

## ALCIBIADES' CRITICISM OF NICIAS AT THUC. 6.18.1<sup>1</sup>

GUY L. COOPER, III

*University of North Carolina at Asheville*

In the late fall of 416, envoys from Segesta in Sicily persuaded the Assembly of the Athenians to send envoys to Segesta in order to investigate the practicability of heeding the Segestaeans' call for Athenian assistance against the Selinuntians. The Athenian envoys were misled about how effectively the Segestaeans could support an Athenian expedition with payments in precious metals, and on returning with a party of their Segestaeans the envoys recommended an expedition. The Athenians, under the influence of dreams of Empire in the Western Mediterranean, voted to send sixty ships, and placed Alcibiades, Nicias and Lamachus in charge.

But at a meeting four days later Nicias opened the question again and argued (6.9–14) in favor of rescinding the earlier vote. Alcibiades then countered (6.16–18) in favor of retaining the earlier decision. As the climax of a development beginning at 6.17.2, in which he heaps scorn on all the supposed difficulties of the undertaking, he is reported at 6.18.1 to have demanded: "Ὡστε τί ἂν λέγοντες εἰκὸς ἡ αὐτοῖς ἀποκνοῖμεν ἢ πρὸς τοὺς ἐκεῖ ξυμμάχους σκηπτόμενοι μὴ βοηθοῖμεν; οἷς χρεῶν, ἐπειδὴ γε καὶ ξυνωμόσαμεν, ἐπαμύνειν καὶ μὴ ἀντιτιθέναι ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἡμῖν. οὐ γὰρ ἵνα δεῦρο ἀντιβοηθῶσι προσεθέμεθα αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα τοῖς ἐκεῖ ἐχθροῖς ἡμῶν λυπηροὶ ὄντες δεῦρο κωλύωσιν αὐτοὺς ἐπιέναι. "So how could we ourselves reasonably explain our hesitation, and what could we decently allege to our allies in that part of the world so (sc. as to say along with my opponent) 'let us not go to their assistance!'"? Rather we ought to assist

<sup>1</sup>It has seemed convenient to use a few bibliographical abbreviations: Cooper, *STT* = Guy L. Cooper, III, *Zur syntaktischen Theorie und Textkritik der attischen Autoren* (Zurich 1971); Gildersleeve-Miller, *SCG* = Basil L. Gildersleeve and C. W. E. Miller, *Syntax of Classical Greek* I–II (New York, Cincinnati, Chicago 1900–1911); Kühner-Gerth, *AG* = R. Kühner and B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, zweiter Teil: *Satzlehre*, in two volumes (Hannover and Leipzig 1898<sup>3</sup> and 1904<sup>3</sup>). I quote Thucydides from Jones-Powell. I wish to thank Alison Burford, James Poultney, Harold Cherniss, and the *TAPA* referees for their kind help and comments.

them, especially since we have given our oaths to do so, and we ought not to object (sc. as my opponent does) that ‘neither have they helped us.’ No, for it was not in order that they might bring aid here that we received them as allies, but in order that by annoying our enemies there they might hinder them from coming here against us.”

The first of these sentences contains a construction that has never been successfully explained and interpreted. The negative *μή* seems to be used with a potential optative (optative with *ἄν*) although the only negative that this construction allows is *οὐ*. The purpose of this paper is to argue that the anomaly should be explained by taking both *μή βοηθοῖμεν* and the subsequent *οὐδὲ ἐκείνοι ἡμῖν* (sc. *ἀπήμυναν*) to be phrases presented by Alcibiades as summary fictive quotations representing the argument of his opponent, the preceding speaker Nicias.<sup>2</sup> The consequence would be that, since *μή βοηθοῖμεν* stands alone for itself, the preceding *ἄν* does not have any effect upon it.

