe makes it likely that the wording is Athenaeus’, and in this case we cannot be sure that Ephorus made the connection between luxurious living and martial degeneration explicit. Similarly, in F 131a Strabo offers Ephorus as the source for an Iberian habit of punishing people for getting fat, but again we cannot see whether Ephorus approved or condemned this or simply reported it. It does seem, then, that Ephorus didactically promoted the simple life over a life in luxury, but along a more Herodotean line of argument than the kind of scandalised tryphe ekphraseis that we have seen in the Hellenistic fragments of historiography preserved by Athenaeus. This difference in focus is probably why Athenaeus did not use him a lot: a mere twelve fragments of Ephorus are preserved by Athenaeus against twenty-five of Timaeus, forty-one of Phylarchus and eighty-three of Theopompus.

Interestingly, another fragment shows that a simple and rugged lifestyle is not always all that is needed for a strong state in Ephorus’ didacticism. This is F 198, which seems to be a summary of a much longer passage by Ephorus about Boeotia. Here Strabo states that Ephorus ‘praised’ Boeotia for its fertile land and said that it was ‘by nature well suited for hegemony’

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13 For the problem with Athenaeus and tryphe, see Chapter 3. Parmeggiani (2011: 233–4) argues that these passages show a Hippocratic streak in Ephorus; I would argue that it might equally well be Herodotean.
(πρὸς ἡγεμονίαν εὐφυῶς ἔχειν), but that it had only held such power for a short period of time because its people did not engage in ‘training and education’ (ἄγωγη δὲ καὶ παιδείᾳ), but rather neglected ‘letters and civilised socialising’ (τὸ λόγων καὶ ὁμιλίας τῆς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους). It seems that in order not just to stay unconquered, but to exercise hegemony, a certain level of civilisation is needed.

Another quality apparently promoted by Ephorus is justice: F 139 (= Strabo 6.1.8) states that he ‘praises’ (ἐπαινεῖ) the lawgiver Zaleucus for this. A third seems to have been courage: at least, it is tempting to connect F 220 (Plut. Dion 36.1), which says that Ephorus ‘lauded’ (ἐγκωμιάζων) the Sicilian historiographer and adviser to the tyrant Dionysius, Philistus, with F 229 (Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀκραφία), which gives Ephorus as the evidence for Philistus committing suicide rather than being captured alive by his enemies. It is also possible that F 85, in which Diogenes Laertius credits Ephorus with a story of the death of Xenophon’s son Gryllus, is a reference to a heroic battle-death narrative (ἰσχυρῶς ἀγωνισάμενος ἐτελεύτησεν, ὥς φησιν Ἡφόρος) like the ones that we have seen are characteristic of the ‘Ephoran’ books of Diodorus. However, all of these references are too brief to be conclusive evidence.

The one historical character who is most obviously criticised in the Ephoran fragments is the Spartan general Dercyllidas (F 71). Athenaeus purports to quote Ephorus to the effect that Dercyllidas ‘did not have anything Spartan or straightforward in his character, but had an unscrupulous and savage streak’ (οὐδὲν ἐν τῷ τρόπῳ Λακωνικὸν οὐδ᾽ ἁπλοῦν ἔχων, ἀλλὰ πολὺ τὸ πανοῦργον καὶ τὸ θηριῶδες). This is an extraordinary description of a character who seems to be admired by Xenophon, and it is hard to know whether Athenaeus is really quoting Ephorus. In any case there is no context preserved for the evaluation, so we cannot know exactly what it was Dercyllidas did to earn such condemnation. Perhaps it is simply his lack of adherence to the Spartan ethos and his propensity for trickery, which earned him the nickname Sisyphus (same fragment, and Xen. Hell. 3.1.8).

Other behaviours possibly criticised by Ephorus are tyrannical behaviour (F 178 and 179, both about Periander of Corinth), and political corruption and starting a war to cover it up (F 196 on Pericles). In neither instance, however, is any actual moralising – even in the form of evaluative phrasing – preserved, and it is impossible to see whether Ephorus merely reported these behaviours without guiding the reader’s evaluation of them. A similar

14 This is the suggestion of Pownall (2004).
15 F 85 = Diog. Laert. 2.53.
16 F 71 = Ath. 11.500c.
instance is F 206, from Plutarch, which relates Lysander’s attempts to bribe various oracles, but here the moralising comes in the form of an internal evaluation, in direct speech by the priests of Ammon when they refuse the bribe. It is impossible to see whether Ephorus disapproved of such behaviour on religious grounds, like Diodorus, or on social grounds, like Polybius.

An important question is whether or not Ephorus showed that morally good behaviour would generally lead to success. If we look for evidence of specifically divine justice in the collected fragments of Ephorus, there is obvious evidence of it in F 96, which, however, comes from book 30 of the History, which was completed by Ephorus’ son Demophilus after his father’s death. The fragment describes divine punishment of the Phocian ‘temple-robbers’ after the end of the Sacred War and has elements of mirroring or ironically apt punishment, but the fact that this passage was not written by Ephorus himself begs the question whether his son made an effort to keep to the overall tenor of the work in terms of moral and divine justice. Since this question cannot be answered, it is safest to leave the fragment out of our analysis of Ephorus’ work. Nonetheless, it is powerful evidence that some historiographers writing as early as the time of Ephorus were happy to include explicit instances of divine punishment of impiety.

There is some evidence among the fragments that Ephorus portrayed oracles in a respectful way. F 16 shows an oracle coming true, and in F 31b, Strabo quotes Ephorus’ statement that ‘it is inappropriate if we follow this sort of a method in regard to other matters, but when speaking of the oracle, which is the most truthful thing of all, we use such untrustworthy and false tales’ (περὶ δὲ τοῦ μαντείου λέγοντες, δὲ πάντων ἔστιν ἰσευδόστατον, τοῖς οὕτως ἀπίστοις καὶ ψευδέσι χρησόμεθα λόγοις). This fragment then continues with portraying Apollo as a rationalised culture hero, who kills a violent man named ‘Python’ and brings civilisation to Greece. In F 174 Clement of Alexandria cites Ephorus (with Plato and Aristotle) as an authority for the fact that Minos learned his laws from Zeus, Lycurgus his from Apollo. This points to a work marked by a mixture of piety and euhemeristic rationalising, which may or may not have contained an element of divine justice.

