

Envoys and ethos : team speaking by envoys in classical Greece

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III

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ENVOYS AND *ETHOS*: TEAM SPEAKING BY ENVOYS IN CLASSICAL GREECE

I. Introduction: envoys' speeches and the genre of symbouleutic oratory

There is broad agreement in modern scholarship that envoys' speeches were not recognised as a specific genre of oratory until the late classical or early Hellenistic period. The earliest attestations of the terminology *logos presbeutikos* may be traced back to Apollodoros' *Chronika*, and possibly even as far back as Douris of Samos, who wrote in the late 4th and early 3rd century.¹ The most famous use of the generic designation *logos presbeutikos* is found in Polybios' *Histories* (12, 25a3 and 12, 25i3) where, rather surprisingly, *logoi presbeutikoi* are juxtaposed with *demegoriai* and *logoi symbouleutikoi* respectively. But in fact so little is left of 4th and 3rd century literature that it would be very ill-advised to argue *e silentio* that envoys' speeches were not recognised as an important category of oratory until the early Hellenistic period. Nor does the coinage itself necessarily indicate that envoys' speeches were recognised as a more important part of the diplomatic process in the Hellenistic period than they had been in the 5th and 4th centuries.²

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the designation *logos presbeutikos* is very much at odds with the main generic

¹ See BARON (2013) 171 n. 9 for references to the debate.

² Pace WOOTEN (1973).

distinctions applied by classical rhetoricians, and in particular with those we find articulated in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: sym-bouleutic, dikeianic and epideiktic. True, envoys' speeches were often deliberative in nature, which is reflected by the fact that both Aischines and Demosthenes quite happily refer to such sym-bouleutic speeches as *demegoriai* and to the delivery of them with the verb δημηγορέω, without any qualification.³ However, when an envoy spoke for his *polis* in an interstate dispute, or when one *polis* sent out representatives to complain to another *polis* about the latter's conduct or the conduct of one of its citizens, his speech would most likely have borne a closer resemblance to the dikeianic genre in Aristotelian terms.⁴ Likewise, some envoys' speeches seem to have been mainly epideiktic in nature, such as the one allegedly delivered by Ktesiphon when sent as Athenian envoy to Philip's daughter Kleopatra to offer condolences upon the death of her husband, Alexander of Epeiros.⁵ Thus, it is unsurprising that the generic terminology attested in Polybios is not used either by classical rhetorical theorists or by the Attic orators themselves. The classification of *logoi presbeutikoi* as a separate genre, sitting alongside battle exhortations and sym-bouleutic oratory delivered before domestic audiences, makes excellent sense in a historiographical universe, but less sense when applied to oratory as it may have been performed in real life.

Nevertheless, it is striking that neither the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* nor Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has much advice to offer on the specific oratorical challenges that envoys had to overcome in order to persuade their non-domestic audiences. It may have been taken for granted by both authors that the observations and recommendations issued for each of the three main genres would apply also when the speaker was addressing a foreign

³ E.g. AESCHIN. 2, 79 and DEM. 19, 11, 304 (Aischines); AESCHIN. 3, 137 (Demosthenes).

⁴ E.g. HDT. 6, 49 (Athenian envoys accusing Aiginetans at Sparta); cf. THUC. 1, 95, 3; XEN. *Hell.* 3, 1, 8; 7, 4, 39-40.

⁵ AESCHIN. 3, 242.

audience, and at one level this makes good sense. The subject matters typically dealt with by attested embassies overlap considerably with those listed by the two treatises as topics characteristic of symbouleutic oratory generally. The *Rhetoric to Alexander* enumerates seven main themes: religious matters, legislation, constitutional framework, alliances and covenants with other *poleis*, war and peace, and revenue.⁶ The corresponding list offered by Aristotle numbers five main themes: revenue, war and peace, territorial defence, imports and exports, and legislation.⁷ While legislation, constitutional matters and territorial defence undoubtedly had particular relevance in an internal context, envoys sent out by states with hegemonic ambitions and a desire to interfere with the laws and constitutions of other states sometimes found themselves in a situation where these themes were part of their brief, too.⁸

Yet, there are three areas in particular where the position of an envoy would have differed significantly from that of a speaker addressing a domestic audience. The first relates to style. Aristotle himself notes that the choice of style must match the type of speaker – child, adult, and elderly; male and female, Lakonian and Thessalian.⁹ The last mentioned is important, in so far as it strongly indicates that oratorical conventions and etiquette may have differed significantly from one Greek community to the next. Yet Aristotle offers no direct observations on how such differences might affect an envoy's ability to engage with his foreign audience, let alone advice on how an envoy might be able to negotiate them in his own oratory. The second area, which largely depends on the envoy's successful handling of the first, concerns the speaker's ability to control the mood of his audience and the listeners' emotional response

⁶ *Rhet. ad Alex.* 2, 2.

⁷ ARIST. *Rhet.* 1359b19-23.

⁸ See, e.g., the Athenian envoys who, after the installation of the 400, were instructed to set up oligarchies in the *poleis* still subject to Athens (THUC. 8, 64, 1-2). Cf. HDT. 5, 92.

⁹ ARIST. *Rhet.* 1408a25-30.

to his argumentation. The third concerns the speaker's character ($\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$) as projected in his speech, which may or may not be reinforced by the audience's prior knowledge of the speaker himself and his personal as well as official track-record.

It is this third area of difference that will be the focus of the present paper. After a brief discussion of the differences between the position of an envoy and that of a speaker advising a domestic audience, I shall turn to the question of how the practice of team-speaking, which is well attested for the Athenian courtroom, may provide at least one key to understanding how envoys may have been able to overcome these challenges.

II. Envoys and *Ethos*

Aristotle's emphasis on character projection by the speaker as essential for the persuasiveness of his speech is, of course, well known.¹⁰ He adds that the three personal qualities most essential for a speaker's ability to win the audience's trust are practical wisdom (*phronesis*), virtue (*arete*), and goodwill (*eunoia*).¹¹ Likewise, the author of the *Rhetoric to Alexander* offers hands-on instructions to speakers in his treatment of *prooimia* to symbouleutic speeches. He provides examples of arguments that may serve to create goodwill towards the speaker, depending on whether the audience is already favourably disposed to him, neutral, or prejudiced against him because of his personal record and past deeds, his age, or his position either as a habitual speaker or as someone who has never before addressed the decision-making body in question.¹² Earlier he has warned against arguments that run counter to the character of the speaker, advocating that the speaker should represent his own deeds and words as being incompatible with what is unjust,

¹⁰ ARIST. *Rhet.* 1377b20-31.

¹¹ ARIST. *Rhet.* 1378a6-9.

¹² *Rhet. ad Alex.* 29, 6-23.

lawless, harmful and generally characteristic of men who are regarded as morally depraved.¹³

This is all sensible advice – so sensible, indeed, as to sound self-evident. After all, a modern audience, too, may judge a speaker's words against what they believe are the speaker's real convictions and moral outlook. If the speaker's words and reasoning appear to be in marked conflict with the latter, the result is that the speaker, and thus the speech itself, may come across as inauthentic and insincere at best and, at worst, as an active attempt to deceive. In the context of ancient Greek political decision-making, oligarchic and democratic alike, this consideration is of paramount importance. Because of the absence of formal party-political structures, and because the idea of representation played only a very limited part in Greek political life (and thought), speakers who attempted to persuade their fellow citizens would take the stage first and foremost *as themselves*. To be sure, each community had its political groupings, and it is important not to underestimate their importance especially at times of crisis. Yet, the idea that a speaker might – like a modern loyal party-politician – be prepared to suppress his own personal convictions and judgement and deliver a speech which promoted a course of action that he himself, in his heart of hearts, did not fully support was anathema. Any suspicion that he did not sincerely believe in the soundness of his own advice, any hint that he was speaking as the mouthpiece of others would undermine the persuasiveness of his speech as a whole. In fact, it might even land him in court on a charge of bribery, subversion or treason, if his perceived insincerity gave rise to the suspicion that he had spoken in the service of a hostile paymaster.

The position of an envoy was different, however. He was not just speaking as himself; he was, above all, speaking as a mouthpiece of the community that sent him out. This does not mean that who he was or how he spoke did not matter –

¹³ *Rhet. ad Alex.* 10, 1-2.

far from it! The foreign listeners were likely to relate both to the personality that he projected in his speech, and to the perceived character of the community that he represented. As highlighted by Low,¹⁴ the moral vocabulary that was applied to individuals was also applied to communities as collective characters, and so the envoy's task would be to counter not only any prejudice that might relate to his own person, but also the prejudices which the audience might harbour against his community. He had to convince his audience that the advice he offered would benefit the addressees at least as much as his own *polis*; and success depended on his ability to make his audience believe not only the rational case itself and the arguments that underpinned it, but also that both he and his community could be trusted, and that his advice was offered in good faith. Particularly when relations between their communities were strained, the envoy's ability to project personal goodwill (*eunoia*) with sincerity may have been decisive for his audience's willingness to listen to his advice with an open mind.

The persons in the most obvious position to command trust in this respect were undoubtedly those who were known to their audience already, and whose personal track-record was regarded as positive. Precisely this is emphasised in a passage in the *Rhetoric to Alexander* that seems to pertain to a debate on the election of envoys. It is used among a number of examples that illustrate arguments on competence and capability in general:

“That this man is not capable, but that someone else is capable, along these lines: he himself will be powerless as an envoy on our behalf, whereas this man is a friend of the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians and will be especially able to achieve what you want.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Low (2007) 132-151.

¹⁵ *Rhet. ad Alex.* 24, 3: ὅτι δὲ οὗτος μὲν οὐ δύναται, ἕτερος δὲ δύναται, τοιόνδε· αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν ἀδυνάτως ἔχει πρεσβεύειν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, οὗτος δὲ φίλος ἐστὶ τῇ πόλει τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ μάλιστα ἂν δυνηθεῖη πράξαι, ἃ βούλεσθε.

