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Huitink, L.

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Luuk Huitink

Musings on an Attic Muse: Three Ancient Responses to a Passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis*

Abstract: This chapter discusses three ancient scholarly comments and reworkings of a passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.5.32–3), which represent three distinct strands in the ancient reception of Xenophon's language and style. First, a comment from the Antiatticist (ε 11 Valente) belongs to the claustrophobic world of "linguistic Atticism", in which Xenophon's Attic was sometimes called into question. Secondly, a passage from Hermogenes (*Id.* 406.1–7 Rabe) is ultimately rooted in the more relaxed environment of "rhetorical Atticism". Thirdly, Philostratus (*VA* 2.28.2) alludes to the Xenophontic passage in ways which demonstrates the playfulness of creative Atticist writing. A final section addresses the undue influence which a tendency to take comments of ancient critics at face value has had on modern assessments of Xenophon's literary achievement.

Keywords: Xenophon, diction, style, Atticism, Antiatticist, Hermogenes, Philostratus

You're something beautiful
A contradiction
I wanna play the game
I want the friction

Muse, *Time is Running Out* (2003)

1 *Amuse*: Armchair Scholars in Armenia

In Book 4 of the *Anabasis* Xenophon relates how the Ten Thousand escape the hostile conditions of the Armenian winter for a while by taking possession of the well-stocked underground dwellings of a local people. Xenophon himself takes a tour of these occupied villages, where the soldiers are living it up:

> ὁπότε δέ τις φιλοφρονούμενός τῳ βούλοιτο προπιεῖν, εἶλκεν ἐπὶ τὸν κρατῆρα, ἔνθεν ἐπικύψαντα ἔδει ῥοφοῦντα πίνειν ὥσπερ βοῦν. καὶ τῷ κωμάρχῳ ἐδίδοσαν λαμβάνειν ὅ τι βούλοιτο. ὁ δὲ ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν ἐδέχετο, ὅπου δέ τινα τῶν συγγενῶν ἴδοι, πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀεὶ λάμβανε. ἐπεὶ δ' ἦλθον πρὸς Χειρίσοφον, κατελάμβανον κἀκείνους σκηνοῦντας ἐστεφανω-

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> μένους τοῦ ξηροῦ χιλοῦ στεφάνοις, καὶ διακονοῦντας Ἀρμενίους παῖδας σὺν ταῖς βαρβαρικαῖς στολαῖς· τοῖς παισὶν ἐδείκνυσαν ὥσπερ ἐνεοῖς ὅ τι δέοι ποιεῖν.
>
> (Xen. *An.* 4.5.32–3)

> And whenever a man wanted out of good fellowship to drink another's health, he would draw him to the bowl, and then one had to stoop over and drink from it, sucking like an ox. To the village chief they offered the privilege of taking whatever he wanted. He declined for the most part to accept anything, but whenever he caught sight of one of his kinsmen, he would always take the man to his side. Again, when they reached Cheirisophus, Xenophon found his troops also feasting in their quarters, crowned with wreaths of hay and served by Armenian boys in their strange, foreign dress; and they were showing the boys what to do by signs, as if they were deaf and dumb.
>
> (trans. Brownson/Dillery 1995)

It is perhaps not too far-fetched to imagine the dedicatee of this Festschrift in a different time and a different part of Turkey similarly relaxing over a meal and beer after a day's hard work — though he would, of course, live in closer harmony with the local population and be armed with nothing more dangerous than a tape recorder and a notebook, and he would not be satisfied to talk with the locals "by signs" alone, but would at once set about documenting their language.