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18 F 206 = Plut. Lys. 25.3.
19 F 16 = schol. on Pind. Pyth. 5.101b, F 31b = Strabo 9.3.11–12.
20 Such rationalising is also seen in F 34 (following on from F 31a) and F 147. Pownall (2004: 123) argues that F 34 is moralising in that Heracles is victorious over the Giants because they are impious, but this is a misreading: Theon says that the victory was thought to be divine because Heracles had conquered many with few, and the many were impious (οἱ δὲ περὶ τὴν πάλαι μὲν Φλέγραν, νῦν δὲ Παλλήνην ὄνομαζομένην κατοικοῦντες ἦσαν ἀνθρώπινοι ὄμοι καὶ ιερόσυλοι καὶ ἀνθρωποφάγοι, οἱ καλούμενοι Γίγαντες, οἷος Ἡρακλῆς λέγεται χειρόσεσθαι τὴν Τροίαν ἐλῶν· καὶ διὰ τὸ κρατῆσαι τοὺς περὶ τὸν τῆς Ἡρακλέα ὀλίγος
Pownall has argued that Ephorus portrayed the world as a just place where the wicked come to bad ends, though not necessarily by means of divine punishment.21 One of the fragments she adduces as evidence is F 19. Here a scholiast of Plato explains the expression Διὸς Κόρινθος, used of pompous people who get their comeuppance, by means of a story about Corinthian ambassadors to their colony Megara, which has revolted, who keep referring in a pompous manner to their own city as ‘Zeus’ Corinth’. In the end they are stoned out of the assembly by the Megarians, and later a battle takes place in which the Megarians defeat the Corinthians, encouraging each other to ‘strike Zeus’ Corinth’ as they kill the fleeing. Thus it seems that the Megarians get their revenge while the arrogant and pompous Corinthians are punished. However, there are problems with the interpretation of the fragment. Firstly, as Jacoby already pointed out, we cannot see whether Ephorus actually told this story or just referred to the proverb.22 The scholiast refers to four different sources:

This expression is mentioned by Aristophanes in the Frogs . . . and in the Broilers, as well as Ephorus in book 1 of the Histories, and Plato in the Euthydemus. But others say that the expression is used of people who make idle threats . . . For the Corinthian told the Megarians, who were about to revolt, ‘Zeus’ Corinth will not abide these things’. Pindar uses the expression too. (Ephorus F 19 = schol. Pl. Euthyd. 292e; translation modified from BNJ)

However, both Aristophanes’ Frogs and Plato in the passage which the scholiast is explaining use the expression ‘Zeus’ Corinth’ without explaining it.23 It is tempting, then, to hypothesise that the scholiast must have found the story in Ephorus since he did not find it in any of his other named sources, but it is entirely possible that he knew it from somewhere else – the expression is also used by Pindar (Nem. 5, 105) and by Aristophanes again

\[\text{μέμνηται δὲ ταύτης Αριστοφάνης ἐν τοῖς Βατράχοις . . . καὶ ἐν Ταγηνισταῖς, καὶ Ἐφορὸς ἐν πρῶτῳ Ἰστορίων, καὶ Πλάτων Εὐθυδήμωι. ἄλλοι δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπεῖδε τέλει ἄπειλοντον φαινεὶ εἰρήσθαι τὴν παροιμίαν. Ἄριστοκράτεις γὰρ ὄρισμένος ἄριστοστάθαι ἐπιλέγειν τὸν Κορίνθιον ὥσκ ἀνέγεται ταῦτα ὁ Διὸς Κορίνθος. μέμνηται ταύτης καὶ Πίνδαρος.}

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\[\text{όντας τῶν Γιγάντων πολλῶν ὄντων καὶ ἀσεβῶν θεῶν ἔργων ἄργων ἤπαται ἠδόκει γεγονέναι τὸ περὶ τὴν μάχην. For an interesting discussion of what role mythological narratives may have played in Ephorus see Luraghi (2014).}

22 Jacoby (1930: 46). See also Parker (n.d.: ad loc.).
23 Ar. Ran. 439; Pl. Euthyd. 292e. Aristophanes Tagenistae is lost except for fragments, and the Platonic scholiast’s words are our only testimony of what it may have said about Διὸς Κόρινθος.
in *Ecclesiazusae* 828 – and referred to Ephorus, as to Aristophanes, simply because the expression was mentioned in his work.

If we do accept that Ephorus told the story, it would show that at least in this instance he implied that the arrogant got their comeuppance. Pownall further adduces as evidence of such universal justice the end of F 118 (= Strabo 8.5.5). Here, Ephorus is given as the source for the fact that Lycurgus is honoured in Sparta because he gave just laws, and Agis and Eurypon because they ruled justly (δικαίως), but not the two founders, Procles and Eurysthenes, because they did not. One gets the impression that Ephorus here worked back from the honours he saw bestowed on these Spartan heroes and the curious fact that the founders were not among them and inferred their respective moral and immoral behaviour from that.24 If so, that would demonstrate a commitment to viewing the world as a place where the good (rulers, at least) are honoured after their death and the bad (rulers) forgotten. F 58a–d show that worse things could happen to the afterlife of a villain: here, Eurybatus betrays Croesus to Cyrus, with the result that Eurybatus’ name becomes proverbial for traitors.25 One further fragment shows punishment for morally bad behaviour during the villain’s lifetime, namely F 60a, a scholion on Apollonius Rhodius, where Ephorus is given as the source for the fact that the Amazons killed their husbands because they had been mistreated (ὑβριζομένας) by them.26

One fragment, nonetheless, shows that people in Ephorus did not always get what they deserved. F 191 is a damaged piece of a papyrus which has often been thought to come from a copy of Ephorus’ *History*. It is, however, more likely to come from an epitome of Ephorus and so does not necessarily reproduce his writing style.27 It is a brisk summary of events from the end of the Persian Wars to the murder of Xerxes in 465 BC, kept in plain language with hardly any evaluative vocabulary, as befits an epitome. The only passage of this text which demonstrates moral evaluation is fragments 3–5, which concern Themistocles:


24 For the likely historical truth behind all of this see Parker (n.d.: *ad loc*).
25 F 58a = Harpocration, s.v. Ἐυρύβατος; F 58b = schol. on Hermogenes 63.140.2; F 58c = Suda, s.v. Ἐυρύβατος; F 58d = Diod. Sic. 9.32.
26 F 60a = schol. on Ap. Rhod. Argon. 2.965.
27 For a brief overview of the case for attributing the papyrus to Ephorus see Parker (n.d.: *ad loc*). For the compelling counter-arguments and the case for an epitome of Ephorus see Parmeggiani (2011: 376–8 with n. 150 and 155).
Moral History from Herodotus to Diodorus

Fr. 3: . . . that h[e had been] deprived of honour by the city, t[he] city which had been deemed worthy of the highest honour by the Greeks because of h[i]s deeds: it [had obtained?] great [international po]wer like . . .
Fr. 4–5: . . . that [the w]isest and most [just]............. [had become] the [mo]st harsh]est towards him. (Ephorus F 191 = POxy. 13.1610.1–16)