It is not unreasonable to expect *proxenoi* to have been especially well placed as speakers. Their recognised position in the community of the addressees would most likely have placed them in the category of symbouleutic speakers for whom, if we go by the advice in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (29, 6-7), professions of personal *eunoia* would be superfluous.¹⁶ Yet, there were considerable limits to how far such individuals would be able to win over their audiences simply on the basis of their own record. That much is clear, for instance, from Aischines' enumeration of a succession of Athenian envoys with close personal ties to Thebes, who nevertheless failed to persuade their Theban audiences on a number of important occasions.¹⁷

Aischines hints that the envoys' failure on these missions was due mainly to the Thebans' own intransigence and ambitions. But there is also a more general point to be made here. From the perspective of the non-domestic audience, two questions would have been of paramount importance for their judgement of the speech by a person with a past record of *eunoia* towards them. The first related to the honesty with which he professed that his advice would be beneficial to both their communities. Although a *proxenos* may have had an advantage over envoys who were unknown to their foreign audience, there was, as recently emphasised by Mack,¹⁸ still an expectation that, when it came to the crunch, a *proxenos* would put his own community first. Thus, his standing would not in itself provide a guarantee against deception.¹⁹ The same would, *a fortiori*,

¹⁶ Particularly if the *proxenos* had acquired the title on his own merit, but there seems also to have been a presumption that the descendants of a *proxenos* inherited not only his title but also his goodwill and sense of obligation. See, e.g., MOGGI (1995) 143-144; MITCHELL (1997) 30; MACK (2015) 130-134.

¹⁷ AESCHIN. 3, 138-139.

¹⁸ MACK (2015) 138-142.

¹⁹ Cf. THUC. 2, 85, 5: the Cretan *proxenos* Nikias of Gortyn persuaded the Athenians to take military action against Kydonia, arguing that this would be in Athens' interests, but in reality obliging Polichna in order to obtain its allegiance. On this Nikias, see HORNBLOWER (1991) 366 and PERLMAN (2004) 1182.

have applied to a speaker who was connected with the foreign community by less formal, personal ties.

Even when the audience was entirely persuaded of his sincerity and personal goodwill, they would still be left with an even more important, second question: how much political influence did the speaker actually wield at home? This may have been decisive in regard to their inclination to trust that promises would be kept and commitments fully honoured. Demosthenes asserts (14, 12) that teams of envoys who cannot back their words up with a credible commitment from their community to work in the addressees' interest will be merely "declaiming like rhapsodes" (ῥαψωδῆσουςιν). That applies equally to individual envoys.

Even a speaker known to occupy a position of political influence in his own *polis* nevertheless faced a risk that his very ties with the particular community he was addressing might give rise to suspicion at home. That in turn might limit his powers of persuasion in his own domestic setting when advocating a course of action that would demonstrably benefit the *polis* with which he was connected.²⁰ He may also, paradoxically, have faced a further difficulty in relation to his non-domestic audience if he tried to counter prejudice by projecting a personal character that he expected would appeal most to his audience. For in doing so, he might inadvertently cause his audience to question his domestic influence further, if his *ethos* was perceived as conflicting with their perceptions of the character of the *polis* he was representing.²¹

²⁰ Demosthenes in *On the Freedom of the Rhodians* (15, 15) emphasises that he is neither their *proxenos*, nor a personal *xenos* of any Rhodian individual; while Aischines attributes Demosthenes' alleged *prodosia* to his being *proxenos* of the Thebans (2, 141). See further MACK (2015) 114-115.

²¹ Cf. PLUT. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 221E: "When the envoy from Elis said that his fellow citizens had sent him out precisely because he alone emulated the Spartan way of life, Theopompos asked: 'Elean, which is the better way of life, yours or that of your fellow citizens?' When the envoy answered that it was his own, Theopompos said 'So how can this *polis* be safe, in which only a single man of a large population is good?'" MOSLEY (1973) 44 cites this as an example of

There were thus some very clear limits to the oratorical potential of *proxenoi* and others with comparable ties to the community of the addressees. Moreover, there is considerable scholarly disagreement as to how often such people were in fact deployed as envoys. The attestations of *proxenoi* acting in this capacity are surprisingly few in 5th and 4th century literature,²² so too in the contemporary epigraphical material. As far as classical Athens is concerned, Mitchell remarks that “[what] is surprising about the trends in ambassadorial appointments in Athens is the small percentage made on the criterion of personal connections”.²³ By contrast, Mack regards it as likely that *proxenoi* were frequently deployed as envoys on diplomatic missions to the states with which they were affiliated.²⁴ But the actual examples he cites are very limited in number as far as the classical period is concerned. A pressing methodological question then is how to interpret this apparent rarity in our sources. One possibility is to take it as an indication that the use of this type of envoy was indeed limited, due to the problems just mentioned. Another is that speakers who were already personally connected with their foreign audiences

how envoys might be selected for their popularity in the state to which they were sent; but the anecdote is more likely a reflection of the problems that might arise because of a perceived discrepancy between the personal *ethos* of the envoy and that of his community.

²² In addition to Polydamas of Pharsalos (XEN. *Hell.* 6, 1, 4), I have found eight instances of *proxenoi* who acted as envoys: Alexander, King of Makedonia (HDT. 8, 136); Miltiades son of Kimon, *proxenos* of Sparta (ANDOC. 3, 3; or Kimon, THEOPOMP., *FGrH* 115F88); Arthmios of Zeleia, *proxenos* of Athens (AESCHIN. 3, 258); Lichas of Sparta, *proxenos* of the Argives (THUC. 5, 76, 3); Kallias of Athens, *proxenos* of Sparta (XEN. *Hell.* 6, 3, 4); Timesitheos of Trapezous, *proxenos* of the Mossynoikoi (XEN. *Anab.* 5, 4, 1-4); Demosthenes, *proxenos* of Thebes (AESCHIN. 2, 141); Thrason Erchieus, *proxenos* of Thebes (AESCHIN. 3, 138). To these may be added Iason of Pherai, *proxenos* of Sparta, who addresses the Spartan assembly in XEN. *Hell.* 6, 1, 4, but since he, like Polydamas, is an autocratic ruler, he is not ‘representing’ his community in the same way as an elected envoy. In addition there are some parallel cases which do not concern conventional envoys, such as THUC. 5, 59, 5, where two Argives, of whom one is *proxenos* of Sparta and the other a general, approach Agis, but without authorisation from their home community.

²³ MITCHELL (1997) 94-95.

²⁴ MACK (2015) 69-70.

were used, but that they may be difficult for us to spot because they would often operate as part of a larger ambassadorial team, without their individual contributions being specifically mentioned in our sources.

III. Ambassadorial teams and rhetorical strategies

That Greek envoys frequently were sent out as teams is well known, and the practice has been much discussed in modern scholarship. Questions surrounding the size of such teams, their appointment, and the political considerations that may have informed their composition have likewise been the focus of considerable attention. It is less clear, however, how such teams operated in practice when they addressed their foreign audiences in councils and assemblies. Various team-based strategies can be envisaged: that one member spoke on behalf of the team as a whole, with the rest standing by his side offering non-verbal support; or that one member of the team set out the position of his community in a long address, while other team members added shorter contributions in support of the main speech. A third possibility is that more than one member of the team (and sometimes all of them) delivered a speech of his own, each speech in itself amounting to a full *symbouleutic* oration.

It is important to be aware of the possibility that the choice of strategy may have varied according to the composition of the team, the situation to which the embassy was responding, and the composition of the audience. In the classical period (as later) most Greek warfare was coalition warfare. This meant that envoys often had to take into account that their audience would comprise representatives from several different communities who had an important stake in the outcome of the decisions. Likewise, several attested ambassadorial teams sent out by hegemonic *poleis* numbered not only representatives of the hegemonic *polis* itself, but also envoys representing other members of the alliance. The role of the latter as speakers is not

always easy to discern. But what the evidence does show is that on several occasions such envoys did have a speaking part; thus, their potential importance in terms of the embassy's oratorical strategy as a whole should not be underestimated.²⁵

Team-speaking was an important aspect of Greek performance culture. The phenomenon is well attested not only in the context of Athenian courtrooms, but also in the courts of other Greek states, as is clear from the numerous judicial curse tablets that bind co-speakers, *synegoroi* or *syndikoi*, as well as main litigants. It would therefore not be at all surprising if team-speaking was likewise an important aspect of oratory in the context of Greek inter-state relations. As far as Athenian court-practice is concerned, it is often possible to form an impression, on the basis of surviving oratory, of how the members of teams may have coordinated their contributions. Moreover, it is also possible to identify the way in which supporting speeches, *synegoriai*, differed in practice from the advice given in the two contemporary rhetorical treatises, the *Rhetoric to Alexander* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, especially in regard to their structure and organisation of material.

Above all, the surviving Athenian forensic speeches show the very diverse strategies such teams could adopt. In some cases, the team appears to have conformed to the model usually assumed by modern scholars to have been the norm in Athenian litigation: the main litigant did all of the speaking, but his performance would be visually backed by supporters who endorsed witness-statements read out by the court attendant. In other cases, the main litigant would deliver a full speech that set out the main features of the case; other members of the team would also address the court, but only with supplementary speeches, demonstrating verbally that the main litigant, and his case, commanded support from fellow citizens (and sometimes others) with a clear personal interest in a positive outcome. Yet another attested strategy is that of assigning only

²⁵ The most famous examples are those reported in XEN. *Hell.* 6, 5, 37-48 and 7, 1, 1-11.

a relatively brief speech, effectively a *prooimion*, to the first speaker who formally was the main party, while leaving the main oratorical performance to one or several other speakers whose voices, visibility and significance in the *agon* itself would have been at least as, and often more important than that of the person who was named as prosecutor or defendant in the case. This diversity in itself suggests that we should be wary of supposing that a single model and strategy was invariably applied in connection with rhetorical teamwork in other contexts, including in diplomatic relations.

It appears from several attested forensic teams in the Athenian courts that the arguments presented by an individual *synegoros* would often be precisely those that would gain in persuasive force through the personal authority of the speaker, either because of his own involvement in the case, or because of his recognised expertise in a particular area, as a general or as a figure of political or religious authority. It does not seem far-fetched to assume that the advantages of such a strategy would be recognised also in the context of oratorical performances before non-domestic audiences. But to prove this assumption right is not altogether an easy thing.

The famous accounts by Demosthenes and Aeschines of the Athenian missions to Philip suggest that it was not unusual for several or even all of the members of an ambassadorial team to speak, and also that teams of envoys were expected to coordinate their oratory so as to constitute a unified rhetorical effort.²⁶ On each occasion the teams numbered ten Athenian envoys and at least one further envoy representing Athens' allies. After their appointment (and apparently *en route*) the envoys allegedly organised their performance as a team, including the decision on the order of their individual presentations. According to Aeschines, it was largely because of Demosthenes' refusal to engage with his fellow envoys in devising a shared rhetorical strategy that the missions failed to work optimally.

²⁶ E.g. AESCHIN. 2, 21-22; 2, 101-107.

