

THUCYDIDES 2.88.2 AND THE SOURCES OF THE POPULARITY OF PHORMIO

GUY L. COOPER, III

University of North Carolina at Asheville

Thuc. 2.88.2 *πρότερον μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ αὐτοὺς* (sc. τοὺς στρατιώτας Ἀθηναίους) *ἔλεγε* (sc. ὁ Φορμίων) *καὶ προπαρεσκεύαζε τὰς γνώμας ὡς οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς πλήθος νέων τοσοῦτον, ἣν ἐπιπλέη, ὃ τι οὐχ ὑπομενετέον ἐστὶ . . .* (αὐτοὺς ABCEF<G> αὐτοῖς M corr. in F, Krüger, Poppo-Stahl², Classen-Steup, Hude¹, Smith, Jones-Powell, de Romilly)

When λέγειν is adverbially modified in such a way as to show that it is in effect a verb of favorable or unfavorable speech, it is found with an accusative object. Cf. Antiph. ap. Stob. *Floril.* 116.23 (= Meineke 3.51) ὦ γῆρας, . . . εὖ λέγει . . . σε οὐδεῖς, Ar. *Ecl.* 435 τὰς . . . γυναικάς πόλλ' ἀγαθὰ λέγων, Xen. *Mem.* 2.3.8 ἐπιστάμενος . . . εὖ λέγειν τὸν εὖ λέγοντα. And conversely cf. Ar. *Ach.* 503 τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω, Hdt. 8.61 Τότε δὴ ὁ Θεμιστοκλῆς κεῖνόν (sc. τὸν Ἀδεύμαντον) τε καὶ τοὺς Κορινθίους πολλά τε καὶ κακὰ ἔλεγε, Isocr. 3.3 καὶ τὸν πλοῦτον καὶ τὴν ῥώμην καὶ τὴν ἀνδρίαν κακῶς λέγουσιν.¹

This seems to be the analogy which explains a certain number of passages where λέγειν is used with an accusative of the person or personal trait. In such passages the context shows that there is an affective attitude on the part of the subject of the form of λέγειν, and that the speech referred to was in fact praise or blame. Cf. Xen. *Mem.*

¹ The construction of the accusative with verbs of good and evil speaking is discussed in K. W. Krüger, *Griechische Sprachlehre für Schulen* (Berlin 1873⁵) 1.46.7.0 and R. Kühner u. B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, Satzlehre (Hannover and Leipzig 1898³ and 1904³) 1.295.2. The latter admit that simple verbs of speaking are used in a few passages of poetry as virtual verbs of good and evil speaking, and are so construed with the accusative. But they go on to deny that there are such examples in prose—"In Prosa dürfte schwerlich etwas Ähnliches vorkommen." In the light of the passages quoted here that statement is seen to be inaccurate.