Even without looking at the restored bits, there is a clear rhetorical antithesis between ἠτιμασμένον (‘having been deprived of honour/disfranchised’) and τῆς μεγίστης τιμῆς . . . ἀξι||ωθεῖσαν (‘having been deemed worthy of the greatest honour’). The word polis is also clearly readable twice in this sentence, and since the text has just been talking about Themistocles, it makes sense to assume that it is here contrasting the honour and glory that he brought on Athens with the dishonour bestowed on him by the city when it sent him into exile. The heavy restoration of fragments 4 and 5 is based on the text of Diod. Sic. 11.56, which can be seen to follow the papyrus closely and must have used the same source, namely Ephorus. Here again we see an antithesis, this time between the reputation of Athens and the city’s treatment of Themistocles. The adjectives used are morally evaluative: ‘wisest’, ‘most just’, ‘harshest’. This looks like an abbreviation of a longer passage of narratorial moralising, which indeed the corresponding passage in Diodorus is. The fact that most of the passage appears to be indirect discourse need not trouble us: it may well have been dependent, in the unfragmented epitome, on a statement such as ‘the well-educated and sensible people thought that’ as an instance of internal evaluation, or even on an expression such as ‘one might reasonably say that’ or ‘I believe that’, thus forming part of a narratorial moralising evaluation. In any case, the juxtaposition of Themistocles’ contribution to the glory of Athens and his disfranchisement by the city deliberately underlines the injustice of his fate and shows that not everyone in Ephorus’ History got the rewards their conduct deserved.

A similar message can perhaps be drawn from F 175, where Aelian says that Lycurgus received ‘an inglorious reward’ (οὐ καλοὺς τοὺς μισθῶς) when he had his eye knocked out. He finishes the story with the statement that ‘Ephorus, at any rate, says that Lycurgus died in exile, having patiently endured hunger’ (λέγει δὲ Ἔφορος αὐτὸν λιμῷ διακαρτερήσαντα ἐν φυγῇ ἀποθανεῖν). If this passage was indeed in Ephorus, it would be interesting that he stressed the injustice of Lycurgus’ ‘reward’. However, the phrasing is almost certainly Aelian’s own, and we cannot even be certain how much of the content he found in Ephorus, as he only gives him as the source for the information that Lycurgus starved himself to death. Most probably, this sentence is an extreme compression of what Ephorus spent at least a

28 Ephorus F 175 = Ael. VH 13.23.
passage or a chapter narrating in much greater detail. This means that we cannot know how Ephorus constructed his narrative of Lycurgus’ death, or whether he moralised on it. In short, there is evidence that some morally bad characters came to bad ends in Ephorus, and an indication that he may have deplored Themistocles’ and Lycurgus’ undeserved fates, but there is not enough for us to draw a firm conclusion about the presence or absence of general moral justice in his narrative.

If we compare this image of Ephorus’ moral lessons with the impression produced by our analysis in Chapter 2 of Diodorus’ moralising in the books of the Bibliothèke based on Ephorus, we see that they only partly correspond: both Diodorus’ ‘Ephoran’ text and references to Ephorus in other later authors indicate that Ephorus moralised on courage and justice, but the moralising on the positive effects of mildness and kindness which we saw in Diodorus is absent from the fragments. This means either that it was in Ephorus’ original, but has been lost, or that it was Diodorus’ own addition to what he found in Ephorus. By contrast, moralising on the connection between inhabiting a fertile land, living an easy life and becoming soft and easy to conquer seems from the fragments to have been part of Ephorus’ History, but plays no prominent part in Diodorus’ ‘Ephoran’ narrative.

Before leaving Ephorus behind, we need to ask what can be deduced about his moralising techniques from the fragments. This is a tricky question to answer in his case because most of the fragments are not verbatim quotation, but summaries, paraphrases and more or less vague references. However, we can tentatively suggest that he seems to have used evaluative phrasing, juxtaposition of information, and evaluation by an internal audience – although sparingly, to judge from the papyrus fragment. He also seems to have shown that morally bad deeds can lead to disastrous results, although his narrative world does not seem to have been a universally just place and there is no evidence of divine justice. Finally, according to Polybius, he was exceptionally good at expressing his opinion in digressions and maxims, but no actual evidence of this exists among the fragments. This corresponds well with the picture that emerged from the analysis of Diodorus’ moralising: according to this, Ephorus made sparing use of evaluative vocabulary, but also engaged in moral digressions, moralising asides and moralising introductions and conclusions.

In conclusion, there is nothing to suggest that Ephorus was the first moralising historiographer. Rather, it looks as if he picked up the style...

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29 Pownall (2004: 140) argues that the moral, λέγεται δὲ ὁ λόγος πρὸς τοὺς άλλα <μὲν> θελόντας άλλων δὲ τυχόντας, is taken over from Ephorus; but even if that were true, it would not be evidence that he moralised on the injustice of Lycurgus’ fate.
of Xenophon, including that author’s techniques of moralising by infrequent use of morally evaluative phrasing and subtle juxtaposition, possibly as well as moralising digressions. In other words, subtle moralising was already present in Xenophon, and Ephorus only developed it further. How much further is impossible to say from the scant evidence, but it certainly seems that he was less explicitly moralising than Theopompus, his younger contemporary, to whom we turn next. In fact, it looks as if the development from subtle to explicit moralising in Greek historiography was gradual rather than sudden, and that Ephorus was just one step along the way. Pownall has argued that Ephorus ‘was willing to stray from his stated historical principles and, what is more, that at times he did so on purpose, to make a moral point’.

I would argue that Ephorus most probably did not consider himself as straying from any principles when he told what we consider to be mythological stories, but that he believed that he was able to get to their core of truth by rationalising them. And moralising was not something he engaged in only when ‘straying’ from his principles; rather it was an integral part of what he thought a historiographer should do in order to make his work useful and relevant to his readers. In this Ephorus was in line with both his Classical predecessors and his Hellenistic successors.

Theopompus of Chios (FGrH 115)

Theopompus of Chios was Ephorus’ contemporary and probably lived c. 403–320 BC. Ancient tradition has it that they were both pupils of Isocrates, and ancient authors often compare them. As with Ephorus, it is impossible now to know for certain whether the relationship with Isocrates was real or a later fabrication, but with Theopompus it is at least obvious why his historical works might be associated with Isocrates’ teachings of rhetoric and moral didacticism. He wrote several works, including a Hellenica in twelve books, which picked up where Thucydides left off and ended with the Battle of Cnidus in 394 BC, and a Philippica in fifty-eight books, from the accession of Philip II to the throne of Macedon in 360/59 BC to his assassination in 336 BC. This latter work was not so much a history of Philip as a Greek history, including the history of Sicily,
structured on the framework of the reign of Philip with numerous lengthy
digressions. That is clear from the varied fragments as well as from testi-
monia, especially Photius (Bibl. cod. 176.121a35 = T 31), which states that
the material about Philip II, when excerpted on the orders of Philip V, ran
to no more than sixteen books. For this reason both of these works must
be included in our study. Theopompus’ separate work on the Sacred War,
however, provocatively entitled On the Funds Stolen from Delphi, was
clearly a shorter treatise with a political purpose, and so the fragments pre-
served from this (F 248–9) cannot contribute to an understanding of moral
didacticism in universal or continuous histories. Neither can the fragments
of his speeches or his letters to Philip II and Alexander the Great (F 250–9).