However, in the absence of further information about the language of the Armenian boys, let us shift our focus back to Xenophon. I cite the passage because it garnered significant attention from ancient readers, with two scholarly comments and one learned reworking from the second and third centuries[1] having come down to us — suggesting that the passage was perused with special care, as if the momentary lull in Xenophon's exciting narrative also slowed down ancient readers. First, the lexicon of the so-called Antiatticist comments on Xenophon's use of the word ἐνεός towards the end of the passage (ε 11 Valente). Secondly, the rhetorician Hermogenes cites several phrases from it in a discussion of the attractions of Xenophon's style (*Id.* 406.1–7 Rabe). Thirdly, Philostratus includes an allusion to it in his own description of a banquet in the *Life of Apollonius* (2.28.2). This chapter offers an extended commentary on these passages, highlighting how each represents a distinct strand in the ancient reception of Xenophon's writing. My aim is to provide a short "sample book" of the diverse interest which ancient scholars in the first centuries of the Common Era took in Xenophon's language and style. In the final section, I add some thoughts on how ancient comments like the ones discussed should (or indeed should *not*) impact our own assessments of Xenophon.

1 All dates are CE, unless otherwise specified.

My analysis takes place against the backdrop of a puzzling dichotomy in Xenophon's ancient reception.[2] On the one hand, we have testimonies like those of Diogenes Laertius, who reports that Xenophon "was called 'Attic Muse' on account of the sweetness of his style" (2.57: ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ καὶ Ἀττικὴ Μοῦσα γλυκύτητι τῆς ἑρμηνείας), and of the *Suda*, that "he was nicknamed 'Attic bee'" (ξ 47 Adler: Ἀττικὴ μέλιττα ἐπωνομάζετο).[3] On the other hand, we are faced with remarks like that of the fourth-century scholar Helladius of Antinopolis, who claims — on account of Xenophon's alleged use of the accusative plural τοὺς νομεῖς instead of the "proper" Attic form νομέας — that he should not be regarded as "a lawgiver of Attic usage" (νομοθέτην … ἀττικισμοῦ), adding that we should not be surprised, because Xenophon was "a man spending his time on campaigns and mixing with foreigners".[4]

As we shall see in the final section, this situation has provoked a good deal of debate among modern Xenophon scholars concerning the question just how "(im)pure" his Attic really is, which has had a lasting impact on his modern reputation. However, in the field of ancient scholarship, the parameters of such discussions have shifted significantly: owing to incisive work on the complex phenomenon of "Atticism", we now know that the term "Attic" was malleable and could mean different things in different contexts.[5] This means, as we shall see, that the question whether Diogenes Laertius and the *Suda* or Helladius is "correct" in their assessments of Xenophon may not be the most productive one to ask.

Building on this work, I will operate with a global distinction between "linguistic" (or "grammatical"), "rhetorical" (or "stylistic") and "creative" Atticism. While representatives of each of those strands were concerned with the emulation of the

2 The chief overview of Xenophon's ancient reception, covering many aspects, remains Münscher 1920. On Xenophon's linguistic reception, see further Gautier 1911: 12–19 (*et passim*); Persson 1915: 87–102; Sgobbi 2004; Rubulotta 2024a; 2024b: 171–175. For Xenophon's ancient reputation in the rhetorical tradition, see Breitenbach 1950: 11–13; Rutherford 1998: 64–79; Patillon 2002: II.13–17; Chiron 2014; Pernot 2014. For an introduction to Xenophon's influence on creative literature from the Imperial Period, see Bowie 2017.

3 Cf. Eustath., *Comm. Od.* I.418.14–15 Stallbaum: Ξενοφῶν ὁ γλυκὺς ἐκεῖνος Ἀττικὸς μέλισσα ἐπωνομάζετο.

4 Helladius *apud* Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 279, 533b23–28. I cite the entire passage in the Appendix, where I go into the question whether Xenophon did or did not write νομεῖς. — The sobriquet νομοθέτης ἀττικισμοῦ appears to be unique; Helladius' rough contemporary and fellow Egyptian Isidore of Pelusium refers to Socrates as ὁ τῶν Ἀττικῶν δογμάτων νομοθέτης (*Ep.* 1.11 "the lawgiver of Attic doctrines"), but this refers to ethical rather than grammatical precepts.