A discussion of the efforts that have already been made to explain the passage is something more than a mere preliminary. It is true that these efforts have not led to a satisfactory conclusion, but they can still make a valuable contribution to the understanding of the passage by leading to a negative proof of the interpretation here urged.

The first such effort to be considered is an attempt made by syntactical authorities to explain *μή* as a regular use of this form of the negative. The second is an attempt made by the commentators on the passage to gain an idiomatic sympathy with the negative in this form.

W. W. Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (Boston 1903<sup>3</sup>) §292.2 (p. 101), makes the most copiously argued effort to explain the passage as a regular construction. He tries to show that, in questions with the potential optative, *μή* is admissible regularly as an alternative to *οὐ*. His position was left untenable by the criticism in Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 2.186 ff. Here Goodwin’s examples are disposed of in various ways, but for the most part they are found to be indirect questions dependent upon verbs expressing purpose. In such cases the form of the negative may be well explained as due to the influence of the leading verb.

<sup>2</sup>It would probably be best in future editions to place these fictive quotations in quotation marks. In this connection it should be noted that the second of the two is introduced by *ὅτι*, which is itself the nearest approximation in Classical Greek orthography to the modern quotation marks, cf. Cooper, *STT* 204–07. The presence of this word has in the past usually caused the phrase *οὐδ’ ἐκείνοι ἡμῖν* to be interpreted as in some sense similar to a quotation, even by those who do not seem to have gained a clear over-all conception of the movement of the passage. See the gloss in Poppo-Stahl according to which *ἀντιτιθέναι* = *ἀντιλέγειν*, *obicere*. Similarly LSJ s.v. *ἀντιτίθημι* I.3 translate “retort, rejoin.”

Kühner-Gerth do not, however, abandon the interrogative theory entirely. Rather it is retained specifically for Thuc. 6.18.1 and for one other example. But that other example is certainly better explained otherwise.<sup>3</sup> Therefore more recent treatments of the negative omit all reference to the supposed construction, and leave the problem of Thuc. 6.18.1 both unsolved and unmentioned.<sup>4</sup> From the point of view of normative syntax, μή with an optative and ἄν outside of a dependent question must be accounted an absolute anomaly.

<sup>3</sup>The supposed parallel is Hdt. 3.127.2 Ὡ Πέρσαι, τίς ἄν μοι τοῦτο ὑμῶν ὑποστὰς ἐπιτελέσειε σοφίη καὶ μὴ βίη τε καὶ ὀμίλῳ; "Men of Persia, would that someone among you might undertake this matter for me and carry it out by skill, and not carry it out by mere force and weight of numbers!" τίς with the potential optative makes the question a wish and gives it the force of an imperative. This construction, which is very common in tragedy, and is more commonly found with πῶς than with τίς or ὡς, is copiously documented in Ewald Bruhn, *Sophokles erklärt* von F. W. Schneidewin und A. Nauck VIII "Anhang" 63 (§112), cf. Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 1.235.6, and Gildersleeve-Miller, *SCG* §446. Any doubt about the matter is removed by Stein's strikingly complete Homeric parallels *Il.* 10.303–04 and *Od.* 15.195–96. The negative μή is used simply to extend the established positive command of the first part of the sentence as a negative command in the second part. This proper interpretation of the passage at Hdt. 3.127.2 makes it unacceptable as a parallel to Thuc. 6.18.1 because, as is shown in the argument further on, a prohibitive sense of μὴ βοηθοῦμεν makes Alcibiades contradict himself, unless the phrase can be taken as Nicias' thought. But if μὴ βοηθοῦμεν derives its imperative force from its relation to the interrogative form of the sentence as a whole, it cannot be considered separately, and must represent Alcibiades' thought. As to Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 2.186 ff., it misses the true force of μὴ in the Herodotean passage. This is a corollary of the fact that inadequate appreciation is shown throughout Kühner-Gerth that μὴ can be used, as it is here, to extend any form of command in a prohibitive sense, even where μὴ would not otherwise be possible. Thus at Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 1.178.6, a supposed prohibitive version of the commonplace use of the future as an imperative is accepted as a standard construction, although the single most convincing example of the otherwise weakly attested construction (cf. Gildersleeve-Miller, *SCG* §270) is Dem. 23.117 φυλάξετε . . . καὶ μὴ βουλήσεσθε, and so the whole supposed construction collapses if one grasps that this is only the special use of μὴ to continue any command in negative form. And again at Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 1.177, cf. 2.221.8, the treatment of the οὐ μὴ constructions is sadly jumbled by the inclusion in it of passages where each negative has its own verb, e.g., Plato, *Symp.* 175a οὐκ οὖν καλεῖς αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ ἀφήσεις; Arguing against this confusion in analysis, B. L. Gildersleeve, *AJP* 3 (1882) 205, had already shown that, in such passages, the first member is the regular use of a question with οὐ and a future indicative to give a positive command (cf. Gildersleeve-Miller, *SCG* §271, and Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 1.176.7 f.), and that this positive command is simply continued in negative form by the μὴ in the second member, which has merely supplementary significance. For other examples of similar pleonasm involving antithetical parallelism see Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 2.586.8.

