

Philistus Still

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AT GRBS 17 (1976) 23–30 I collected various difficulties experienced by scholars with Thucydides 7.42.3 and suggested what I took to be the most economical solution to those difficulties. Matthew W. Dickie, without proposing a new solution to the dilemmas of the passage, defends its authenticity by referring to 6.63.2 and Demosthenes' opinion that follows the parenthesis. I dealt with both passages at p.29 n.15. The correct but insufficient view that an army is most frightening on its arrival Thucydides attributes to the Syracusan mob and to Demosthenes, the foolish and the reckless, both on the eve of defeat. The passage I bracketed would have attributed the view to Thucydides himself.

Other objections follow.

(1) "The real problem of 7.42.3 is" the suggestion "that the first Athenian attack on Syracuse came after the winter spent at Catana. . . . There is no reason at all to think that Philistus believed that the Athenians did not attack Syracuse until the spring of 414 B.C. In short, . . ." my solution "simply transfers the problem from Thucydides to Philistus" (Dickie, pp.217f). We know that Philistus differed from Thucydides on material points (pp.27–28). We do not know that the quotations would have been a contradiction in his anti-Nician account. The remarks may have been spoken in direct discourse by Demosthenes, Menander or Euthydemus; the latter two are important figures in Philistus' account but are hardly mentioned by Thucydides.

(2) *καὶ αὐτὸς* following the bracketed passage means "he too," and by implying a reference to someone other than Demosthenes who was most frightening on arrival, the phrase protects the parenthesis (Dickie p.218). "Denniston was once heard saying to a pupil, 'Kai of course can mean "and"'. ' (C. M. Bowra, *Memories* [Cambridge (Mass.) 1967] 256). It can also mean 'also' or 'too'; see *GP*² 289–94. "Hence, by an easy transition, the sense of addition sometimes recedes into the background, while the sense of climax predominates, a ladder of which

only the top rung is clearly seen. 'Even' then passes into 'actually', and *καί* is little more than a particle of emphasis, like *δή*. As such, it precedes, and emphasizes, various parts of speech" (GP² 316–17). *καὶ αὐτὸς* need mean nothing more than 'he himself'. (If taken closely with *ἐστι* [GP² 326–27], it could mean 'actually was most frightening'.) There is a link and contrast with the Nicias of the previous clause, but this in no way protects the parenthesis. The parallelism of expression in the two passages is as well explained by considering the bracketed passage to be an intrusive marginal note, and this explanation also solves the substantive difficulties of the passage.

(3) The parenthesis is necessary because "as it stands, it is by no means clear what is supposed to have happened to Nicias" (Dickie p.218). Thucydides' description of the Sicilian Expedition is one of the masterpieces of Greek prose. Few readers will need to be reminded at Book 7 chapter 47 "what is supposed to have happened to Nicias." If any do need reminding, they surely do not require a summary at once incomplete, misleading and in direct contradiction to Thucydides' account both on points of fact and of interpretation.

The simplest and most economical explanation of the problems of 7.42.3 remains the intrusion of a marginal quotation of Philistus.