Theopompus is among the best-attested of the fragmentary historiog-
raphers, with 413 fragments collected by Jacoby (411 in BNJ). Of the
ones that preserve the title of their work, thirteen come from speeches,
letters and pamphlets (F 247–59), five from his epitome of Herodotus (F
1–5), eighteen from the Hellenica (F 6–23) and a staggering 231 from the
Philippica (F 24–254), showing that this was by far his most-read work. In
terms of covertext, 107 fragments are preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium
and consist of short, geographical notices, and thirty-three in Harpocration
are mainly brief lexicographical entries. However, an impressive eighty-
three fragments are preserved by Athenaeus and twenty-four by Plutarch,
all of which are longer and often moralising passages. Of the rest, forty
fragments come from various scholiasts, thirteen from Strabo, and the
remaining 113 from a wide variety of later authors, who are each responsi-
ble for fewer than ten fragments and often no more than one or two. The
wide spread in covertexts and the large number of fragments perhaps mean
that what is left is more representative of the original works than is the
case for most other fragmentary historiographers, but it is risky to make
assumptions. Even though use of Theopompus by Athenaeus and Plutarch
shows that they found his work a rich quarry of moral anecdotes, it also
means that the extant fragments are likely to contain a larger proportion of
moralising than the original works.

Scholarship on Theopompus is quite extensive. Everyone agrees that
Theopompus was a moralising historian, who propounded traditional
moral values, first and foremost moderation and sobriety, and who blamed
more than he praised. He is generally considered a pessimist who depicted
his historical characters in the worst light possible, although he may have

34 For a detailed discussion of the likely contents of the Sicilian digressions of the
Philippica see Occhipinti (2013).
35 Main works are: Laqueur (1934), Westlake (1954), Connor (1967, 1968), Pédech
strangely, does not give Theopompus’ FGrH entry his usual introduction.
made a few exceptions.\textsuperscript{36} It is also common to consider his works part of the rhetorical/moralising decline of post-Thucydidean historiography.\textsuperscript{37} An interesting question is Theopompus’ attitude to Philip, after whom he named his greatest work of history: did he admire or despise him?\textsuperscript{38} We shall return to these issues below.

The fragments of Theopompus contain a large number of explicitly moralising passages, mainly from Athenaeus. Most of these are negative \textit{paradeigmata}, some are positive, two are combinations of praise and criticism.\textsuperscript{39} The most revealing evidence of his moralising style is a set of fragments found in Athenaeus and Polybius, who both claim to be quoting Theopompus verbatim. The fragments overlap (with minor differences) and are obviously from the same passage, an extended and passionate lecture on the moral failings of Philip II. The text quoted below is from Polybius, but overlaps with Athenaeus (and Pseudo-Demetrius, \textit{On Style}) at several points.\textsuperscript{40}

\begin{verbatim}
ei δέ τις ἀναγνῶναι βουληθείη τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἐνάτης καὶ τετταρακοστῆς αὐτῷ βύβλου, παντάπασιν ἂν θαυμάσαι τὴν ἀτοπίαν τοῦ συγγραφέως, ὅς γε χωρὶς τῶν άλλων τετόλμηκε καὶ ταῦτα λέγειν—αὐταῖς γὰρ λέξεις αἷς ἐκεῖνος κέχρηται κατατετάχαμεν· 'εἰ γάρ τις ἦν ἐν τοῖς ῾Ελλησιν ή τοῖς βαρβάροις' φησί 'λάσταυρος ή θρασὺς τὸν τρόπον, οὗτοι πάντες εἰς Μακεδονίαν ἀθροιζόμενοι πρὸς Φίλιππον ἑταῖροι τοῦ βασιλέως προσηγορεύοντο. καθόλου γὰρ ὁ Φίλιππος τοὺς μὲν κοσμίου τοῖς ἤθεσι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων βίων ἐπιμελουμένους ἀπεδοκίμαζε, τοὺς δὲ πολυτελεῖς καὶ ζῶντας ἐν μέθαις καὶ κύβοις ἐτίμα καὶ προῆγεν. τοιγαρ<οῦ>ν οὐ μόνον ταῦτ᾽ ἔχειν αὐτοὺς παρεσκεύαζεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{36} The idea of Theopompus as a harsh judge of character goes back to ancient critics; see e.g. Polyb. 8.8.7–11.6 (= Theopomp. T 19), Dion. Hal. Pomp. 6 (= Theopomp. T 20a) and Luc. Hist. conscr. 59.59 (= Theopomp. T 25a). Pessimist: Pédech (1989); misanthrope: Laqueur (1934). Connor (1967) famously says that Theopompus’ work depicted no heroes, only villains. Westlake (1954) argues that Theopompus made an exception for Timoleon and portrayed him as a good man, Morison (n.d.) that he did this with Lysander and Agesilaus; Shrimpton (1991) argues that Theopompus did not paint all his characters in black, but some in ‘shades of grey’, and that these are his heroes. Shrimpton (1991) and Pownall (2004) argue for a distinction between two types of villains: those who are merely corrupted and slaves to their own pleasure, and those who are contagiously villainous and corrupt others.

\textsuperscript{37} E.g. Lane Fox (1984: 116–18), Meister (1990: 90–4).

\textsuperscript{38} Some scholars argue that Theopompus despised Philip for his immorality and used his narrative to show that Philip's success was due to luck (Connor 1967, Pownall 2004) or to the prevailing moral corruption of Greece (Connor 1967, 1968, Shrimpton 1991, Flower 1994). Others argue that Theopompus admired Philip’s political and military achievements despite being critical of his personal life (Pédéch 1989, Westlake 1992).