<sup>4</sup>So Eduard Schwyzler, *Griechische Grammatik*, II. *Syntax und syntaktische Stilistik* (Munich 1950), treatment of negatives 540–99, esp. 594 ff.; A. C. Woodhouse, *Studies in Greek Negatives* (Cardiff 1959), treatment of negatives *passim*; H. W. Smyth and Gordon M. Messing, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA 1963<sup>3</sup>), treatment of negatives 609–29, esp. 620 ff.; Jean Humbert, *Syntaxe Grecque* (Paris 1972<sup>3</sup>), treatment of negatives 345–87. Only J. M.

Faced with this failure the commentators have been forced to do the best they could with the passage, using only their practised, but otherwise unaided, sensibilities. In so doing they grope, I believe, toward an essential advance over anything hitherto offered by formal analysis. The remarks in two standard commentaries run as follows: Classen-Steup, “*μὴ βοηθοῦμεν*: das ungewöhnliche *μὴ* soll wohl die Möglichkeit dass sich ein plausibler Grund finden lasse, besonders entschieden ablehnen;” cf. Poppo-Stahl *ad loc.* “Propter hanc recusandi vim in verbis *μὴ βοηθοῦμεν* latentem praeter consuetudinem *μὴ* positum est.”<sup>5</sup>

Neither commentator denies the anomaly, but both suggest that a peculiar vehemence about the words *μὴ βοηθοῦμεν* justifies the irregular negative. I think that their feeling about a sudden forcefulness in the words *μὴ βοηθοῦμεν* is correct, and I suppose that in failing to let their idiomatic sensibilities guide them a little further the commentators narrowly miss the true interpretation of the passage. We should recognise in *μὴ βοηθοῦμεν* an anacoluthic wish-optative. Precisely in the prohibitive form and in coordinated construction there is an occasional sudden shift of this kind. See Dem. 8.68 Ἐγὼ ἀναιδῆς οὐτ’ εἰμι μήτε γενοίμην, 19.49 οὐτ’ ἦν μήτε γένοιτο, Soph. Ant. 686 οὐτ’ ἂν δυνάμην μήτ’ ἐπισταίμην.

There is, however, a difficulty here that has doubtless kept the commentators from trusting to what seems to have been their natural feeling about the passage. From the historical point of view this interpretation results in an incomprehensible contradiction. Throughout

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Stahl, *Kritisch-historische Syntax des griechischen Verbums der klassischen Zeit* (Heidelberg 1907) 765, still retains the interrogative theory and attempts to supply two more examples. But Stahl misconstrues these passages. At Plato, *Leges* 887c *μὴ θυμῷ sine ira* (Harold Cherniss), the negative is adnominal (see the references and further examples immediately below in note 5). Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 2.186.2, had already correctly observed that at Plato, *Crat.* 426d, *μὴ τὸ δὲν* is almost the same as *τὸ μὴ δὲν*. It should, however, be added that the expressive position of the negative before the article produces litotes, cf. Lys. 20.5 *μὴ τὰ ἄριστα*, Plato, *Rep.* 389c *μὴ τὰ δύντα*, Thuc. 3.57.1 *μὴ τὰ εἰκότα*.