Aischines' narrative may be taken to suggest that such team work and coordination were perceived as the ideal, but it is hard to determine to what extent the use of multiple speakers can be regarded as typical. The missions to Makedonia were conducted in a climate of deep political division within Athens itself. This may have meant that the individual envoys who appear to have belonged to different political camps may each have had stronger reasons than usual to demand an active speaking role on the team. Moreover, the context of both Demosthenes' trial against Aischines for *parapresbeia* in 343 and Aischines' trial against Ktesiphon in 330 was one of bitter political rivalry that went far beyond the persons of Aischines and Demosthenes themselves. In both actions the political stakes were extremely high, and since Aischines especially needed to defend his record as an envoy whose competence and integrity were beyond question, the role assigned to individual members of the teams may be exaggerated both in his account and in that of Demosthenes.

Unfortunately, a major methodological problem caused by the nature of our sources hampers any attempt to establish the value of the accounts of the Makedonian episodes as evidence for general oratorical practice in inter-state relations. Although written speeches delivered by envoys in the 5th and 4th centuries are known to have been in circulation in antiquity, none has survived, except for a few fragments. Despite the fact that teams of envoys are frequently mentioned in Attic oratory, especially in the speeches delivered in the second half of the 4th century, there is precious little information on how they operated. In fact, leaving aside Andoc. 3, Aeschin. 2 and 3, and Dem. 18 and 19, there are surprisingly few comments on the type of arguments envoys deployed in order to persuade their audiences, whether foreign envoys in Athens or Athenian envoys in other Greek states.²⁷

²⁷ DEM. 1, 8; 2, 12; 6, 19-26; 7, 1, 19, 20-23; 9, 72; 15, 22; 17, 16-17; 17, 19; 20, 73; [50, 5]; DIN. 1, 12-13, 16, 18-20, 28, 80-82; HYP. 1 *Dem.* col. 8; HYP. 3 *Eux.* 24-25.

The inscriptions from the classical period are equally frustrating. Although they normally permit us to establish the existence of ambassadorial teams, they, unlike many comparable inscriptions from the Hellenistic period, normally offer no specific information on the argumentation presented by the teams in their speeches.²⁸ Thus it goes without saying that they tell us nothing about how the envoys in question had distributed the arguments among themselves.

Any reconstruction of envoys' symbouleutic oratory and the operation of ambassadorial teams therefore depends almost entirely on the evidence of the historiographers. A considerable proportion of the set speeches in the works of Herodotos, Thucydides and Xenophon is given to envoys advising foreign listeners on important matters of policy. However, as sources for real-life oratorical practice these speeches are notoriously problematic. The debate on the extent to which they reflect what was actually said on each occasion is never-ending, with no clear consensus emerging, and it is not my intention to enter that debate here. On the other hand, many scholars, especially recently, have adopted an approach that in some ways gets round the problem of historical accuracy. Although the speeches themselves may be partly or wholly the product of the historiographers' creative imagination, their intended effect of drawing the reader into the narrative by letting him experience debates and arguments as they unfold may well have depended considerably on dramatic realism, *mimesis*. Thus, it may be possible to identify themes and argumentative strategies that were characteristic of this particular type of symbouleutic oratory, on the assumption that what we are listening to, in the company of the internal audiences in the stories, conforms in generic terms to the real-life oratory typically delivered in similar circumstances. A recent attempt to produce

²⁸ Note, however, that although the Hellenistic inscriptions tend to be far more eloquent as evidence for the contents and themes of envoys' speeches, they only rarely throw light on how the speeches delivered by individual envoys on a team may have complemented each other.

a systematic overview of such features is that of Piccirilli (2002), who draws primarily on historiography with supplementary evidence especially from the philosophers and from later biographies. But even this cautious approach is not without its potential pitfalls. The most pressing question is how far we can be confident that the historiographical speeches were in fact plausible and realistic imitations of envoys' speeches as delivered in real life. That question is extremely difficult to answer, because we have so few surviving comparanda, apart from Aischines' and Demosthenes' accounts of the speeches that they themselves delivered to audiences abroad, in the Peloponnese, Makedonia, and Delphi.²⁹ Even more problematic is the fact that the historiographers only rarely inform us on the composition of individual teams, let alone on the rhetorical strategies adopted by them on each occasion. These, as suggested earlier, may have varied considerably depending on the aims, context and composition of each delegation.

IV. Envoys and *ethos* in the works of Xenophon

For all its limitations as evidence, classical historiography at least confirms that the rhetorical strategies adopted by ambassadorial teams could vary just as much as those of legal teams. The best illustrations of the range can be found in particular in Xenophon's works. Xenophon's interest in exploring *mimesis* and the artistic characterisation of individuals is attested in his *Memorabilia* (3, 10, 1-8), and it is thus not altogether surprising if Xenophon likewise took a particular interest in the characterisation of individual envoys, including how they interacted not only with their audiences but also with other speakers, supporters as well as opponents.

²⁹ E.g. AESCHIN. 2, 25-33, 109-112, 113-117; 3, 119-122.

At one end of the spectrum we find teams of multiple speakers on at least four occasions in Xenophon's *Hellenica*,³⁰ and I shall return to two of these later in this section. At the other end we find communities making use of a single speaker who acts as the mouthpiece of the collectivity and does not even attempt to back up his words with his own personal authority. This is perhaps most graphically depicted in Xenophon's representation of the messenger sent by the Thebans to Athens after their victory at Leuktra. Through him the Thebans not only announce their victory but also urge the Athenians to join them in following up their success. But despite this clear symbouleutic aspect of the messenger's brief, he remains nameless and faceless. He is merely a conduit for the Thebans' request, expressed with a speaking verb and circumstantial participle in the plural (ἐκέλευον λέγοντες).³¹ According to Xenophon, the Athenians cannot even be bothered to issue a reply. Their pointed dismissal of both the messenger and his message may reflect broader concerns about the growth of Theban power, but Xenophon probably also intended the episode as an illustration of Theban arrogance. Athenian support is so taken for granted that they feel able to dispense with any professions of goodwill, and their collective attempt to persuade the Athenians to join them in a new phase of war for the sake of revenge is – apparently – assigned to a man who seems to have had no authority of his own.

More complicated is an episode related by Xenophon in *Anabasis* 5, 5, 7-24. The 10,000 are approached by a team of envoys from Sinope with a request that they stop imposing on the communities that paid tribute to the Sinopeans. Xenophon prefaces the Sinopean address as follows:

“When they had entered the camp, they began to speak. Hekatonymos, who was regarded as a formidable speaker, spoke as representative (προηγόρει).”

³⁰ XEN. *Hell.* 5, 2, 11-23; 6, 3, 2-19; 6, 5, 33-48; 7, 1, 1-14.

³¹ XEN. *Hell.* 6, 4, 19.

The verb προηγόρει may be taken to suggest that the original plan was to let Hekatonymos speak alone on behalf of the entire team. If so, the strategy adopted here resembles one attested for numerous Athenian private legal actions: the main litigant does the speaking, while silent support is provided by witnesses through their physical presence on the litigant's *bema* and confirmation of their written testimony.

The reader is next treated to Hekatonymos' speech in *oratio recta*. It begins with a profession of Sinopean goodwill, stressing their admiration and joy at the army's victories over the barbarians, and emphasising the shared Greek identity of both sides. But it ends with a threat: the Sinopeans intend to form alliances with the Paphlagonians against the 10,000 unless their request is met.

Hekatonymos' speech is followed by a reply delivered by Xenophon, again in *oratio recta*, defending the actions of the army and ending with a warning and a counter-threat, suggesting that the Paphlagonians could just as well be used against the Sinopeans themselves (5, 5, 22-23). In his speech, Xenophon twice resorts to *apostrophe*: he counters the accusations as emanating from Hekatonymos himself (λέγεις, 5, 5, 20); and he holds Hekatonymos personally responsible for the threat (ὑπέλυσας, 5, 5, 22), rather than responding to it as a threat issued collectively by the Sinopeans. At this point the rest of the Sinopean team springs into action (5, 5, 24), visibly angry with Hekatonymos for his words. One of them, unnamed, delivers a speech of his own in which he promises, on behalf of his city, to receive the soldiers kindly. After that, cordial relations are established, resulting in the envoys' being invited to offer advice to a council of officers on the following day (5, 6, 1-14). Again Hekatonymos is given a speech to deliver in *oratio recta*, but his persona as projected in this address is strikingly different from that in his oration on the previous day.

In his first oration, Hekatonymos is made to speak exclusively in the first person plural. His own character is entirely suppressed, and he plays the part of the 'walking voice' of Sinope to

perfection. But when Xenophon the character exposes his reasoning as flawed (and indeed harmful to his own community) and responds directly to him *as an individual* rather than as the mouthpiece of his *polis*, cracks open up in the Sinopean team itself. The resulting discord between the envoys is not unlike Aischines' description of the conflict within the Athenian teams sent to Makedonia more than half a century later. Perhaps as a direct result of his unmasking by Xenophon the character on the previous day, Hekatonymos' second speech (5, 6, 3-10) is a highly personal one, in the first person singular, except for one instance.³² He apologises for having made the threat and begins his symbouleutic speech with a solemn oath, emphasising that his personal reputation is at stake. It is peppered with verbs indicating that he is voicing his personal opinion,³³ based on his own considerable expertise.³⁴ But despite his strenuous efforts, he is unable to generate trust: some in his audience are suspicious that he is in reality motivated by his ties of friendship and *proxenia* with the Paphlagonian king Korylas, while others suspect him of speaking in return for a bribe. Hekatonymos' two *ethe*, as the Sinopean 'walking voice' and as the god-fearing and knowledgeable man, could hardly be more different, but both of them utterly fail to lend persuasive force to his arguments. Had it not been for the (apparently improvised) intervention by other members of his team, the whole mission, at least in Xenophon's representation, looked set to end in disaster.

The projection by Hekatonymos of two different *ethe*, as the Sinopean mouthpiece and as 'himself', is not without literary precedent. A parallel can be found in Herodotos 8, 140, only here it is not two but three characters that are represented, and the representations are combined in a single speech, delivered by Alexander son of Amyntas of Makedonia. Alexander is acting as envoy for Mardonios, and Herodotos has already informed

³² XEN. *Anab.* 5, 6, 5 (ἐξομεν, ἡμᾶς).

³³ οἷδ', γινώσκω (5, 6, 5); οἷδα (5, 6, 7); οἷδα (5, 6, 8); οἶμαι (5, 6, 9); νομίζω (5, 6, 10).

