

here must be 'while going as ambassadors' and not 'by sending ambassadors': (a) the indictment states that the defendants sailed in an enemy ship and went by way of Deceleia; and (b) Thucydides tells us (8.90.1–2) that Antiphon went on this embassy and did not merely dispatch it. For the meaning 'go as ambassadors' see also the scholiast's interpretation of *προσβευομένους* at Thuc. 8.89.2: *τοὺς ἀπιόντας εἰς Λακεδαίμονα πρόσβεις* (C. Hude, *Scholia in Thucydidem* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 427, line 14).

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PLATO, *APOLOGY* 29d3–4: A NOTE ON THE GRAMMAR OF OBEDIENCE

In 1979, A. D. Woozley¹ proposed an interpretation of *Apology* 29c–d which was intended to alleviate the well-known tension between the *Apology* and *Crito* on the citizen's obligation to obey the law. According to his interpretation, the court's hypothetical offer – to release Socrates on the condition that he will be put to death if he does not give up philosophy – is not an order, but a warning as to what would happen should he accept their acquittal and yet continue to philosophize. Obviously, if this is the spirit of the words he puts into the court's mouth, Socrates would not be guilty of *disobedience* should he refuse the offer, or even if he should accept it and then disregard the warning. To support this interpretation, Woozley suggested a novel construal of the words in which Socrates makes his refusal – *πεῖσομαι δὲ μάλλον τῷ θεῷ ἢ ὑμῖν* (29d3–4):

We are not compelled to read Socrates as here refusing to obey a court order, he could as well be declaring that he would not *be persuaded by them* (emphasis added), that he would disregard their condition for leaving him at liberty. (p. 45)

Woozley's proposal has generally not found support among the scholars who discuss it.² For example, Richard Kraut argues (i) that since the court's offer is made on the *condition* that Socrates not philosophize, he must be understood to be subject to the court's order, and (ii) that Socrates sees himself as having originally been commanded, not persuaded, by god to philosophize.³ Both these considerations indicate that at 29d Socrates is preferring to obey one command, god's, over another command, the court's.⁴

It is striking that the objections of Kraut et al. leave untouched, indeed even concede, the grammatical validity of Woozley's reading.⁵ For it violates some very simple rules of Greek grammar. Although he does not give an explicit grammatical

¹ A. D. Woozley, *Law and Obedience: The Arguments of Plato's Crito* (Chapel Hill, 1979).

² An exception is S. Panagiotou, 'Socrates' "Defiance" in the *Apology*', *Apeiron* 20 (1987), 39–61.

³ R. Kraut, 'Plato's *Apology* and *Crito*: Two Recent Studies', *Ethics* 91 (1981), 651–64.

⁴ C. M. Young, Review of Woozley, op. cit., *Philosophical Review* 91 (1982), 109–12, offered independently what amounts to Kraut's point (ii). J. Kostman, 'Socrates' Self-Betrayal and the "Contradiction" between the *Apology* and the *Crito*', in *New Essays on Socrates*, ed. E. Kelly (Lanham, MD, 1984), 107–30, emphasizes that *ἀπειθεῖν* at 29a3 and b6 means 'disobey' and not 'fail to be persuaded by'.

⁵ Kraut, op. cit., p. 658; Young, op. cit., p. 111; Kostman, op. cit., p. 108; C. C. W. Taylor, Review of Woozley, op. cit., *Mind* 90 (1981), p. 609 says Woozley's reading is 'hard', but does not explain why.

description of *πείσομαι τῷ θεῷ*, Woozley seems to think of it as a passive verb with a dative of personal agent. Indeed, his translation, 'I will be persuaded by the god' and his remark that *πείσομαι* 'can mean anything that corresponds in the passive to the active "persuade"' (p. 45), admit no other interpretation I can imagine. Yet this is simply impossible. *πείσομαι* is a middle, not a passive form,⁶ but a dative of personal agent must be used with either a passive verb, normally in the perfect or pluperfect, or a verbal adjective in *-τός* or *-τέος*.⁷ Even if *πείσομαι* were passive, however, Woozley's construal would still be prohibitively unlikely, for it is not normal to use a dative of agent either with a future verb, or (unless the agent is a thing and not a person) with a personal subject.⁸ It should be clear then that Woozley's reading requires so much violation of recognized Greek usage and idiom as to be, in effect, impossible. If Plato had meant to say what Woozley suggests, he would have written *πεισθήσομαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ ὑμῶν*.

This point about the grammar of 29d3–4 need not, however, be a decisive objection to Woozley's overall interpretation of *Apology* 29c–d. He and his defenders can still capitalize on the fact that *πείθωμαι* has a semantic range which includes behaviour other than strict obedience to commands of authority, much like the English idiom 'listen to'.⁹ There are no grammatical objections to understanding that Socrates will heed the god rather than the men of Athens. This reading neither entails nor requires, however, that he will *be persuaded*; and since 29d3–4 cannot be interpreted as a future passive with a dative of personal agent, it should not be translated as such into English.¹⁰

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⁶ There is a class of verbs in Attic Greek whose future middle functions as a passive, but *πείθω* is not among them. See the copious examples in R. Kühner and B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache*³ ii.1 (Hannover, 1898), pp. 114–16, and the two lists of verbs in H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 220. Woozley may have been misled by the presentation of material in LSJ, s.v. *πείθω* B.1, which gathers middle and passive forms together under the meaning 'be persuaded'. Only two of the twelve examples listed there clearly mean 'be persuaded' as opposed to 'obey' or 'heed', though, and both are passives (Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 524–5; Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 1170). LSJ gives us no reason to believe that *πείθω* in the middle ever has a simple passive meaning.

⁷ Kühner–Gerth, op. cit., pp. 422–3; Smyth, op. cit., pp. 343–4.

⁸ Smyth, op. cit., p. 344.

⁹ This is clearly the operative sense at 25e5 and 29c6–7, though the grammar of these two passages does not differ from that of 29d3–4. S. Panagiotou, op. cit., claims that '*πείσομαι* at 29d3–4 is used in its very broad sense of "to comply with", "to yield to", "to listen to"' (56). As I admit, this interpretation of *πείσομαι* is possible, but it cannot be supported by Woozley's revisionary construal of the grammar.

¹⁰ I am very grateful to Chuck Young and The Editors, whose comments on the original draft of this note helped me to sharpen its argument significantly.

STATIC ELECTRICITY IN AGATHON'S SPEECH IN PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM

...ἐν πόνῳ, ἐν φόβῳ, ἐν πόθῳ, ἐν λόγῳ κυβερνήτης ἐπιβάτης παραστάτης τε καὶ σωτῆρ ἄριστος, συμπάντων τε θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων κόσμος, ἡγεμὼν κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος...

Agathon's mannered yet striking encomium on Eros in Plato's *Symposium* (197c ff.) has attracted critical attention in ample measure, yet at least one dark corner remains