<sup>5</sup>These commentators correctly discarded a passage that had earlier been adduced by Krüger *ad loc.*, namely Dem. 23.75 *πῶς γὰρ ἂν δίκαι’ ἅμα ταῦτ’ αἰ καὶ μὴ γένοιτο*; “. . . for how can the same act at the same time be both just and unjust?” (Vince). This is an elliptical adnominal generic-hypothetical *μὴ*, so that the construction must be understood to be *δίκαι’ ἅμα καὶ μὴ* (sc. *δίκαια*). The following passages show a similar elliptical *μὴ* which is juxtaposed to, but cannot be construed with, a verb form: Eur. *Alc.* 528 *χωρὶς τότ’ εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ* (sc. *εἶναι*) *νομίζεται*, Plato, *Leges* 638b *δεῖ τό τε χρηστὸν καὶ τὸ μὴ* (sc. *χρηστὸν*) *σκοπεῖν*, Plato, *Phaedrus* 277b *τὸ . . . ἐντεχνον καὶ μὴ* (sc. *ἐντεχνον*) *δοκεῖ μοι δεδηλώσθαι*. For doctrinal statements on *μὴ* with substantives and for additional examples see LSJ s.v. *μὴ* B.7, and Kühner-Gerth, *AG* 2.197.4. (For the adnominal *μὴ* at Plato, *Leges* 887c, see note 4 above.)

the speech Alcibiades has argued in favor of the Sicilian expedition. But *μὴ βοηθοῖμεν* as an anacoluthic wish-optative can only be a wish, indeed practically a prayer, that the expedition should not take place. Alcibiades cannot have been meant to voice such a sentiment, cannot, that is, if he is supposed to accept responsibility for it. Supposing that Alcibiades must speak the phrase as his own thought, the commentators have backed away from what would otherwise seem the most natural interpretation. I suggest that it is better to draw a different conclusion, and take it that Alcibiades is not meant to accept responsibility for the words, but that he is made by Thucydides to utter them as a semi-quotation. Certainly the person upon whom responsibility for the thought, *μὴ βοηθοῖμεν*, "may we not go to their assistance," should be placed is Nicias. He has just been portrayed as speaking at length against the expedition.

The negative argument or argument by elimination that has just been urged need not stand alone. It can be supplemented by positive arguments showing the advantages that the new understanding of the passage offers.

The new understanding, unlike the earlier solutions offered, is technically feasible and attractive. This holds good from the point of view of both syntactical and, especially, rhetorical analysis.

Taking up the former approach first, one finds that the exact construction called for, an anacoluthic wish-optative with *μὴ* that occurs as a mocking fictive quotation in a sentence where *οὐ* with an optative in the sense of a potential is expected, is indeed rare. Yet at least one passage where the same thing occurs can be adduced. This is Dem. 4.31: *τοῖς πνεύμασι καὶ ταῖς ὥραις τοῦ ἔτους τὰ πολλὰ προλαμβάνων διαπράττεται Φίλιππος, καὶ φυλάξας τοὺς ἐτησίας ἢ τὸν χειμῶν' ἐπιχειρεῖ, ἥνίκ' ἂν ἡμεῖς μὴ δυναίμεθ' ἐκεῖσ' ἀφικέσθαι*. "Philip is forward in carrying out most of his projects by virtue of the annual winds and seasons, and makes his attack after he has carefully waited for the winds from Thrace or the rainy season, when we 'please may not be able to reach his quarter!'"