³⁴ ἔμπειρος (5, 6, 6).

us (8, 136) that Mardonios has chosen him because he was the Athenians' *proxenos* and *euergetes*. The first half of his speech is an intricate construction of Chinese boxes: he announces, and then performs, a speech by Mardonios directly to the Athenians, which in turn includes a message from the Persian King to Mardonios. Mardonios' address to the Athenians is in *oratio recta* using the first person singular, as is the King's message to Mardonios, in which the King professes himself willing to forgive the Athenians, offer them autonomy, and rebuild their sanctuaries, if they conclude an agreement with him. Alexander's personality is completely suppressed in this part of the speech; there is, by contrast a very clear projection of the *ethos* of the absent Mardonios, whose retelling of the King's message paves the way for his representation of himself as being compelled to carry out the King's bidding.³⁵ This in turn lends credibility to his assurance that, as far as he is concerned, the Athenians will be able to preserve their territory and their freedom, if they accept the pact. Thus, the threat inherent in his reference to the size of the Persian invading forces and to those under his own command is not left to stand on its own. A key objective of Mardonios' strategy is to establish trust, which is particularly clear from his assurance that the agreement will be concluded without trickery and deceit. Combined with his self-projection as both loyal servant of the King and a military commander in his own right, Mardonios' demonstration that his words are congruent with the words of the King is an essential part of his strategy.

In the second half of his address, Alexander abandons his impersonation of Mardonios. He delivers in his own voice what is in effect a *synegoria*, which in many ways conforms to the pattern observable in Attic forensic oratory. Initially he asserts his goodwill in the form of a *praeteritio*,³⁶ a strategy he

³⁵ HDT. 8, 140A2.

³⁶ HDT. 8, 140B1: ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν εὐνοίας τῆς πρὸς ὑμέας εἰσέσεως ἐξ ἐμεῦ οὐδὲν λέξω (οὐ γὰρ ἂν νῦν πρῶτον ἐκμάθοιτε) ...

can adopt only because he is who he is. It is also his pre-existing ties with the Athenians that allow him to appeal to the audience's fear, not by a crude threat, but by asserting that he himself is afraid for the Athenians.³⁷ His reference to his own direct emotional engagement is an argument that can be voiced with conviction only by a friend, and it adds a tone of earnestness and urgency to his imperative: ἀλλὰ πέιθεσθε.

The three characters given a voice by Alexander all depend on each other for the overall persuasive effect of the address. Mardonios' ability to persuade depends partly on the words of the King and partly on his own reputation as a military commander with experience of dealing with the Greeks. The plausibility of the King's message itself depends on Mardonios' commitment to implementing it in practice. On their own, the two of them might have been in a position to persuade the Athenians to come to terms by appealing to the emotion of fear alone. But the trust that would be required for the Athenians to accept their offer of an alliance depended on a sincere and credible expression of goodwill, *eunoia*, which only Alexander himself was in a position to make.³⁸ And only he could plausibly appeal to both fear and hope when stressing the benefit to the Athenians of winning the Persian King as a friend.³⁹

How crucial Alexander's *ethos* is for the persuasiveness of his address is signalled by Herodotos when he lets a delegation of unnamed Spartan envoys unmask him (8, 143), not unlike the way in which Xenophon the character is made to unmask Hekatonymos. The Spartans do not have much to offer the Athenians other than appeals to Athenian pride in their reputation for defending Greek freedom and an assurance that they will provide for the Athenians' dependants for the duration of the war. But their intervention consists of a devastating attack

³⁷ HDT. 8, 140B3.

³⁸ Contrast the strategy employed by Kroisos in HDT. 1, 69, 1-3, who sends a group of envoys with presents to the Spartans, *having instructed them on what to say*, and manages to project his own character in the words conveyed by them.

³⁹ HDT. 8, 140B4.

on Alexander, designed to undermine precisely the sincerity of his address and thus his trustworthiness.⁴⁰

According to Herodotos, the Athenians were perfectly able to see through Alexander's deception unaided, and he seems to suggest that his rhetorical strategy (and that of Mardonios) was doomed to fail from the outset.⁴¹ On the other hand, the strategic distribution of arguments between different characters provides a suggestive parallel to the strategies adopted by other Persians, by Philip II of Makedonia, and by the Greeks themselves in their dealings with each other. Thus, Xenophon relates how the Chians and other *poleis* allied to the Spartans agree to send an embassy to Sparta to complain about the behaviour of the Spartan commander Eteonikos and request he be replaced by Lysandros. On this mission they were joined by envoys sent by Kyros, who appear to have had a speaking role of their own.⁴²

As for Philip, a delegation was organised by him, probably in 343,⁴³ that comprised representatives of his allied states as well as Python of Byzantion, formerly a pupil of Isokrates with strong ties to Athens. From [Dem.] 7, 19-20, it can be inferred that several of them spoke, although it was apparently Python's speech, summarised in 7, 20-23, that made an especially strong impression. It is to this speech in particular that Demosthenes (18, 136) claims that he himself responded, with such spectacular success that even the envoys representing Philip's allies rose to voice their agreement. If we can trust his account, this event bears a striking resemblance to Xenophon's description of the Sinopean episode in terms of the dynamics between the individual members of Philip's ambassadorial team. The difference is that Philip's team most likely had performed as a team *before* the cracks began to show.

⁴⁰ HDT. 8, 142, 4-5.

⁴¹ Cf. HDT. 8, 141, where he claims that the Athenians delayed Alexander's performance until the arrival of the Spartan ambassadors.

⁴² XEN. *Hell.* 2, 1, 6-7.

⁴³ WANKEL (1976) 739-740.

Despite the obvious risk of open discord arising among the members of an ambassadorial team, the use of multiple speakers may well have been a safer strategy than letting a single speaker carry the entire performance, acting as a spokesman for them all. It might not be too difficult to demolish the character and reasoning of a single speaker in a counter-speech that calls into question his motives, his sincerity, or his power to deliver on his promises. But if the same basic advice and course of action are advocated by a range of different characters, it may have been considerably harder to carry out a demolition job in the way the Spartans undermined the character of Alexander and Xenophon that of Hekatonymos. Additionally, a team performance may have presented further strategic advantages when the envoys were addressing a composite audience that numbered attendants from more than one community.

How this may have worked in practice can be illustrated by one of the most famous historiographical depictions of ambassadorial teamwork: Xenophon's account of the Athenian peace embassy to Sparta in 371 (*Hell.* 6, 3, 2-17). Xenophon's dramatisation of the embassy is one of only two instances in surviving classical historiography where several envoys belonging to the same ambassadorial team are given speeches in *oratio recta*. The other episode is the Peloponnesian mission to Athens in the winter of 370/69, likewise depicted by Xenophon in his *Hellenika* (6, 5, 33-48). Not least because of their rarity, the two representations of team-based ambassadorial oratory have been the focus of intense debate, in particular the one representing the Athenian team in action. This episode also provides the closest parallel to the operations of ambassadorial teams as described by Demosthenes and Aischines.

The narrator prefaces the scene by naming the members of the Athenian team, most of whom are known from other sources to have occupied a prominent standing in Athenian political life.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The exact number of envoys selected is disputed, but the team must have numbered at least eight, possibly as many as ten. See DILLERY (1995) 243 with n. 7.

We are also told that their audience at Sparta consists of Spartan *ekkletoi* and representatives sent by Sparta's allies. In the scene itself, only three members of the team are given a voice of their own: Kallias son of Hipponikos; Autokles, introduced as having a reputation for being a particularly earnest orator;⁴⁵ and Kallistratos, whom the narrator has already introduced as 'the Orator' (ὁ δημηγορός) in 6, 3, 3. Kallias and Kallistratos are both known from other sources to have had prior dealings with the Spartans,⁴⁶ but only Kallias makes explicit reference to his own connections in his speech, the first to be delivered.

The three speakers project very different and distinctive characters, and each employs the first person singular at the beginning of his speech: Kallias extensively (*Hell.* 6, 3, 4-5), Autokles three times (*Hell.* 6, 3, 7), and Kallistratos five times (*Hell.* 6, 3, 10-11). Kallistratos, alone of the three, refers to himself and his own opinion throughout his address.⁴⁷ Each uses verbs that serve to demonstrate that he is voicing his own personal opinion, as well as expressing the collective will and views of the Athenians (in the first person plural). Yet, the tone adopted by each speaker and the contents of their speeches differ considerably. Kallias, hereditary *proxenos* of the Spartans, devotes his *prooimion* (a considerable part of his speech) to an exposition of his own and his ancestors' ties with the Spartans. He emphasises his own positive track-record as successful broker of peace between his own *polis* and the Spartans, as well as the fact that he is a man of military standing and highly regarded in his *polis* as a peace-maker. The substance of the rest of his speech relates to the mythical ties between Athens and Sparta, including Demeter's gift of grain to the Peloponnese. Autokles

⁴⁵ The adjective ἐπιστρεφής, rare in classical prose, is ambiguous. It may mean sharp in tone (as HDT. 1, 30); earnest or vehement (as AESCHIN. 1, 71); or "attentive".

⁴⁶ Kallistratos spearheaded the successful prosecution of four Athenian ambassadors on their return from Sparta in 392/1 (PHILOCH., *FGrH* 328 F149a), but in 374 spoke against the Thebans in favour of the renewal of the King's Peace (DIOD. SIC. 15, 38, 3).

⁴⁷ ἐλπίζω (6, 3, 11), ἐπιμνησθῶ (6, 3, 14), ἔγωγε ἐπαίνῶ, ὁρῶ (6, 3, 16).

adopts a different line, rebuking the Spartans for depriving their allies of *autonomia* and their bullying of the latter, who are obliged to follow the Spartans in war, but whom the Spartans do not consult on questions of alliances and choice of enemies. This is followed by explicit criticism of Sparta's occupation of Thebes, and he ends with the comment that those who are on the verge of concluding an alliance should not expect to receive just treatment from others while they themselves appear to grasp as much they can. Kallistratos' speech is the one that has won most approval from modern commentators. In it, he acknowledges the mistakes committed by the Athenians as well as the Spartans as hegemonic powers and argues that the two states may benefit equally from the mutual support that peace and an alliance will make possible. He ends by stating that, together, both states will enjoy a stronger position within Greece than either of them has ever had before (6, 3, 17).

On the surface the impression is one of discord within the team, or at least of three very different positions in relation to the subject matter and to the audience itself. Precisely this has given rise to very different scholarly interpretations of what it is that Xenophon the author is trying to show us. Until the publication of Gray (1989), there was a fairly wide consensus that Kallias and Autokles are both set up as foils to Kallistratos. He has been regarded as the only 'true diplomat' of the trio, and his speech as the one which alone is responsible for the final positive outcome of the envoys' performance. Kallias' speech has been widely dismissed as empty rhetoric delivered by a conceited man,⁴⁸ and that of Autokles as "an extraordinarily undiplomatic, bitterly anti-Spartan speech".⁴⁹ However, Gray argued for an entirely different interpretation, insisting that Xenophon meant us to interpret the speeches as representing, in combination,

⁴⁸ Esp. DALFEN (1976) 66-68, who dismisses Kallias' speech as hot air; see also TUPLIN (1993) 104-108; DILLERY (1995) 243; MARINCOLA (2010) 270.