4.6.13 *Εἰ δέ τις αὐτῷ* (sc. τῷ Σωκράτει) . . . ἀντιλέγοι . . . ἥτοι σοφώτερον φάσκων εἶναι ὃν αὐτὸς λέγοι ἢ πολιτικώτερον ἢ ἀνδρειότερον ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐπανήγεν αὖν (sc. ὁ Σωκράτης) πάντα τὸν λόγον ὧδὲ πως· Φῆς σὺ ἀμείνω πολίτην εἶναι ὃν σὺ ἐπαινεῖς ἢ ὃν ἐγώ; “If someone argued with Socrates saying that the man he was talking about (i.e., praising) was more intelligent, or a better statesman, or braver, or something else of the kind, Socrates would steer the whole conversation back to the definition pretty much like this: ‘You state that the man you praise is a better citizen than the man I praise?’” Xen. *Cyrop.* 1.3.10 πάντες μὲν . . . ἅμα ἐκεκράγετε . . . λέγων . . . ἕκαστος ὑμῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ρώμην, ἔπειτ’ εἰ ἀνασταίητε ὀρχησόμενοι . . . οὐδ’ ὀρθοῦσθαι ἐδύνασθε. “You were all shouting loudly at the same time, each of you talking about (i.e., bragging upon) his own mightiness, and then if you rose to dance you couldn’t even stand up straight.” Xen. *Cyrop.* 3.1.41 ἐπεὶ δ’ ἤλθον οἴκαδε, ἔλεγον τοῦ Κύρου ὁ μὲν τις τὴν σοφίαν, ὁ δὲ τὴν καρτερίαν, ὁ δὲ τὴν πραότητα, ὁ δὲ τις καὶ τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος. “When they got home they talked (sc. and talked, i.e., carried on), one about Cyrus’ wisdom, another about his bravery, still another about his civility, and there would be an occasional person to mention his personal beauty and how tall he was.” Xen. *Cyrop.* 6.1.47 ἐκ τούτου δὴ λέγει ἡ Πάνθεια τοῦ Κύρου τὴν οἰότητα καὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην καὶ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὴν κατὸικτισιν. “Naturally from that time forth Panthea spoke of (i.e., lauded) Cyrus’ piety, his modesty, and his compassion for her.” Cf. also passages where the converse affective attitude is implicit, e.g., Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.8 Τὴν μὲν τῶν βαρβάρων ἐπιорκίαν τε καὶ ἀπιστίαν λέγει μὲν Κλεάνωρ, ἐπίστασθε δὲ οἶμαι καὶ ὑμεῖς. “Cleanor has spoken of (i.e., described and condemned) the perfidy and ill-faith of the Barbarians, but, I think, you too understand it.” Xen. *Cyrop.* 6.1.35 ὁ Ἀρταβάζος . . . ἐλοιδόρησεν αὐτόν (sc. τὸν Ἀράσπαν) . . . ἀσέβειάν τε αὐτοῦ λέγων ἀδίκιαν τε καὶ ἀκράτειαν (λέγων codd. edd. pler. ψέγων Gemoll). “Artabazus rebuked him, talking about (i.e., complaining of) his lack of respect for the gods, his cheating and his depravity.” And cf. also (a passage where the ambiguity of the idiom is deliberately played upon) Xen. *Cyrop.* 1.4.24 ἀνήγεν ὁ Ἀστυάγης, μάλα χαίρων καὶ τῇ ἵπποκρατίᾳ, καὶ τὸν Κῦρον οὐκ ἔχων ὃ τι χρὴ λέγειν, αἷτιον μὲν ὄντα εἰδὼς τοῦ ἐργοῦ, μαινόμενον δὲ γινώσκων τῇ τόλμῃ. “Astyages led his forces

back home and rejoiced at the victory of his cavalry, but he was quite uncertain how he should speak of Cyrus (i.e., whether in praise or blame), for while he knew that Cyrus was responsible for the success, he also recognised that the boy was insanely possessed with daring."

Considering these parallels, I believe that it would be best to read *αὐτοῦς* in our Thucydides passage, and translate, "For even before this he always had a good deal to say about them, and tried to arm their morale in advance with the idea that there was no fleet, no matter how large in numbers, against which, if it should attack, they might not with confidence stand and fight." The accusative is better attested, and, since it is the less common construction, it is also the *lectio difficilior*. But beyond these advantages it also avoids the repetition of *αὐτοῖς*, about which both Poppo-Stahl² and Classen-Steup have expressed some worry. Furthermore the sense is also improved. *πρότερον . . . αἰεὶ αὐτοῖς ἔλεγε* would only mean that Phormio harangued his troops frequently. The accusative, however, would suggest that Phormio followed a consistent policy of building morale by means of judicious praise. He might, according to this reading, have applied his policy not only in speeches, but also in personal conversation, with small groups of soldiers, or at staff meetings. Surely this is the sort of deportment which best helps us understand the penchant shown by Aristophanes' choruses at *Eq.* 562, *Lys.* 804, and *Pax* 347 for fond recollection of Phormio.² Not only was he a vigorous and successful general who had led the Athenians in the by-gone hours of their greatest triumphs, but he was also a man who had understood the uses of gruff flattery.³

² See further the scholiasts on the passages just cited, and especially on *Pax* 347, who seem to suggest that Phormio's soldierly simplicity (*λιτὸς δὲ οὗτος καὶ στρατιωτικός*) made him the subject of popular anecdotes. The statement is made that he was mentioned in other plays of Aristophanes now lost and also in comedies by Eupolis, Strattis and Cratinus.

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