Here the proximity of *μὴ* to *ἂν* is so striking that K. W. Krüger, *Griechische Sprachlehre für Schulen, Attische Syntax* (Berlin 1873<sup>5</sup>) 1.65.7.2, suggested the emendation of *μὴ* to *οὐ*. But that was a mistake.<sup>6</sup> Demosthenes simply attributes an original thought *μὴ δύναιντο* (sc. *οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι*) *δεῦρο ἀφικέσθαι* to Philip, and this supposed heart-felt wish is meant to be a reassuring and cozening compliment to the author's

<sup>5</sup>*ἂν* is disregarded as the sentence proceeds and thus there is an anacoluthon. In Gildersleeve-Miller, *SCG* §448, *ἂν* left hanging this way is well referred to as "adherent *ἂν*." Such adherence is never really common in Classical literature. But it occurs more often in temporal sentences than elsewhere. See Cooper, *STT* 33–36.

Athenian audience. He suggests that Philip is only too aware that the further success of his schemes is entirely dependent upon continued Athenian inactivity. Demosthenes is urging the establishment of Athenian year-round presence in the North Aegean, and he is interested in inducing belief in his audience that such an expense on their part would indeed effectively check Philip.

Henri Weil in his commentary has understood the significance of the optative and its unexpected negative perfectly: “Μὴ δυνάίμεθ(α). La negation *μὴ* et l’optativ indiquent que telle est la pensée de Philippe.” This has convinced editors who retain *μὴ*. Still more readily can the same syntax be admitted at Thuc. 6.18.1, for in this place the distance between *μὴ* and *ἄν* makes the construction much easier.

Considered from the point of view of rhetorical analysis, Thuc. 6.18.1 is an example of hypophora, i.e., it presents in a form suitably adapted to monologue a fictive dialogue between the speaker Alcibiades and his opponent Nicias.<sup>7</sup>

The figure is found in other speeches in Thucydides, for instance in Archidamus’ anti-war speech delivered at the first conference at Sparta in 432/1 (1.80–81.2), and in Athenagoras’ speech given at Syracuse in 415 against action in response to rumors of the approach of the Athenian expedition (6.38.5–39.1). These are full-scale examples of great formal clarity. But by nature of their very extensiveness and elaboration, these examples of hypophora take on a stylistic life of their own that draws them away from the immediate tendentiousness that the figure can show. They do not have the aggressive focus on a specific opponent that Alcibiades’ attack on Nicias shows.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The parallels cited in this section are adopted from the more thorough discussion of hypophora found in “Das angedeutete Wort des Gegners (Hypophora),” Cooper, *STT* 10–31. See there for the particular value of the *λύσις* (speaker’s retort) in establishing the existence of hypophora p. 16, for the use of *ὥς* and of *ὅτι* to introduce hypophora proper pp. 10–12, for the introduction of the *λύσις* by a relative p. 17, for the introduction of the *λύσις* by *οὐ* pp. 18 and 20–21. One of the important general conclusions of the discussion throughout these pages in Cooper is that hypophora as a figure of thought presses widely varying constructions into use. Many formally irregular and divergent forms occur, with the result that some examples of the figure have not been generally recognised. The irregular feature of the hypophora at Thuc. 6.18.1 is the unusual form of the first element of hypophora proper *μὴ βοηθοῖμεν*, and this it is, I argue, that has hitherto kept the figure from being recognised in this place. Thuc. 6.18.1 perfectly illustrates the conclusion drawn on p. 17: “Wir müssen uns also in Zweifelfällen zu guter letzt mit dem Sinne des Textes als der letzten entscheidenden Instanz auseinandersetzen.” See further p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>They are developed for the most part by the use of the commonplace strongly adversative conjunction *ἀλλὰ* to mark both hypophora proper and *λύσις* (cf. Cooper, *STT* 14–15). It is