⁴⁹ DAVIES (1971) 161. See DALFEN (1976) 70; also DILLERY (1995) 243-244; MARINCOLA (2010) 272.

different aspects of the Athenian character.⁵⁰ Her interpretation of the trilogy as effectively presenting different arguments all leading to the same conclusion is further developed by Tuplin.⁵¹ He notes the very important comment by the narrator that all three speakers were thought to have spoken well (6, 3, 18), and that “the overall effect is one of unanimity”,⁵² even though Tuplin himself is less than complimentary in his analysis of Kallias’ speech in particular.

Other scholars have adopted a more charitable line than Tuplin towards Kallias’ contribution. Buckler noted that Kallias’ use of mythological examples is well attested in political discourse already in the classical period.⁵³ He also highlights the importance of Kallias’ personal standing as *proxenos* and friend of the Spartans: it is precisely this which allows him to produce a *prooimion* that ticks most of the boxes provided by the two surviving classical rhetorical treatises. Kallias’ contribution has been further rehabilitated in a penetrating analysis by Schepens, who observes that his use of myth reflects the fact that myths “were regarded as some kind of quintessential history”, and that Kallias’ reference to the mythical connection between Athens and Sparta permits him to represent their recent conflicts as “temporary disturbances”. This in turn paves the way for Kallistratos’ discussion of cooperation in the present in the third speech in the trilogy.⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, Kallias’ personal relations with the Spartans lent extra weight to his professions of personal goodwill in his own voice, and his connection with the Eleusinian sanctuary as a *dadouchos* and a member of the *Kerykes* lent particular force to his use of myth. However, despite its clear function as a *captatio beneuolentiae*, Kallias’ speech is not quite as anodyne as is commonly assumed. The mythical material that he deploys has a very important significance that places it firmly in the

⁵⁰ GRAY (1989) 123-131.

⁵¹ TUPLIN (1993) 101-110.

⁵² TUPLIN (1993) 104.

⁵³ Buckler in BECK / BUCKLER (2008) 158-159.

⁵⁴ SCHEPENS (2001) 92-93.

present. His reference to Triptolemos' gift of Demeter's grain to the Peloponnese is followed immediately by the rhetorical question (6, 3, 6), "How can it then be just (*δίκαιον*) either for you ever to come to destroy the crops of those from whom you received seeds, or for us not to wish for those to whom we gave it to have as much abundance of it as possible?" This, in my reading, is not a casual reference. One of the recent incidents known to have poisoned the relationship between Athens and Sparta and which, according to the narrator, had driven the Athenians to support the Thebans (5, 4, 34), was Sphodrias' invasion of Attica in 379. In 5, 4, 20-21 we have heard how Sphodrias and his troops, when his original design failed, stole livestock and plundered the houses in the Thriasian plain – that is, in the vicinity of Eleusis. Although the raid itself took place in late winter or early spring, green grain would have been vulnerable to trampling during this period, and any grain stored in unprotected houses exposed to looting.⁵⁵ Moreover, we are told that at the time of the attack three named Spartan envoys were staying in Kallias' home in the *asty*, enjoying his hospitality as Sparta's *proxenos*. We learn that the envoys were arrested and questioned, and we are told the gist of their defence and how they were judged to have had no knowledge of the affair and acquitted. How far Kallias had been responsible for getting his guests off the hook is not revealed. Even so, it is clear that Kallias himself had been personally affected by Sphodrias' actions, not only because of his role as Spartan *proxenos* but also because of his position in Eleusis, in whose backyard Sphodrias and his army had been on the rampage.

It seems inconceivable that Sphodrias' invasion eight years earlier could have been left to remain as the elephant in the room during any meaningful peace negotiations, and it would no doubt have been possible for any of the members of the delegation to voice the collective Athenian grievance over the matter. But precisely because he was who he was, Kallias was in

⁵⁵ See, e.g., HANSON (21998) 38-40.

an especially good position to do so. As a member of the *Kerykes* he could endow the episode with a religious dimension, which would hardly have been lost on the internal audience in the story (or for that matter on Xenophon's intended readership).⁵⁶ Most importantly, Kallias was especially well placed for tempering his accusation by a credible display of his own goodwill towards the Spartans.⁵⁷ His use of myth can be seen as a diplomatic masterstroke: Athenian grievances are brought out in the open, but so delicately that Kallias' own *ethos* as Sparta's well-meaning friend is not undermined.

Kallias' diplomatic criticism paves the way for the second speech by Autokles. The aggressive tone of the speech given to him has puzzled even those modern readers who have interpreted the trilogy as constituting a single rhetorical strategy, in which all speakers are working towards the same outcome. Gray sees Autokles' intervention as a graphic example of Athenian *parrhesia*, while the very bitterness with which he voices his criticism of Sparta's actions and policies lends all the more force to the generosity of the final speech given to Kallistratos.⁵⁸ It is indeed possible to interpret his speech as that of a critical friend, whose address is intended mainly as a contrast and thus prelude to Kallistratos' conciliatory oratory. However, once we take the nature of the audience into account and consider the speeches from their point of view, it is possible to explain the choice of tone and contents of Autokles' speech, and indeed of Autokles himself as a speaker. The speech itself

⁵⁶ There is a striking similarity between the part played by Kallias here and that by the unnamed speaker of LYS. 6, who acted as *synegoros* on the prosecution team. See RUBINSTEIN (2000) 140-142 and, in more detail, MARTIN (2009) 137-151.

⁵⁷ The widespread negative evaluation of Kallias' speech as conceited and pompous has been prompted in part by the narrator's introduction of him as "the kind of man no less fond of praising himself than of being praised by others" (6, 3, 3). See GRAY (1989) 124. Yet, the frequent self-praise by Athenian defendants in court and occasionally also by prosecutors shows that it must have been regarded as a necessary strategy by orators in certain circumstances, such as the present occasion may have been.

⁵⁸ GRAY (1989) 128-131.

can be interpreted as absolutely crucial for the success of the Athenian mission as a whole. As already mentioned, the speakers are not addressing an exclusively Spartan audience, but an audience also numbering representatives sent by Sparta's allies. If we consider the Spartans first, they may have responded favourably to Kallias' speech, despite his allusion to the Sphodrias issue. But as argued earlier, even the most sincere advice from a speaker who is believed to harbour *eunoia* in relation to his audience may still fail to carry conviction, unless the audience can be persuaded that his advice enjoys broad support from the community that he represents. For the Spartans on this occasion, a burning question must have been whether Kallias was merely giving voice to a view prevalent among Lakonophile Athenians, or whether the desire for a treaty was shared by those who were more neutral in their sentiments, let alone those who had been strongly in favour of collaboration with the Thebans in the past. Autokles' speech seems to be aimed in part at persuading them of the latter. By referring explicitly to Sparta's ill-treatment of the Thebans and their occupation of the Kadmeia (6, 3, 9), he seems to identify himself as a man who had himself been sympathetic to the Theban cause. That he personally has now decided to participate in the effort to broker a peace may well have reassured the Spartans in the audience that the mission itself enjoyed Athenian backing that went way beyond a limited Lakonising clique.

Concerns about the level of support that the mission enjoyed in the Athenian *demos* may not have been the only worry that troubled the Spartan listeners – and their allied representatives least of all. There was a historical precedent for such an alignment between the two states, and it was not a happy one from the point of view of either Sparta or Sparta's Peloponnesian allies. The present audience could hardly have forgotten what had happened between 421 and 418,⁵⁹ let alone how the Spartans

⁵⁹ Cf. the Corinthians' approach to officials in Argos after the conclusion of the Peace of Nikias, suggesting anti-Spartan defensive alliances (THUC. 5, 27, 2).

had thrown their weight about in the Peloponnese after the King's Peace, and so the prospect of yet another Athens-Sparta alignment must have given cause for concern. For the Spartans, the concern was likely to have been mainly that the alliance itself might cause further tension in relations between themselves and other Peloponnesian states – which may have been an important reason why they permitted allied representatives to be present at the negotiations. The imperative for the Spartans to keep their allies sweet, and the consequences of their failure to do so, are all too clear from Xenophon's subsequent narrative.

But any such Spartan worries would almost certainly have been dwarfed by those of her allies at the prospect of Athenian military backing of Sparta's policies in the Peloponnese. If we imagine that Kallias' speech had been followed immediately by that of Kallistratos, who ends by asserting that the peace will strengthen both Athens' and Sparta's position in Greece, the result would most likely have been one of alarm. Autokles' speech in fact focusses primarily on Sparta's unacceptable behaviour towards other states, and especially Sparta's policy of waging wars without consulting their allies (6, 3, 7-8). Thus, despite his consistent address to the Spartans in the second person plural, his aim seems first and foremost to be to reassure their allies that there are powerful voices within Athens who are not willing to support a policy of further Spartan oppression. It is also noteworthy that Autokles does not refer explicitly to any specifically *Athenian* grievances: he sets himself up as a man who is concerned with the need to respect the integrity of other Greek states. He alludes only once to Athens' own suffering at the hands of the Spartans, when he says that the Spartans have "installed dekarchies here, and rule by thirty there" (6, 3, 8). The intended effect is probably to create a 'we-feeling' with the allies in the audience: the message seems to be "we know what it's like, and we won't let this happen to you!".

If I am right that Autokles' speech is intended first and foremost to win over Sparta's allies, then that would also explain

Autokles' gruff, if not aggressive, tone. Autokles arguably had to project a credible representation of a political figure who had the courage of his convictions and the will to speak truth to power. If he did not, Sparta's allies would have been left to wonder if Autokles himself and those who shared his opinions would in reality be willing (and able) to restrain the Spartans in any bid for further consolidation of their power over other states in the Peloponnese. A softer and more conciliatory tone towards the Spartans themselves on the critical matter of allied *autonomia* would have done little to reassure them in this respect.