\textsuperscript{40} For a good overview of the overlapping fragments see Morison (n.d.: \textit{ad F} 224–5c) and Flower (1994: 105–6).
If someone should wish to read the beginning of his [i.e. Theopompus’] forty-ninth book, he would be completely amazed at the absurdity of the historiographer, who apart from the other things has dared to say also this – for I have set down the very words which he has used: ‘For if someone among the Greeks or the non-Greeks’, he says, ‘was a hairy predator or brazen in character, these were all gathered together to Macedon and Philip and became known as the king’s companions. For, in short, Philip rejected those who were orderly in character and managed their own lives with care while honouring and promoting those who were extravagant and lived a life of drink and dice. Accordingly he not only made sure that they had these things, but also made them masters of the other unjust and perverse behaviours. For what shameful or awful thing was not present for them, and what honourable and good thing was not absent? Some of them lived their lives shaved and smoothed although they were men, others dared to have sex with each other although they had beards. They also led around with them two or three of those who prostituted themselves, and they themselves offered the same use of those to others. For this reason someone might justly assume that they were not companions (hetairous) but prostitutes (hetairas) and call them not soldiers but streetwalkers. For though man-killers (androphonoi) by nature, they were man-whores (andropornoi) by character.41 To cut a long story short’, he says, ‘especially as I am drowning in such great events, I believe that those who have become known as the friends and companions of Philip have in character become beasts of a kind and magnitude such as neither the Centaurs at Pelion nor the Laestrygones living in the Leontian Plain nor any others can match.’ (Polyb. 8.9.5–13 = FGrH 115 F 224–5c)

Polybius is shocked at Theopompus’ style, and he is certainly right that it is unusual for its genre: the coarse language and the dirty puns are closer in style to Aristophanes than to anything we see elsewhere in historiography. It is also this ‘low’ style that causes Pseudo-Demetrius to take issue with the passage, and it is no doubt also the reason why Athenaeus decided to
quote it verbatim. We shall return to the techniques of moralising below; for now the focus will remain on the moral lessons. What Theopompus criticises about Philip and his companions here is their lifestyle: drinking, gambling, hard partying, sexual intemperance. Secondarily, he alludes to their injustice and dishonesty, but these – one might think more historically significant – vices are not the focus of the passage. The sexual immoderation criticised here is unregulated homosexuality (i.e. between grown men rather than between a grown man and a youth), but other fragments show that Theopompus was also critical of deviant heterosexual sex, that is, sex with prostitutes and adultery with free women. All of these behaviours are criticised repeatedly in the Theopompan fragments, often in combination. Heavy drinking is the most frequent vice, closely followed by hard partying and gambling. Sometimes extravagant eating, over-the-top dress and equipment, and effeminacy are thrown into the mix. Theopompus also seems to have singled out lavish and thoughtless spending as a particular vice.

Such behaviours are all part of what Athenaeus calls *tryphe*, and indeed most of the fragments on these topics are found in the *Deipnosophistae* (forty-six fragments). However, there are enough fragments with similar contents from other covertexes to make it clear that this was, indeed, an important feature of Theopompus’ *Philippica*, and no doubt that was why he was a favourite of Athenaeus’. They are also typical behaviours to criticise, both for Theopompus’ Classical predecessors and particularly for his Hellenistic successors. What seems to have singled Theopompus out is his style of moralising, which we shall return to below, and his insistence on the presence of these vices more or less across the board. They are central in his characterisation of Philip and his companions, as we have seen; they play an important part in his description of various peoples and ethnic groups (Illyrians F 39, Chalchidians F 139, Thessalians F 162, Tarentines F 233), they characterise tyrants (Dionysius F 134, Apollocrates F 185, Hipparinus F 186, Timolaus F 210), but they also attach to leaders of oligarchies (F 121) and democracies (Chares of Athens F 213). In fact, in one fragment Theopompus seems to have argued that democracy in

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42 F 225c = Ps.-Dem. 27, F 224 = Ath. 4.166f–7c, F 225b = Ath. 6.260d–1a.
46 See especially F 224 and F 227.
47 F 99 from Harpocration, F 283b from Aelian, F 107 and F 333 from Plutarch, F 27 and F 225a from Polybius.
48 F 27, F 224, F 225a–c, F 236, F 282.
particular led to such dissolute behaviour, not only in the leaders, but in
the whole people (F 62).\(^4^9\) In tyrants, and people behaving like tyrants, the
extravagant lifestyle is combined with a violent temperament and actions
of cruelty.\(^5^0\) Other traits criticised intermittently in the fragments are cor-
ruption (repeatedly designated ‘thieving’), dishonesty, injustice, flattery,
fickleness and impiety.

Positive \textit{paradeigmata} seem to have been rather thinner on the ground in
Theopompus’ works than the by all accounts frequent negative \textit{exempla}.
Partly for that reason they carried greater weight with some readers, as we
can see from Plutarch’s remark that we should trust Theopompus more
when he praises than when he blames because he enjoys blaming more
(\textit{ψέγει γὰρ ἡδιον ἢ ἐπαινεῖ: F 333 = Plut. \textit{Lys.} 30.2–3), and from the testi-
mony of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (T 20a = Dion. Hal. \textit{Pomp.} 6) that
Theopompus reflected on ‘justice, piety, and the other virtues’ (\textit{δικαιοσύνης}
καὶ εὐσεβείας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἄρετῶν) throughout his work.\(^5^1\) Revealingly,
positive role-models in the \textit{Hellenica} and \textit{Philippica} seem always to have
belonged to the previous generation: the only four fragments that say
something unambiguously positive about a historical character concern
Lysander (F 20 and F 333) and Agesilaus (F 22 and F 107), and a possible
fifth deals with Alcibiades (F 288). The passages on Lysander both extol his
lack of greed, but one of them goes further and praises him for moderation
in every aspect of his life. Athenaeus purports to quote verbatim from the
\textit{Hellenica}:

\begin{quote}
Παυσανίαν δὲ καὶ Λύσανδρον ἐπὶ τρυφῇ διαβοήτους γενέσθαι σχεδὸν πάντες
ἰστοροῦσιν. . . Θεόπομπος δὲ ἐν τῇ δεκάτῃ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν τάναντια
φησὶ περὶ τοῦ Λυσάνδρου, ὅτι ἡφιλόταιρός τε ἢν καὶ θεραπεύειν δυνάμενος
καὶ ιδιώτας καὶ βασιλεῖς, σώφρων ὄν καὶ τῶν ἠδονῶν ἁπασῶν κρείττων.
γενόμενος γοῦν τῆς Ἑλλάδος σχεδὸν ἅπασης κύριος ἐν οὐδεμιᾶι φανήσεται
τῶν πόλεων οὔτε πρὸς τὰς ἀφροδισίους ἠδονὰς ὁρμήσας οὔτε μέθαις καὶ
πότοις ἀκαίροις χρησάμενος’.
\end{quote}

Almost all historiographers say that Pausanias and Lysander were famous
for their extravagant lifestyles. . . . But Theopompus in the tenth book of his
\textit{Hellenica} says the opposite about Lysander, namely that ‘he was hardwork-
ing and able to help both private people and kings, being temperate and
indifferent to all pleasures. And so, although he became master of almost
all of Greece, he will be seen in none of the cities to have been eager either
for sexual pleasures or for those related to carousals or to drinking at odd
times’. (Theopomp. F 20 = Ath. 12.543b–c)