However, the system of hypophora that Alcibiades is depicted as using does not purchase its brilliance at the expense of formal clarity. This system, as it is recognised and translated above, consists of two elements of hypophora proper, i.e., two fictive quotations given as summarizing the argument of the opponent, here clearly Nicias, and two elements of retort, i.e., two statements by means of which the speaker, here Alcibiades, answers the supposed objections of his opponent. Each of these four elements of the system shows a clear identifying formal sign. In the case of all but the first element of the system this sign is one that is in general use in hypophora. The sign of this first hypophora proper *μη βοηθοῦμεν* is the form of the negative, not *οὐ*, but *μή*. I have shown above that it cannot be conveniently interpreted unless it is taken to stand apart from the rest of the sentence as a fictive quotation attributed to Nicias. It is thus appropriate for use in hypophora. And it is extremely unlikely that it is not so used. For the rest of the four-part system is in absolutely regular form.

The second element of hypophora proper, which is *οὐδὲ ἐκείνοι ἡμῖν*, has as its introduction *ἀντιτιθέναι* (= *ἀντιλέγειν*) *ᾧτι*. See for this the discussion in note 1. Statements that are clear examples of hypophora proper and that are introduced in this form may be studied at Antiphon 5.57 *λέγειν . . . ᾧς*, Dem. 7.2 *ἔλεγε . . . ᾧς*, 16.11 *τῶν ἀντιλεγόντων ᾧς*, 20.105 *λέγειν . . . ᾧς*, 20.125 *ἐροῦσ' ᾧτι*, 20.131 *ἐροῦσιν ᾧς*, 20.145 *λέγεις ᾧτι*, Dinarchus 1.11 *λέγων . . . ᾧς*.

The formal sign of the first element of retort—what is called in the technical language of rhetorical analysis the *λύσις*—is the relative *οἷς*. Clear examples of *λύσις* introduced in this way may be studied at Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.41 *οἷ γε*, Isocrates 4.175 *δι' ᾧς*, 17.47 *ὅς*, 17.49 *ὅς*, Dem. 8.38 *οἷς*, 21.148 *ἐν οἷς*, 25.79 *περὶ οὗ*, Dinarchus 1.13 *ἐφ' αἷς*. This form of *λύσις*

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not quite clear whether the adversary intended by Archidamus is the Corinthians, whose speech precedes his own, or the Spartan advocate of the Corinthian wishes, the Ephor Sthenelaidas, whose speech follows Archidamus'. Similarly the opponent intended by Athenagoras seems to be less Hermocrates, whose speech immediately precedes his own, than the bellicose party of aristocratic youths, to whom Hermocrates' speech probably had the greatest appeal. The character of Archidamas' hypophora is thus not allowed to detract from the prudent wisdom of the over-all impression. Athenagoras' elaborate and rather unspecifically directed hypophora achieves a different effect by somewhat similar means. It is one of the ways Thucydides has of bringing out the tiresomely doctrinaire, even pedantic, aspect of this speaker's demotic fanaticism. For less elaborate hypophora in Thucydides, this time with reference to a somewhat more specific opponent, see 3.66.4, and for hypophora with a sharply aggressive focus on a specific opponent, see many of the examples from Demosthenes cited above, and cf. Dinarchus 1.12–13. The formal signs of hypophora in this passage closely resemble the signs at Thuc. 6.18.1.

seems to show the strong adversative force that can attach to relatives. Exceptionally, as at Isocrates 17.47 and Dem. 8.38, the relative refers to the opponent. But in most of these examples, as also at Thuc. 6.18.1, this is not the reference of the relative. Hence it is probably in all cases the adversative force that makes the relative appropriate for the introduction of these statements in rebuttal. Other words used to introduce λύσις are also typically adversative in sense.