The narrator indicates that, if Autokles' persuasive efforts were aimed mainly at Sparta's allies, he was indeed successful. Although we are told that the reaction was one of dead silence, he "instilled delight in those who felt aggrieved at the Spartans" (6, 3, 10). It is important to note that the articulated participle used here, τοὺς ἀχθομένους, does not imply any emotions of hatred or anger (the verb should not be confused with ἔχθω / ἔχθομαι), nor does it have to refer to those who were declared enemies of the Spartans.⁶⁰ Rather, the reference is to Spartan allies with legitimate grievances at Spartan oppression. Thus the narrator gives us to understand that Autokles' message on oppression and freedom had got through to Sparta's allies, and that they believed his sincerity and his commitment. Without his speech, the speech by Kallistratos, ending as it does with its naked and jubilant promise of shared hegemony and increased power of Sparta and Athens, would have been unpalatable.

As mentioned earlier, some modern scholars have noted the narrator's comment that all three speakers were thought to have spoken well. The genitive absolute δοξάντων δὲ τούτων καλῶς εἰπεῖν permits the interpretation that the envoys' combined performance was favourably received not only by the Spartans, but by the composite audience in its entirety. The narrator further states that the Spartans proceeded to ratify the

⁶⁰ Pace DILLERY (1995) 244 and DALFEN (1976) 70.

peace, the terms of which included Spartan withdrawal of their harmosts and a mutual commitment by Athens and Sparta to allied *autonomia* (6, 3, 18). Thus the Athenian mission as a whole has succeeded in achieving the goal imposed on it by the assembly. Moreover, the terms to which the Spartans consent appear, on the surface, to have taken account of some of the criticism voiced by Autokles. If there is any sting in Xenophon's account, it is most likely the narrator's observation (6, 3, 19) that, despite the *autonomia* term, the Spartans subsequently swore to the treaty on behalf of themselves and their allies, whereas the Athenians permitted their allies themselves to swear. This may well be intended to signal to the reader that, in reality, the Spartans were not inclined to mend their ways.

As Xenophon represents the Athenian mission, the arguments presented by the three envoys gain in persuasive force because of who each one is (or is believed to be). Each contribution in turn lends further persuasiveness to the contributions by the two other speakers by complementing them. Thus, in some respects, their combined effect is similar to that which must have been intended by the combination of the three different voices and characters projected in the speech by Herodotos' Alexander.

In his analysis of this trilogy, Schepens resorts to a musical analogy:

"Although the three Athenian voices pursue, like in a polyphonic musical composition, each in their distinctive pitch, their own way independently from one another, they meet harmoniously at significant points."

On this interpretation, the envoys' combined performance constitutes a parallel to the way some prosecution teams seem to have operated in Athenian public actions, where a similar musical analogy may be applied.⁶¹ One frequently recurring

⁶¹ See RUBINSTEIN (2000) 232.

feature seems to have been that each contributor to the prosecution's case plays down his personal link to the formal prosecutor, while emphasising his own motives for becoming involved in the case, as well as his own views on it and on the defendant's guilt.

Often, there seems to have been no clear hierarchical relationship between the main prosecutor and his *synkategoroi*, who tend to represent themselves as *kategoroi* in their own right, just as the three Athenian envoys are represented as addressing their audience independently of one another. Political heavyweights like Demosthenes and Lykourgos are found contributing together to the same cases, adding to the impression that the prosecution's *case*, and not just the prosecutor's person, is endorsed by significant sections of the Athenian political élite. The intention may well have been to convey an impression that the case was the *polis*' case rather than that of a single prosecutor pursuing a personal agenda. At the same time, such a prosecution team may have been more effective in persuading a large dikastic panel which, like the composite audience addressed by the Athenian envoys, was bound to number citizens with different political opinions and sympathies.

Even when envoys addressed audiences consisting entirely of citizens of a single *polis*, they still needed to take into account that their audience would contain individuals with very divergent political outlooks. How a team effort might help to overcome this challenge is illustrated in Xenophon's trilogy in 6, 5, 33-49, in which a composite team, consisting of five named Spartans and representatives of their remaining allies, addressed the Athenian *demos* after the Spartan defeat at Leuktra and the resulting Theban invasion of the Peloponnese. We are told that all the Spartan envoys spoke (6, 5, 33), and that they all said much the same things. A single resumé is given of their speeches in combination, with only one particular point attributed to an individual, but unnamed, Spartan representative. The summary is followed by two speeches in *oratio recta*, delivered by the

Korinthian Kleiteles, and Prokles of Phleious. Prokles' speech has attracted much attention. It is sometimes interpreted as a device with which Xenophon represents Athenian values and the Athenian collective character by relating their positive response to his speech, as well as their subsequent failure to live up to their reputation.⁶²

For present purposes, the importance of Xenophon's scene lies in the narrator's comments on the Athenian audience's response to the speeches. They depict a process by which the assembly moves from internal dissent over the merits of the case as presented by the Spartan envoys (6, 5, 36), to more widespread approval following Kleiteles' address (6, 5, 37), and culminating in unanimity in response to the final address by Prokles (6, 5, 49). While the speech given to Kleiteles does not reveal his character at all, but merely represents him as the mouthpiece of the Korinthians (in the first person plural), Prokles' speech allows his own character and opinions to be projected through his oratory. He deploys opinion verbs in the first person singular,⁶³ and refers to what he himself has heard about the Athenians' reputation in a blatant appeal to their *amour propre* (6, 5, 45). He also takes care to project the collective *ethos* of his own community and the rest of Sparta's allies as trustworthy and motivated primarily by their honourable sense of obligation (6, 5, 44).

Although the narrator does not let on whether Prokles himself was known to the Athenians, the representation of his speech suggests a man who is able to persuade first and foremost through the *ethos* he projects in his speech, and who manages to play his standing as a representative of a relatively insignificant allied state to the advantage of the Peloponnesian team as a whole. Prokles refers to his own and Kleiteles' role with the verb συναγορεύω. This verb often refers to those who

⁶² E.g. GRAY (1989) 113-118; MARINCOLA (2010) 274-275; BARAGWANATH (2012) 322-329.

⁶³ οἶμαι (6, 5, 38), ἡγοῦμαι, οἶμαι (6, 5, 39), μοι δοκοῦσι (6, 5, 41), ὅρῶ (6, 5, 45), ὅρῶ (6, 5, 46).

deliver supporting symbouleutic speeches, but it is also used by Xenophon to refer to Sokrates' defence *synegoroi* at his trial, in which sense it is used by the Attic orators, too.⁶⁴ Indeed, Prokles' speech shares many of the characteristics associated with the rhetoric of defendants and defence *synegoroi* in the courts.⁶⁵ These include appeals to *charis*, the call on the audience to come to the rescue of the main party, the representation of the Lakedaimonians as supplicants, the highlighting of their track record as benefactors alongside the admonition to the audience to remember it, and the high emotional temperature of the speech as a whole. All this is similar to arguments deployed in defence *epilogoi*.⁶⁶

This is not to say that Xenophon necessarily expected his readers to associate Prokles' intervention with the kind of oratory they were familiar with from the courts, let alone that he consciously drew on any particular piece of Attic forensic oratory. In Prokles' speech, the very same arguments and phrases that might make the reader think of the courtroom correspond remarkably well to the instructions issued in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (34, 2-7) on how to persuade an assembly to come to the rescue of individuals as well as *poleis*. This suggests that Xenophon's representation of his address is unlikely to have contained anything that would have struck the ancient observer as completely out of place in a symbouleutic speech of this type. Rather, my point is that the strategy of the Peloponnesian team, the reported dynamics between the team and their audience and, above all, the way in which Prokles' speech constitutes an effective *epilogos* within the team's combined address are very similar to the strategies of attested defence teams in court.

⁶⁴ XEN. *Apol.* 22; cf. likewise in a forensic context DEM. 49, 9; AESCHIN. 1, 87; 2, 143; HYP. 3 *Eux.* 11. For the verb used with reference to symbouleutic oratory, see, e.g., THUC. 6, 6, 3; 7, 49, 3; LYS. 12, 25; ISOC. 6, 2; 14, 33; XEN. *Hell.* 3, 5, 16; 5, 2, 20; DEM. 15, 15; 23, 172; 50, 6; AESCHIN. 2, 63 and 123.

⁶⁵ For a general discussion, see RUBINSTEIN (2000) 148-172.

⁶⁶ Compare, e.g., Prokles' assertion in 6, 5, 40 with that in LYS. 20, 31, and his protestations in 6, 5, 42-43 with LYS. 20, 31-32 and 34; also the argument over returning *charis* in 6, 5, 44 with LYS. 20, 31-32.

Furthermore, Prokles' speech may serve as a reminder that there were in fact very considerable overlaps between *dikanic* and *symbouleutic* oratory. In other words, we should not be seduced by Aristotle's classifications into believing that the two genres were entirely compartmentalised.⁶⁷

It is then not altogether surprising if oratorical practice and the strategies adopted by ambassadorial teams corresponded in some respects to those attested for teams operating in forensic contexts. On this comparison Xenophon's representations of the Athenian and Peloponnesian missions make excellent sense. The courtroom parallel should not be pressed too far, however, for there were significant differences between the forensic and *symbouleutic* stages, in regard to both the setting and the composition of the teams themselves. I shall return to these in my final section.

V. Ambassadorial teams in art, life and law

The similarities between oratorical teamwork as represented by Xenophon and the kind of teamwork attested in the Attic Orators may provide some reassurance on the question how far Xenophon was aiming at dramatic realism in his portrayal of ambassadorial teams at work. Yet, if this is the case, we are left to wonder why similar detailed and explicit depictions of team speaking cannot be found in the works of either Herodotos or Thucydides.

One possible explanation which cannot be ruled out *a priori* is that the kind of teamwork that Xenophon represents in his dramatisation of the Athenian and Peloponnesian missions was the exception rather than the rule. He may have chosen to devote so much attention to the interrelated performances by the speakers precisely because they were unusual and therefore

⁶⁷ Cf. ANDOC. 1, 150, who refers to the task of his *synegoroi* as that of "giving advice" (συμβουλεύειν).

notable. Or, if we believe that the episodes were mostly or entirely invented by Xenophon himself, he may have been inspired by the Homeric precedent of the embassy to Achilles in the *Iliad*. A further possibility is that team speaking was in fact not unusual, but that both Herodotos and Thucydides have opted deliberately for a more impressionistic representation of ambassadorial practices as part of their literary agendas. Indeed, Xenophon himself may often have chosen to suppress the role of the team as a whole, opting instead for a representation consisting in only a single oration, performed by a single voice and character.

