

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

PERICLES POETA

At Thucydides 2. 61. 2 Pericles asserts his consistency in these words: καὶ ἐγὼ μὲν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἐξίσταμαι. This is not prose, it is verse, even if our habit of writing Greek prose and Greek verse according to different conventions impedes recognition of the fact: κἀγὼ μὲν αὐτός εἰμι κοῦκ ἐξίσταμαι—a full trimeter, metrical and syntactical termini coinciding, distinguished as verse by more than mere metricality.¹ There is nothing like it anywhere else in the speech, or, I think, anywhere else in Thucydides.² This did not happen by accident: it is the πρόσωπον τηλαυγές of the body of the speech.³

Opinions will vary, but I am constant in mine: Thucydides would not have had Pericles declaim this verse unless he had in fact done so.⁴ And (despite my title) I do not imagine that Pericles broke into verse of his own making: the line belongs, as it were, in quotation marks. It must have been fairly well known, either quasi-proverbial or recent. The most probable source, I suppose, is a tragedy, though one should not forget Solon.⁵

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1. The diction is perceptibly unprosaic: first there is ὁ αὐτός *tout court* (contrast the reference back to our passage in the prose version of it set in Cleon's mouth at 3. 38. 1, ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι τῇ γνώμῃ); then there is ἐξίσταμαι *tout court*, a usage so out of the ordinary that it earns a separate classification in *LSJ* (B II. 5; cf. n. 5 below). It is true that the verbs in the continuation (μεταβάλλετε, etc.) also stand without further definition, but that is much easier, both in context (after ἐγὼ μὲν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι what is one to say *but* ὑμεῖς δὲ μεταβάλλετε?) and intrinsically: ἐξίσταμαι—elsewhere in Thucydides used only of relinquishing ἀρχή—by itself stands in greater need of amplification than does μεταβάλλω.

2. So it is no use trotting out Arist. *Poet.* 1449a24–27. The closest approximation I find in this speech is 2. 60. 1 . . . καὶ ἐκκλησίαν τούτου ἔνεκα ξυνήγαγον, which remains stolidly prosaic even if we are prepared (as we should not be) to imagine crisis of τούτου ἔνεκα; cf. Solon 36. 1–2 West. See also 2. 61. 4 (. . . καὶ ἐν ἡβασιν ἀντιπάλους) αὐτῇ τεθραμμένους χρεῶν καὶ ξυμφοραῖς (ταῖς μεγίσταις. . .)—but this is butchery. Cf. schol. at 2. 49. 3, Porpo at 6. 36. 1, Classen-Steup at I. 80. 2.

3. Most editors begin a new paragraph at 2. 61. 1 καὶ γὰρ κτλ.: better here, I would have thought, if such extratextual interference is to be practiced at all. (If we wished to apply conventional rhetorical analysis, we could say that the πίστις begins here. A scholium attaches the label παραγραφικόν to 2. 60. 5 καίτοι ἐμοὶ κτλ., thereby placing that segment still in the prooemium.)

4. This of course has some bearing on the question of the speech's authenticity, but I would not care to carry the inference beyond the theme of constancy.

5. Cf. Soph. *OT* 557 καὶ νῦν ἔτι ὁ αὐτός εἰμι τῷ βουλευμάτι. In its original context (where it may or may not have had the initial καὶ) I expect the next line continued the sense (e.g., γνώμης ἐμῆς γε or ὧν εἶχον αἰεὶ διὰ τέλους βουλευμάτων).