The second λύσις is introduced by οὐ γάρ. Clear examples of λύσις in closely analogous form where οὐ has a strongly adversative force may be studied at Thuc. 3.66.4 οὐκ, ἄν, Lysias 34.4 οὐκ, ἄν, Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.19 οὐκ, ἄν, Dem. 23.166 οὐκ ἔστι, Dinarchus 1.12(bis) οὐκ, ἀλλά, cf. Thuc. 5.101 οὐκ, ἄν in the actual dialogue of the Melian debate, and similarly Plato, *Phaedo* 89b οὐκ, ἄν.

It is not reasonable to believe that this confluence of formal indicators of a system of hypophora, occurring in a passage that cannot be explained except on the supposition of hypophora, is merely fortuitous.

The recognition of the previously unnoticed hypophora in this place reveals a stylistic movement in the passage that was hitherto obscured, and this is a powerful positive argument for the proposed solution. But a no less powerful argument derives from the sense that the proposed solution allows us to discover in the passage. Because of the extremely close inter-relationship of the two speeches, both speakers being present and speaking in succession on the same subject, the two phrases μὴ βοηθοῦμεν and οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἡμῖν (sc. ἀπήμυναν) are, doubtless, not only fictive quotations from Nicias but also direct hits at him personally, and adverse comments on the arguments he used. By the mock-prayer form of the first expression Alcibiades suggests trepidation, and this is directed at supposed pusillanimity in Nicias. The second expression suggests petty want of Athenian generosity, and Alcibiades goes on in the second λύσις to show that this is incompatible with the imperial stature of the city, and with the policy by which that stature was attained.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>My understanding that the passage contains a large element of sarcastic invective directed at Nicias personally fits statements in Classical authors about Alcibiades' style in political oratory. Cf. Dem. 21.143 βδελυρὸς καὶ ὑβρίστης ὦστο (sc. ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης) δεῖν εἶναι, and Andocides 4.16 διατετέλεκεν (sc. ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης) . . . ἕνα . . . ἕκαστον προπηλακίζων. It may be that the difficulty of the passage results when Thucydides attempts to suggest peculiarities of Alcibiades' manner. There is evidence that Thucydides has a general tendency, both in the speeches and in narrative, to characterize leading historical personalities with rapid but significant strokes that today often either go unnoticed or lead to textual problems. I have discussed idiosyncracies of Alcibiades' language in Thucydides in "Prepositional Problems in Thucydides, Xenophon, Isaeus and Plato I," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 403–09. And similarly for Nicias see "Wiedergabe der Sprache des Einzelnen" in Cooper, *STT* 95–102. Other historical



The substantial point in Nicias' contentions to which οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἡμῖν (sc. ἐπήμυναν) refers is his argument that the alliance with the Segestaeans is not effectively reciprocal, and should not therefore be binding. This comes out, e.g., at 6.10.5 Ἐγεσταίοις δὴ οὐσι ξυμμάχοις, where the particle δὴ suggests that the Segestaeans are allies in name only.<sup>10</sup> Again, after chiding what he considers the patent mendacity of the Segestaeon diplomatic committee, Nicias insists upon their unequal contribution to the proposed venture, 6.12.1 λόγους μόνον παρασχομένους. And it is doubtless with reference to the Segestaeans that he approaches his conclusion at 6.13.2 with a general recommendation against alliances that do not benefit the Athenians as well as the other party.