In support of the former explanation, one may note that ambassadorial teams were not always permitted to address their foreign audience *seriatim*, without interruption by other speakers. In his representation of the Akanthian and Apollonian joint embassy to Sparta requesting military intervention, Xenophon gives one speech in *oratio recta* to a single named Akanthian envoy (5, 2, 12-19), which is followed by the Spartans opening the floor to their own citizens and allied representatives. Only after a decision has been made to meet their request do the Akanthians (in the plural) rise to speak again (5, 2, 23). This constitutes an important difference between the forensic and the diplomatic stage, and it is worth noting that two of Xenophon's other accounts of team speaking likewise mention that the envoys' performances were interspersed with interventions by speakers belonging to their audience.⁶⁸

The possibility of interruption by other speakers meant that ambassadorial teams faced a greater need to improvise than forensic teams (especially teams of prosecutors), who would be able to plan in advance a coordinated performance appropriate to the time allocated to them by the waterclock. On the other hand, the need for improvisation does not in itself rule out that the team may still have worked with a common rhetorical strategy: improvisation would also have been required from

⁶⁸ XEN. *Hell.* 6, 5, 37; 7, 1, 1.

teams supporting defendants in the courts, since they would not always have a clear idea of precisely what arguments the prosecutor and his team might employ.

The way in which the contributions by foreign envoys were managed as a point on the assembly's agenda may not only have varied from *polis* to *polis*; even within the same community there may have been variations in the way debates were conducted, depending on the occasion and context. Our knowledge of actual practice in the 5th and 4th centuries is extremely limited, even for Athens, especially when it comes to meetings involving representatives of several allied states. When a team of envoys represented their community in an allied congress, the time at their disposal may well have been so limited that it would make most sense for them to assign their presentation to a single speaker. This is particularly relevant when we consider some scenes depicting envoys in action in Thucydides. Two of the set ambassadorial speeches were delivered during formally convened meetings of allied representatives.⁶⁹ A third was delivered during a Spartan assembly meeting to which the Spartans had invited representations from "their allies and any other party who claimed to have been unjustly treated by the Athenians" (1, 67, 3).

Yet, two of these episodes can in fact be taken to suggest that Thucydides himself, the characters in his story, and his intended readership were aware not only of the phenomenon of oratorical teamwork, but also of its potential strategic advantages. Both episodes are set in Sparta, both involve a team of Korinthian envoys who are given one speech in *oratio recta* and on both occasions are we told that the Korinthians were the last to speak (1, 67, 5 and 1, 119). On the first occasion, the narrator prefaces the speech by noting that this was a conscious rhetorical tactic: the Korinthians had left the delegates from other communities to bring their Spartan audience into a state

⁶⁹ THUC. 1, 119-124 and 4, 58-65 (a congress at Gela).

of agitation.⁷⁰ This tactic then allows the Corinthians to dispense with all the niceties of a diplomatic *prooimion* and launch straight into a speech which, in terms of its vehement criticism of the Spartan audience and its tone throughout, is not unlike Autokles' speech discussed earlier. It also means that the performance here is one that could easily be carried convincingly by a single speaker.

In a sense, the Corinthians are deploying multiple speakers to their own rhetorical advantage. Only here they appear to have devised their strategy on their own, without consulting the allied representatives whom they use to pave the way for their own address. In a world where composite ambassadorial teams were not at all uncommon, more openly and systematically conceived versions of the Corinthian strategy are highly plausible, aiming at the effect that we are allowed to observe in Xenophon's account of team-based ambassadorial performances at Athens and Sparta. But what should we make of the fact that the Corinthians, on both of these occasions, are referred to as speakers in the plural? It is unfortunately not the case that a speaking verb and corresponding subject in the plural permit the inference that the Corinthian envoys themselves all shared the performance.

Xenophon's account of the Theban mission to Athens in 395 demonstrates precisely how treacherous these plurals can be when they occur in introductory and capping phrases before and after envoys' speeches. We learn that, when the Thebans realised that they would be attacked by the Spartans, "they sent envoys to Athens, who were to speak as follows" (3, 5, 7). The following speech in *oratio recta* ends (3, 5, 16) with the capping phrase "After he had said this, he stopped". Subsequently, we are told, numerous Athenians rose and spoke as *synegoroi* in favour of the proposal.

⁷⁰ THUC. 1, 67, 5. In 1, 119 we are told that the Corinthians had engaged in systematic lobbying of other communities in advance.

The discrepancy between the plural introductory phrase and the singular in the capping phrase is surprising, and we cannot rule out that it may have been deliberate. If so, it may have been meant to indicate that the Thebans sent out their team with a shared oratorical brief, but that, in the event, the first Theban speaker was so successful that any further speeches were superfluous. Instead, a large number of Athenian participants themselves provided the necessary *synegoriai* – a powerful illustration, then, of the rhetorical efficacy of the case made by the first Theban speaker, of the ringing endorsement by the Athenian *demos* of the Thebans' proposition, and of the Athenian eagerness for war.

Alternatively, the shift from plural to singular was simply due to carelessness on Xenophon's part when he constructed the scene. This seems more plausible, for if Xenophon's aim was to highlight the efficacy of a single speech and speaker, one might have expected him to name the envoy who succeeded so spectacularly in winning over the Athenian assembly. However, the speaker remains unidentified, and his personal voice is entirely absent from the speech assigned to him. All opinion verbs are in the first person plural, with the Theban community as their subject,⁷¹ and only twice is it possible to interpret the first person plural as referring to the envoys themselves as a group, rather than to the Theban collectivity.⁷² Like Hekatomnos of Sinope in his first speech, the Theban speaker here is simply the conduit for the argumentation and persuasive effort of his *polis*.

The discrepancy constitutes a warning that speaking verbs in the plural cannot be taken as a safe indication that a speech in *oratio recta* represents the contents of two or more separate speeches rolled into one. But nor does the attribution of a single speech to a team of envoys necessarily mean that we are meant to imagine the speech as being delivered by only one

⁷¹ νομίζομεν (3, 5, 8), ἀξιοῦμεν (3, 5, 9), νομίζομεν (3, 5, 15).

⁷² λέγομεν at 3, 5, 11 and 15.

speaker who spoke on behalf of all.⁷³ For there is a general tendency for the historiographers, including Xenophon, to air-brush out the envoys' individual characters from the representations of their oratory.

Sometimes the existence of an embassy is left entirely unmentioned, with the narrator instead representing the diplomatic exchange as a direct encounter between two collective groups.⁷⁴ But even when the narrator uses circumstantial participles that allow us to visualise the envoys in action, and even when they themselves are allowed to refer directly to their own position as speakers, their remarks tend to be general and impersonal. They are often restricted to providing information on who had sent them – an important indication, of course, that the envoys were authorised to speak for their community.⁷⁵ Their speech may also contain initial observations on the existing relationship between the addressees and envoys' community, with comments on how this affects the envoys' rhetorical position.⁷⁶ However, when the envoys are made to refer directly to their own characters (rather than the collective character of their community), their remarks are often little more than ethnic stereotyping.⁷⁷

The sharply delineated personal characters given to the individual envoys discussed in the previous section are exceptions rather than the rule. Apart from Xenophon's Kleiteles, Prokles and his three famous Athenians, the envoys who are given distinct voices and characters of their own tend to be those who are autocratic rulers, men who with some justification could say "L'état, c'est moi". This makes their position very different from envoys given their brief by a collective decision-making

⁷³ As HORNBLLOWER remarked (1987) 51, the two named Plataian envoys in THUC. 3, 52, 5-59, 4 hardly spoke in unison, and Thucydides may have 'telescoped' two originally separate speeches.

⁷⁴ E.g. THUC. 1, 115, 2; 3, 102, 6; 5, 32, 4-5; XEN. *Hell.* 5, 2, 1.

⁷⁵ HDT. 7, 136, 2; 7, 157, 1; 8, 142, 1; 9, 7A, 1; THUC. 4, 17, 1.

⁷⁶ E.g. THUC. 1, 32, 1; 1, 68, 1-2; 1, 73, 1-3.

⁷⁷ Cf. the Spartan envoys who comment on their need to speak at un-Lakonic length (THUC. 4, 17, 2-3).

body. The difference is not unlike that which distinguishes a powerful CEO of a modern corporation from an employee in the corporation's PR department. Because of the CEO's personal authority within the corporation, his or her personal values and opinions will contribute directly to the public perception of the *ethos* of the corporation. By contrast, the individual character of a PR officer is of little consequence for the persuasive effect of any statement he or she might issue: what the public is meant to hear is the voice of the corporation and the *ethos* projected is that of the organisation as an entity. In Greek historiography, the voices of elected envoys are for the most part comparable to the latter rather than the former.

It is likely, however, that envoys' symbouleutic oratory may in reality have been much more personal and much more dependent on individual character projection than is normally represented by the historiographers. This is suggested not only by the evidence in the Attic Orators and Xenophon's trilogies, but also by the rhetoric of the one elected envoy whom Thucydides allows to speak with a voice of his own: Hermokrates of Syracuse. Both in his speech at the conference at Gela (4, 59, 1-64, 5) and in his speech to the assembly at Kamarina (6, 76, 1-80, 5), Hermokrates comes across far more as an advisor in his own right than as the representative of his polis. Although he does refer to his brief in both speeches, his frequent use of the first person singular, and his references to his own judgement and opinions are as conspicuous as in Xenophon's trilogies, if not more so. The effect is that his oratory does not convey a particularly strong impression of the Syracusan collective character, but a gripping characterisation of Hermokrates himself as, effectively, the influential CEO of Syracuse.

Furthermore, when he uses the first person plural in his speech at Gela, this is more often the 'we' of the Sicilian Greeks than the Syracusan 'we'. Hermokrates thus sets himself up as an advisor who speaks in the common interest of all Sicilian Greeks. His strategy can be explained by the overall Syracusan objective of creating a united front against an invading enemy,

making it particularly important for Hermokrates to allay any fears in his audiences that the Syracusans were in reality planning a power grab.

Arguably, the juxtaposition of Hermokrates' oratory with the later report of his fall from grace does serve as a powerful collective characterisation of the Syracusans – as Hornblower wryly comments, "All this sounds very Athenian".⁷⁸ But if we consider the specific occasions, it is Hermokrates' own *ethos* that appears to be decisive in winning over his audience at Gela, while at Kamarina he reportedly fails (6, 88, 1-3). Perhaps significantly, the Kamarinaian equivocal response to his speech and the counter-speech by the Athenian envoy Euphemos is ascribed to their fear of the Syracusans. This Hermokrates evidently has not succeeded in dispelling.

Hermokrates' projection of his own *ethos* is unusual for elected envoys as represented by Thucydides, but this does not permit the inference that it was exceptional for this genre of symbouleutic oratory in real life. The frequent suppression of envoys' individuality may well have been due mainly to the wider literary agendas of the historiographers.