\(^4^9\) For a good discussion of Theopompus’ views on luxury see Flower (1994: 71–83).
\(^5^0\) Pédech (1989: 226–30) has a good discussion of the different terms used by Theopompus in
this context.
'Hard-working' (φιλόπονός), 'temperate' (σώφρων), ‘indifferent to all pleasures’ (τῶν ἡδονῶν ἁπασῶν κρείττων), with no weakness for sex or drinking, Lysander seems to be the very opposite of Philip and all the other corrupt characters of his time. In the other fragment, Plutarch gives Theopomps’ Philippica as his source for the fact that Lysander was so scrupulous in money matters that although he had held so much power during his lifetime, he died in poverty, again the antithesis of the lavish spenders that seem to have populated most of the two works. Similarly, the two fragments on Agesilaus, one from the Hellenica (F 22 from Athenaeus) and one from the Philippica (F 107 from Plutarch), both present the same moralising vignette: Agesilaus is sent delicacies as presents, but gives them to the helots so he and the Spartans will not get corrupted. Finally, in F 321 Plutarch claims that ‘even’ Theopomps says that Agesilaus was the greatest and most famous of all of his contemporaries (μέγιστος μὲν ἦν ὁμολογουμένως καὶ τῶν τότε ζώντων ἐπιφανέστατος, ὡς εἴρηκέ ποι καὶ Θεόπομπος). The uncertainty signalled by ποι makes this unlikely to be a verbatim quotation, but the fact that Theopomps had something positive to say about anyone apparently stuck in Plutarch’s mind. It seems that Theopomps’ moral lesson was consistent: just as he poured scorn on intemperance in all areas of life, he praised self-control and moderation. In this he is in line with the rest of the Greek historiographical tradition, as we have seen; what is unusual is his apparent focus on this one moral lesson to the exclusion of others. For that reason it is worth spending a little time on the two other possible praise passages among the Theopomps fragments in order to see whether there were in fact other character traits and behaviours that he actively recommended in his historical works. One of these fragments comes from Cornelius Nepos, who claims that Theopomps, along with Timaeus and Thucydides, ‘praised’ Alcibiades (summis laudibus extulerunt: F 288) because he was able to adapt to any culture and outdo the Athenians in brilliance, the Thebans in strength, the Spartans in self-discipline and endurance, the Thracians in drinking and sex, and the Persians in hunting and luxurious living. After having read through all the other fragments of Theopomps, it is a priori unlikely that he would, straight-faced, praise Alcibiades for such a frivolous talent. Furthermore, the pairing with Thucydides does not inspire confidence: Thucydides does praise Alcibiades briefly, but only for his intelligence and ability, in order then to show how his personal life is contributing to the downfall of Athens (Thuc. 6.14), and he certainly does not describe Alcibiades as a cultural chameleon as explicitly as Nepos makes out. Surely it is possible, then, that Nepos missed similar nuances in Theopomps, who may well have described Alcibiades in such terms only then to make it clear by some acerbic remark in the next paragraph that such a lack of personal integrity was not to be admired.
The other fragment that might be construed as praise passage is F 328, where Plutarch gives Theopompus as his source for the galvanising effect of Demosthenes’ speech to the Thebans:

η δὲ τοῦ ρήτορος δύναμις, ὡς φησὶ Θεόπομπος, ἐκριπίζουσα τὸν θυμὸν αὐτῶν καὶ διακαίουσα τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἐπεσκότησε τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄπασιν, ὡστε καὶ φόβον καὶ λογισμὸν καὶ χάριν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐνθουσιῶντας . . .

But the power of the orator, as Theopompus says, roused their spirit and set alight their ambition. It cast everything else into darkness so that they threw away fear, reason, and gratitude under its influence. (Theopomp. F 328 = Plut. Dem. 18.1–3)

This is strong praise of Demosthenes’ oratorical power (δύναμις), but it has immoral consequences: reason and gratitude should surely not be given up on the basis of a speech, and ἐπισκοτέω, ‘cast into darkness’, sounds decidedly ominous. Further on in the same passage Plutarch disagrees with Theopompus’ judgement that Demosthenes’ position among the Athenians and Thebans was obtained ‘unjustly and beyond his merit’ (ἀδίκως, παρ’ ἀξίαν). Another fragment shows that Theopompus had called Demosthenes’ political manoeuvring ‘fickle’ (ἀβέβαιον: F 326). While Demosthenes’ oratorical skill may have been presented as worth emulating, then, it is unlikely that he was represented as a morally good person. It does seem, in fact, that the only positive role-models provided by Theopompus were the ascetic and disciplined Spartans of the previous generation, whom he presented as foils for the unscrupulous, decadent and debauched kings and politicians of his own time.

The question of Theopompus’ portrayal of Philip II needs to be faced. It seems clear from the fragments that he was presented as a thoroughly negative paradeigma: immoderate in his personal life, corrupting in his friendship, treacherous and brutal in international relations. But how did a moralist such as Theopompus square that with Philip’s undeniable success? On the basis of a brief passage from Athenaeus, it has been argued that Theopompus showed Philip’s success to be due to tyche, luck or fortune, rather than to any personal qualities: 52

ὁ Θεόπομπος δὲ ἐν τῇ πεντηκοστῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν Ἱστοριῶν κατὰ τὴν Φιλίππου φησὶν ἀρχὴν περὶ τὴν Βισαλτίαν καὶ Αμφίπολιν καὶ Γραιστωνίαν τῆς Μακεδονίας ἔαρος μεσοῦντος τὰς μὲν συκὰς σῦκα, τὰς δ’ ἀμπέλους βότρυς, τὰς δ’ ἐλαίας ἐν οἷς χρόνοι βρύειν εἰκός ἦν αὐτᾶς ἐλαίας ἐνεγκεῖν, καὶ εὐτυχῆσαι πάντα Φιλίππον.

Theopompus says in the fifty-fourth book of his Histories with regard to Philip’s rule in the region of Bisaltia, Amphipolis, and Graestonia in Macedon that in mid-spring the fig trees produced figs, the vines produced grapes, and the olive trees – at the time when it was reasonable for them to come into bloom – produced olives, and that Philip was fortunate in all things. (Theopomp. F 237a = Ath. 3.77d–e)

This is a tempting conclusion, but hardly permissible on the basis of this fragment alone, which is the only reference in the fragments to Philip’s luck or fortune. If Theopompus had developed a theory on the reasons for Philip’s success to the effect that it was due to fortune rather than to the king’s own qualities, I find it hard to believe, in view of the interest of later authors in both Theopompus and Philip, that no source would have referred to it. It is more likely that the reference is to a speech delivered or a view expressed by a character in the Philippica in the aftermath of the Battle of Chaeronea, perhaps Demosthenes, who says something similar in his speech On the Crown. It has also been argued that Theopompus was critical of Philip’s personal life, but admired his military and political achievements. Nothing in the fragments points to this: rather, Philip’s politics and wars seem as morally flawed as his companion-keeping (e.g. F 162, F 209, F 236). The explanation best supported by the fragments is that Theopompus showed Philip to be degenerate and debauched, but also calculating and clever. All those around Philip, from his companions to the rulers of barbarian peoples and Athenian democrats, were equally degenerate and were so busy wallowing in their own sordid luxury that they were unable to form an efficient defence against Philip. The only remedy against this contemporary weakness and degeneracy would be to emulate the Spartans of the past: refuse pleasure and embrace hard work in order to gain military and moral strength.