The point of substantive recommendation in Nicias' speech to which μὴ βοηθοῖμεν, "may we not go to their assistance," refers is his rejection of the expedition. This thought is the general content of the speech and comes out in many specific statements throughout, e.g., 6.9.1 μὴ οὕτως βραχείᾳ βουλῇ . . . πόλεμον οὐ προσήκοντα ἄρασθαι, 6.9.3 μὴ τοῖς ἐτοίμοις περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν καὶ μελλόντων κινδυνεύειν, 6.10.5 μὴ μετεώρῳ τε (τῇ) πόλει κινδυνεύειν καὶ ἀρχῆς ἄλλης ὀρέγεσθαι, 6.11.6 μὴ πρὸς τὰς τύχας τῶν ἐναντίων ἐπαίρεσθαι, 6.12.2 εἰ τέ τις . . . παραινεῖ ὑμῖν ἐκπλεῖν . . . μηδὲ τούτῳ ἐμπαράσχητε τῷ τῆς πόλεως κινδύνῳ ἰδίᾳ ἐλλαμπρύνεσθαι, 6.13.1 ὅπως μὴ δόξει, ἐὰν μὴ ψηφίζεται πολεμεῖν, μαλακὸς εἶναι. Of all of these statements and of others μὴ βοηθοῖμεν is a summary representative.<sup>11</sup>

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figures are discussed in my "Thucydides 2.88.2 and the Sources of the Popularity of Phormio," *TAPA* 106 (1976) 97–99; "Thuc. 8.33.4 and the Use of Torture by the Spartans Pedaritus and Astyocheus during Interrogations at Erythrae in 411," *Studi in Onore di Anthos Ardizzoni* (Messina-Rome 1978) 223–29; "Thuc. 5.65.3 and the Tactical Obsession of Agis II on the Day before the Battle of Mantinea," *TAPA* 108 (1978) 35–40.

<sup>10</sup>See schol. *ad loc.* ἡμεῖς δὲ Ἐγεσταίοις . . . ] ἡμεῖς δ' Ἐγεσταίοις δῆθεν ἀδικουμένοις. ἡ ὡς δῆθεν ξυμμάχοις οὐσιν Mv<sub>2</sub>. The second interpretative remark is the more precise. We find δὴ used similarly elsewhere in association with participles of εἶμι to ironise terms descriptive of official relations between Athens and other cities. See 3.10.6 ἡμεῖς δὲ αὐτόνομοι δὴ ὄντες καὶ ἐλεύθεροι τῷ ὀνόματι ξυνεστρατεύσαμεν, and schol. *ad loc.* αὐτόνομοι δὴ ὄντες ] ἐμφατικῶς εἶπε τὸ δὴ, ἀντὶ τοῦ δῆθεν, καὶ μέχρι μόνου ὀνόματος ἐλεύθεροι καὶ οὐκ αὐταῖς ἀληθείαις Gfc<sub>2</sub>. Similarly 6.80.2 καίτοι κάλλιον . . . τοὺς Ἀθηναίους φίλους δὴ ὄντας μὴ ἔασαι ἀμαρτεῖν, and schol. *ad loc.* φίλους δὴ ὄντας ] προφασίζομένους εἶναι φίλους Mv<sub>2</sub>. J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford 1954<sup>2</sup>) 234–35, discusses these passages and several roughly comparable passages both in Thucydides and other authors. He concludes that the particle "denotes that words are not to be taken at their face value, objectively, but express something merely believed, or ironically supposed, to be true."

<sup>11</sup>It is possible that Alcibiades' choice of language here is influenced by Nicias' caustic remark at 6.10.5 ἡμεῖς δὲ . . . ὀξέως βοηθοῖμεν. But I think the reference intended is probably not so specific. We must beware of trying to find anything much like literal quotation in hypophora. It is the proper rhetorical purpose of the figure to put words into the mouth of

Alcibiades makes his reference to Nicias' policy with a pithiness that stands in sharp contrast to Nicias' repetitious and circumlocutory sententiousness. In this way we are reminded of the double conflict between the two men, both a conflict of policy and a conflict of personality. Thucydides explains to us at 2.55.10–11 what an important factor in the ultimate misfortunes of Athens he considered these rivalries among the leaders of the city to be.

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one's opponent, and thus to set up a straw man who can be more easily vanquished. The arguments attributed to such a phantom of one's opponent are likely to be impressionistic, abridged, and often absurd versions of anything the real opponent—in this case Nicias—would be likely to say.