The editing out of the envoys' individual characters permits the reading audience to listen to what appears to be conversations between collectivities. The *ethos* projected in the speeches presented in *oratio recta* is the collective *ethos* of an entire community, very often in ways that correspond closely to the projection of *ethos* in the speeches put in the mouths of individual characters. For example, in Thucydides' speech assigned to a team of Mytilenaians, who are asking for Peloponnesian assistance in their rebellion against the Athenians, the envoys are anxious to demonstrate that their community adheres to a basic code of trust and allegiance between allied states despite its decision to rebel.⁷⁹ The thrust of their *prooimion* is strikingly similar to the exiled Alkibiades' justification, in the *epilogos* of

⁷⁸ HORNBLOWER (2008) 532.

⁷⁹ THUC. 3, 9, 1-3.

his speech to the Spartans, of his decision to back the bitterest enemies of his own *polis* (6, 92, 2-5). In both speeches, the demonstration of values – in one case collective, in the other individual – is essential for establishing the trustworthiness of the speeches themselves and of the motives behind them. In the Mytilenaian case, a credible projection of a collective *ethos* is most likely of critical importance. A positive Peloponnesian response is likely to depend on the audience's being persuaded that the envoys' proposition is broadly supported by their community as a whole, and not just by a narrow faction. It may in fact have been the case that several of the envoys spoke in order to prove precisely that point (thus adopting a strategy similar to Xenophon's Athenian envoys in 371);⁸⁰ but if so, this does not seem to have been relevant to what Thucydides is aiming to describe.

The impersonal quality of the *ethos* normally projected in envoys' speeches may thus be due mainly to their function as vehicles for collective characterisation. But it may also have served an additional literary purpose. As suggested by Cogan,⁸¹ in cases where the envoys remain nameless and faceless in their orations, the effect is that we, as readers, find ourselves listening to the speeches in the company of the envoys' addressees rather than sitting together with the envoys on their *bema*.

To be sure, a foreign mass audience may well have been in a position to recognise some of the men making up a team of envoys and have responded to them with a preconceived judgement on their individual trustworthiness and authority. This was especially likely to have been the case if a team numbered not only speakers with the standing of *proxenoi* but also one or more celebrities – successful military commanders, famous

⁸⁰ We are told in 3, 4, 4 that one of the men who had originally disclosed the Mytilenaian plot to the Athenians, but who had now changed his mind, was among the participants on the ambassadorial team sent to Athens to reassure them that they were not intending to secede.

⁸¹ COGAN (1981) 218-222. Note, however, the comments by HORNBLOWER (1987) 50-52 on the two named Plataian envoys in THUC. 3, 52, 5.

actors, trendy philosophers,⁸² and renowned orators. All of these are attested frequently as members of ambassadorial teams in the 4th century, and their potential importance for the team's overall performance should not be downplayed. Likewise, an envoy who was previously unknown to his audience may have left a lasting impression because of a spectacular performance – as Xenophon's Prokles did in his first address to the Athenian assembly.

Yet, even when a team featured a number of familiar faces whose individual characters would have been of some rhetorical importance, it is likely that the overriding concern of the foreign audience was the totality of the message they conveyed, in terms of its substance and credibility as a genuine expression of the collective will of the envoys' own community. Thus, Xenophon's blurred representation of the several orations by the five named Spartan envoys at Athens after Leuktra, who "all said much the same thing" (6, 5, 33), may well reflect the way a foreign audience would often have remembered the oratory of an ambassadorial team. That classical Greek audiences responded to ambassadorial teams first and foremost as teams is also suggested by the frequent formula used in Athenian inscriptions recording responses to visiting foreign missions: "On the matters on which the Methymnaians speak" – *περὶ ὧν λέγουσιν οἱ δεῖνα*.⁸³ The tendency in classical historiography to let us experience ambassadorial speeches from the point of view of the audience may well have contributed to the conventional

⁸² The participation by philosophers on ambassadorial teams is especially well attested for the Hellenistic period, but there is at least one 4th-century example, Xenokrates of Chalkedon, who joined the Athenian ambassadors to Antipater after Krannon; see WHITEHEAD (1981) 238-241; HAAKE (2007) 64 n. 222. An earlier example may be Alkidamas of Elaia, whose *Messeniakos* may have been delivered at Sparta during the first half of the 360s, despite a broad scholarly consensus that the speech was merely a rhetorical exercise; see, e.g., MARISS (2002) 20-21 and GRANDJEAN (2003) 65-66.

⁸³ E.g. *IG* II² 42, 44, 96, etc. The wording of the formula even seems to have crept into DEM. 7, 1 (*ὕστερον δέ, περὶ ὧν οἱ πρέσβεις λέγουσι, καὶ ἡμεῖς λέξομεν*).

representation of the envoys as speaking with a single, impersonal voice.

The operation of the team collectively and the performances by its individual members look quite different when viewed from the perspective of the envoys' own community. The selection of team members is very unlikely to have been done with a view to maximising the rhetorical potential of the team as a whole, although the potential of individuals to establish a rapport with their non-domestic audiences probably played an important part.⁸⁴ When the mission's objectives were potentially contentious, different factions most likely did their utmost to work for the election of team members whose views coincided with their own.⁸⁵ The presence of envoys with different political leanings would have been important as a way of ensuring internal 'policing' within the delegation. As Demosthenes comments: on the first of the missions to Makedonia Aischines allegedly owed his election to his avowed hostility to Philip and was chosen as "one of those who was to keep an eye on the rest" (Dem. 19, 12).

No doubt, such considerations would often have informed the composition of ambassadorial teams and made them very different from forensic teams. That did not necessarily present an insurmountable obstacle to rhetorical cooperation and it could even be a strength. As discussed in section iv, the Athenian mission to Sparta in 371 may have been successful precisely because the team appears to have played its internal differences to their collective advantage by combining the projection of very different individual characters and viewpoints with an overall loyalty to the Athenian brief to which they were all ultimately committed.

Nevertheless, it is an important question if effective rhetorical cooperation was generally realistic, especially on a team

⁸⁴ This is suggested not least by *Rhet. ad Alex.* 24, 3, cited earlier.

⁸⁵ The precise methods with which envoys were selected are difficult to reconstruct, even for Athens, where the role of the *boule* in particular, which was emphasised by BRIANT (1968), is disputed.

packed full of men with large egos. Here it is important to bear in mind that Athenian envoys at least had a strong legal incentive to cooperate with fellow team members, however bitter their personal differences. Ambassadorial teams resembled ordinary boards of officials in that individual liability was combined with a certain level of collective liability. The team was debriefed as a team, yet it seems to have been each participant's duty to render account of his own personal performance, as well as of the mission itself. Aischines and Demosthenes provide ample evidence for the importance of debriefing speeches delivered by returning envoys,⁸⁶ and the process itself clearly presented a considerable risk to the individual envoys of being shopped by their colleagues.⁸⁷ Interestingly, the only specific advice offered to envoys in the *Rhetoric to Alexander* relates directly to the speeches which an envoy might be required to present during his debriefing.⁸⁸ The author notes that these, being reports, should contain only a narrative, but spun in such a way that the speaker will persuade his audience not to hold him responsible for the failure of his mission, or to credit him as responsible for the embassy's achievements, if the mission had been a success.

The recognition that an envoy, unlike any other symbouleutic orator, gave advice both as himself and as the mouthpiece of his own community was sometimes explored even in the representations of ambassadorial oratory in the historiographers. We see this in the speech given to the aforementioned Theban envoy to Athens who succeeded in persuading his audience to join the Thebans against the Spartans in 395 despite the Theban call for Athens' destruction ten years earlier. The envoy tackles this by asserting that the proposal had emanated not from his *polis* but from a single man who happened to be present in the congress of Spartan allies. In the context of the

⁸⁶ E.g. AESCHIN. 2, 47-54, 122; 3, 125; DEM. 19, 5, 18-24.

⁸⁷ E.g. the prosecution by Leon of his fellow envoy Timagoras (XEN. *Hell.* 7, 1, 33-38).

⁸⁸ *Rhet. ad. Alex.* 30, 2-4.

Hellenica this may seem disingenuous, since the clamour for Athens' destruction is represented as being made by the Thebans and the Corinthians collectively (2, 2, 19). However, the Theban's representation may not have sounded as absurd as is sometimes thought, precisely because an envoy was individually liable for his own words as well as his actions. It was this which made it possible for communities to disown envoys who were perceived as having overstepped the mark.⁸⁹ The disowning of an envoy would, it seems, normally require him to be formally punished for his words after debriefing. Thus, the disingenuousness in the Theban representation of the episode arises mainly from the fact that the Thebans had not done so.

Obviously, the most dangerous accusation an envoy potentially faced was that he had sabotaged the mission because of collaboration with hostile states. Thus, even a relatively innocent reluctance to cooperate with the others in working towards the mission's goals might be used against him in support of far more serious allegations.

However much an envoy may have owed his election on a mission to a desire by a particular faction to ensure internal policing of his team, he had nevertheless made a binding personal commitment to ensuring, as far as possible, that the objectives as defined by the assembly and council were indeed met. The accounts of Demosthenes and Aischines show us how such team work might fail due to the over-sized egos of some of the members. Xenophon's accounts, by contrast, show us how they might succeed. The literary conventions in classical historiography do make it difficult to identify how often teams divided up their rhetorical tasks in this way. Yet, there is good reason to believe that team-speaking was, in practice, one of the ways that each team member would be able to support his own argumentation by projecting his personal authority and

⁸⁹ Compare the Thebans' disowning of their Medism in THUC. 3, 62, 2-4 with reference to the fact that they were ruled by an autocratic government.

knowledge, while the team, at the same time, worked together to strengthen the totality of their case by a shared projection of their city's collective character.

The lack of explicit comment on the practice in the *Rhetoric to Alexander* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* should not be taken as an indication that it was rare. After all, neither author has much to say on the strategies associated with forensic *synegoria*,⁹⁰ yet the evidence for the practice testifies to their important role in real-life litigation.

The evidence does not permit a more precise assessment of the frequency of ambassadorial team speaking as compared with the use of a single spokesman. However, any analysis of the ambassadorial speeches represented in classical Greek historiography has to take into account that each speech may in fact be a distillation of several contributions to what was originally not only a polyphonic but a symphonic performance.

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⁹⁰ Aristotle refers once to what appears to be a *synegoria* in 1374b36-1375a2, while the *Rhet. ad Alex.* devotes 36, 37-41 to advice on how a *synegoros* might justify his participation in the case at hand and counter any suspicion that he was speaking in return for a fee.

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