To a modern mind it would perhaps seem logical for such a negative portrayal of contemporary history also to be void of divine justice. However, such an assumption would be jumping to conclusions. Three fragments from the Philippica clearly narrate instances of superhuman punishment. The most obvious one is F 31. The story as told by Athenaeus runs like this: Cotys was the most decadent of all the Thracian kings. He travelled around his country and designated all the loveliest places as banquetting halls. He also used to sacrifice regularly to the gods and so was happy and prosperous (εὐδαίμων καὶ μακαριστὸς ὢν) until he committed impiety and

53 Dem. De cor. 18. 300: οὐδὲ γ’ ἦττήθην ἐγὼ τοῖς λογισμοῖς Φιλίππου, πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ, οὐδὲ ταῖς παρασκευαῖς, ἀλλ’ οἱ τῶν συμμάχων στρατηγοί καὶ οἱ δυνάμεις τῇ τύχῃ.


55 Thus, more or less, Connor (1967, 1968), Shrimpton (1991), Flower (1994).
blasphemy against Athena (eis tēn Ἀθηνᾶν βλασφημεῖν καὶ πλημμελεῖν). The narrative of the impiety, where Athenaeus seems to be paraphrasing Theopompus, deserves to be quoted in full:

διηγεῖται τε ἐξῆς ὁ συγγραφεὺς ὅτι δεῖπνον κατεσκεύασεν ὁ Κότυς ὡς γαμουμένης αὐτῷ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς καὶ θάλαμον κατασκευάσας ἀνέμενεν μεθύων τὴν θεόν. ἤδη δ’ ἐκφρον γενόμενος ἔστησεν τῶν δορυφόρων ὑμόμενον εἰ παραγέγονεν ἡ θεός εἰς τὸν θάλαμον ἁρκομένου δ’ ἐκείνου καὶ εἴπόντος μηδένα εἶναι ἐν τῷ θαλάμῳ, τοξεύσας τοῦτον ἀπέκτεινεν καὶ ἄλλον δεύτερον ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς, ἐν ὁ τρίτος συνεις παραγεγομενήν ἔφη πάλαι τὴν θεόν αὐτὸν ἀναμένειν. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς οὗτος καὶ ζηλοτυπήσας τὰς αὐτοῦ χερσὶν ἀνέτεμε τὴν ἄνθρωπον ἀρξάμενος.

The historiographer narrates subsequently that Cotys prepared a meal as if he was going to marry Athena. He prepared a bed-chamber and sat down to drink while he waited for the goddess. Since he had already gone out of his mind, he sent one of his bodyguards to see if the goddess had come into the chamber. When he had come back and reported that there was no one in the chamber, Cotys shot and killed him and sent a second guard in with the same purpose, until the third, having understood the situation, said that the goddess had been there for a long time and was waiting for him. This king was also once struck with jealousy of his own wife and cut the woman up with his own hands beginning from her private parts. (Theopomp. F 31 = Ath. 12.531e–532a)

The interesting thing here is the expression ‘already gone out of his mind’ (ἦδη δ’ ἐκφρον γενόμενος). ἐκφρον is a word used of frenzied bacchants and inspired poets. It is only used in one other passage by Athenaeus (Timaeus F 149), so it is very tempting to believe that he took it over from Theopompus. The sense seems to be that Cotys has been struck by madness for his impiety and that this madness is driving him on to still more crimes, that is, killing off his bodyguards as they one by one come to tell him that the goddess is not in the bridal chamber. The end of the story in Athenaeus is abrupt; we are not told what Cotys did when he was finally told that Athena was waiting for him. From the skip to the information that he ‘also once’ (ποτε καί) killed his wife out of jealousy it is perhaps not too far-fetched to assume that Theopompus connected the two events and made the murder a result of the divinely sent madness. Thus, we find in Theopompus a narrative world where the gods can punish impiety by madness, something which we have seen clearly in Herodotus and which was implied in Thucydides’ description of the Athenians rushing towards the Sicilian Expedition.

A slightly more ambiguous fragment is F 232 (= Ath. 12.536c–d), where Archidamus, son of Agesilaus, is said to have turned from the traditional Spartan values to live ‘in a non-Spartan and soft way’ (ξενικῶς καὶ μαλακῶς).
and, when he dies a mercenary in a foreign land, is not even deemed worthy of a proper funeral (οὐδὲ ταφῆς κατηξιώθη). On the one hand, no superhuman force is mentioned in the fragment. On the other, the enemies’ refusal to give back Archidamus’ body is hardly provoked by his deviation from Spartan moderation. If a connection is supposed to be seen between the two things – and Athenaeus clearly intends this, which makes it likely, but not inevitable, that his source also did – one must assume that some superhuman power had engineered Archidamus’ dire fate as punishment for his lack of moderation. This is supported by F 312, where the same story is told by Pausanias, who adds that Archidamus was unburied ‘with Apollo standing in the way’ (ἐμποδὼν τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπόλλωνος). Regardless of whether Pausanias took this interpretation from Theopompus or inferred it, it must surely be the one Theopompus intended.56

One intriguing fragment implies the existence of a divine power which not only punishes the wicked, but also if not rewards, then at least notices, piety. This is F 344 (Porph. Abst. II.16),57 which tells the story of a wealthy man who has always offered splendid sacrifices. He travels to Delphi to ask who honours the gods best, in the hope that he himself will be named. To his disappointment, he is told the name of another man. When he goes to find him, he sees that the other is a poor man who never sacrifices lavishly, but is always careful to give the gods the best of what he has (there are clear parallels to Herodotus’ narrative of Croesus and Solon). Such a story serves as a comment on one of Theopompus’ favourite moral subjects, namely extravagant spending, but it also conveys the message that the world is ruled by the gods, and that they appreciate – and so perhaps reward – piety. A final indication that Theopompus promoted traditional piety is his fantasy of two cities, Wartown and Saintsburg (Μάχιμος and Εὐσεβεῖα: F 75α–e; the translations are offered by Shrimpton). This seems to be Theopompus’ addition to an older myth and tells the story of a supremely warlike people who spend their lives in misery and a supremely peaceful and pious people who live completely happy lives.58

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Theopompus is frequently referenced by various covertexts as evidence for oracles and divine portents:59 such stories belong in a narrative world ruled by divine forces, not in one governed only by human causation. Theopompus, then, may well have been a pessimist with regard to human nature, but it seems that he was not as

56 F 312 = Paus. 3.10.3.
57 In a clear example of covertext authors appropriating an earlier text for their own purposes, Porphyry uses the anecdote to argue against sacrificing and eating meat.
58 For good discussions of this digression with references to earlier literature see Shrimpton (1991: 143–4), Pownall (2004: 154–5) and Morison (n.d.: ad F 75c).
59 F 316, F 331, F 336, F 343, F 392.
much of a pessimist as Thucydides;\(^{60}\) he apparently did believe in a super-
human force which, at least sometimes, punishes evil and rewards virtue.

It has been argued that Theopompus portrayed a world where another
kind of universal justice is at work, by means of which good rulers thrive
and harsh rulers fail. This may well have been the case, but the arguments
are not compelling. One rests on a statement in F 256 which connects
Philip’s ‘behaviour’ or ‘habits’ (ἐπιτηδεύμασιν) with his ability to extend
his rule across Europe; but the verb tenses of the sentence show that it
must come from a speech delivered by a character in the \textit{Philippica}.\(^{61}\) The
second argument on which rests the theory that Theopompus demon-
strated a causal relationship between the way a ruler treats his subjects
and his success is based on F 185–8 and F 283a and b, which criticise a
series of Syracusan tyrants for their decadent living, especially their drink-
ing habits.\(^{62}\) As these fragments most probably come from Theopompus’
Sicilian digression (see F 184 = Diod. Sic. 16.71.3), it has been argued that
Theopompus showed the decline and fall of the Syracusan tyrants to have
been caused by their decadent lifestyle.\(^{63}\) However, it is impossible to see
from the brief fragments whether Theopompus made such a causal con-
nection, and there is no mention in any of the fragments of the tyrants’
behaviour towards their subjects.

One further fragment may point to a moralising connection between
the way a ruler or hegemonic power treats his or its subjects and his or its
success. This is Theopompus F 103, the table of contents for book 12 of the
\textit{Philippica}, which is preserved by Photius. Number 7 of Photius’ entries is:

καὶ ώς Αθηναίων ἡ πόλις ταῖς πρὸς βασιλέα συνθήκαις ἐπειρᾶτο ἐμμένειν,
Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ ὑπέρογκα φρονοῦντες παρέβαινον τὰς συνθήκας·

And that the city of the Athenians tried to keep to their treaty with the king,
but the Lacedaemonians transgressed the treaty in their excessive arrogance.
(Theopomp. F 103 = Phot. \textit{Bibl.} 120a)

If the phrase ‘in their excessive arrogance’ (ὑπέρογκα φρονοῦντες) was in
Theopompus’ text, he must have criticised the Spartans for being arrogant

\(^{60}\) \textit{Contra} Pédech (1989: 249–51).

\(^{61}\) Aelius Theon (\textit{Progymnasmata} 2.110.27–32) says that the sentence comes from an
encomium of Philip by Theopompus, and many scholars have speculated about the date and
purpose of this work (e.g. Jacoby 1930: 354, Laqueur 1934: 2206, Connor 1967, Shrimpton
1991). However, as Flower (1994: 38–9, 102) has argued, the fact that the conditional sen-
tence is a mixture of present unreal and future potential means that it could only have been
spoken while Philip was still alive, which would be an extremely unusual situation for an
encomium. It is therefore more likely to come from a speech of the \textit{Philippica} which was later
extracted as an encomium of Philip.

\(^{62}\) F 283a = Ath. 10.453d, F 283b = Ael. \textit{VH} 6.12.

in the time after the King’s Peace, a point of view which was shared by Xenophon, as we have seen. Taking it a step further, we can hypothesise that Theopompus, like Xenophon, interpreted the defeat at Leuctra as the punishment for Sparta’s arrogance and crimes against their allies. However, we cannot know whether the phrase was in Theopompus at all, or whether it merely expresses Photius’ interpretation of Theopompus’ text, perhaps influenced by the patriarch’s reading of Xenophon. All we can say for certain is that Photius found the phrase ‘in their excessive arrogance’ apt to describe the Spartan behaviour after the King’s Peace as depicted by Theopompus. In short, the evidence is insufficient to support an argument that good rulers were rewarded with success and bad rulers were punished with failure in Theopompus’ historical works.

Finally, we turn to Theopompus’ moralising techniques. The fact that his words are so often quoted verbatim makes this a more rewarding exercise than for many of his equally fragmentary peers. From these quotations, Theopompus seems to have used the full toolbox of moralising techniques: from evaluative phrasing (e.g. F 13, F 81 and F 97) via speeches (e.g. F 166–7, F 256, F 380) to moralising vignettes (e.g. F 21 and F 280), moral causation (Philip conquering Greece because of its degeneration) and moralising digressions (e.g. F 225a and b). Perhaps he even cast his ethnography in a moralising light (e.g. F 39, F 139, F 162, F 233) and told a moralising utopian myth of his own invention (F 75). What seems to have been unique to Theopompus is both his amount of moralising and its rhetorical shape: in all of his different types of moralising he seems to have made frequent use of sarcasm, puns, antitheses and similes, to a much greater extent than any of the other historiographers examined in this study, perhaps apart from Posidonius.  

CONCLUSION: FROM MACRO AND MINIMALIST MORALISING TO EXPLICIT PARADEIGMATA

Moral didacticism does seem to come into its own in the fourth century BC, but the innovator was not Ephorus; it was Theopompus. Both the Oxyrhynchus Historian and Ephorus seem to have engaged in the kind of moralising already displayed by their predecessors. The Oxyrhynchus Historian seems to have played safe and stuck close to the minimalist moralising of Thucydides and stretches of Xenophon’s Hellenica. Ephorus  

64 Flower (1994: 184–7) argues convincingly that Theopompus only used the highly rhetorical style seen in the preserved quotations in passages of special passion and that his style was otherwise more like Isocrates’, which is indeed what Dionysius of Halicarnassus says (Pomp. 6.9–10 = T 20a). It seems likely that most or all of these passionate passages were moralising.
innovated by writing a much longer work than any of his predecessors and so, of necessity, introduced a new principle of organisation, *kata genos*, and prefaced each book with a proem. Whether or not these proems were moral-didactic we cannot now know. What we can see from his fragments and discern from Diodorus’ use of his work suggests that his style of moralising was close to that of Xenophon, even if Ephorus had more frequent moralising digressions and expressed narratorial judgement more often. Theopompus, on the other hand, seems to have created a work of history that was radically new: guided by the principle of moral condemnation of his own generation against the backdrop of a nobler past, it emplotted contemporary history as a satire, combining entertainment with moral outrage and plenty of examples of how not to behave. No later historiographer had the temperament to imitate this approach exactly (although Posidonius may have gone some way towards it), but it did pave the way for centuries of more explicit moralising where the narrator’s overt moral judgements were considered necessary to guide the reader.