5 The bibliography is immense; Tribulato, Favi and Prauscello (2024), the first of three projected volumes on ancient ideas about linguistic purism, is now the go-to work. Useful brief overviews can be found in Whitmarsh 2005: 41–56; Kazazis 2007; Kim 2010; 2017; Willi 2014.

great classical authors from the past, they tended to focus on different aspects of the emulation and to engage in different kinds of arguments.[6] I will elaborate this point with the help of the three ancient responses to the passage from the *Anabasis*. This chapter is a counterpart to work which I did together with Tim Rood, in which we attempted a characterization of Xenophon's language without the usual appeals to normative conceptions of classical Attic.[7] Here I wish to make clear that such appeals are themselves rooted in a skewed understanding of ancient critical discourse on language and style. Given the complexity of ancient responses to Xenophon's language and style and the frequent disconnect between modern Xenophontic scholarship and that on the ancient rhetorical tradition, this chapter aims to clarify potential misunderstandings and to identify promising avenues for future research into some fundamental questions about the reception of Xenophon's literary art.

2 Amused or not Amused: Ancient Responses to Xenophon

2.1 The Antiatticist

I start with the comment found in the lexicon of the so-called "Antiatticist" (I will return to this name below) on Xenophon's use of ἐνεός in "our" passage (the word is only found there in the *Anabasis*, and indeed in all of Xenophon, so it is certain that the Antiatticist is referring to this occurrence):

> ἐνεός· ὁ μὴ ἀκούων. Ξενοφῶν Κύρου ἀναβάσει.
>
> (Antiatt. ε 11 Valente)

> ἐνεός: one who cannot hear. Xenophon in the *Anabasis of Cyrus*.

6 For the distinction, see Kim 2010: 472–473; Tribulato, Favi and Prauscello 2024: 13–16. O'Sullivan 2015 has challenged the validity of the contrast between "linguistic" and "rhetorical" Atticism, arguing that the two were not chronologically and terminologically distinct in antiquity. O'Sullivan's points caution against overstating the case. However, as a broad-brush way of referring to different ancient approaches to "Attic" and different kinds of attention that could be devoted to the language and style of classical authors, the distinction still strikes me as real and helpful.

7 Huitink and Rood 2019: 23–32; 2020; 2024; cf. Tribulato, Favi and Prauscello 2024: 209–212.

At first glance, this entry might seem like a straightforward gloss, explaining a rare word in classical prose, and to some extent it serves that purpose.[8] However, to limit our interpretation to this would be to severely mistake the Antiatticist's lexicographical project. It is essential to note that the Antiatticist belongs to a broader category of Atticist lexica. Other examples from the second century, sharing a comparable format, are Phrynichus' *Ἐκλογὴ Ἀττικῶν ῥημάτων* and Moeris' *Ἀττικιστής*.[9] The former is a possibly incomplete work in two books consisting of a series of brief entries (not alphabetically arranged), collecting non-Attic words (τὰς ἀδοκίμους τῶν φωνῶν "the disreputable among the expressions", as the preface has it) and giving proper Attic equivalents that one could (or rather should) use instead. The latter is likely intact and is primarily comprised of alphabetically ordered entries that juxtapose Attic and non-Attic (*koinḗ*) word-pairs side by side. These and other lexicographical works are our best window onto the world of "linguistic" Atticism, whose practitioners were preoccupied with the finer nuances of classical Attic.[10] It produced a stifling and intolerant intellectual environment, "populated by an elite obsessed with recreating the minutiae of the Attic dialect and catching the mistakes of their peers".[11] The latter part of this statement is particularly important: unlike modern dictionaries, the Atticist lexica do not seek objectively to reconstruct actual Attic usage of the late 5th and 4th centuries BC, but instead engage in prescriptive debates about what should or should not be accepted as "proper" Attic: beneath their seemingly objective tone lies a radical and polemical agenda.

The lexica's polemical intent and the nature of their disagreements become evident in cases where multiple lexica offer commentary on the same word or expression. An illustration of this, which involves Xenophon, can be found in the following entries on ἀκμήν ("still"):[12]

> ἀκμὴν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔτι· Ξενοφῶντα λέγουσιν ἅπαξ αὐτῷ κεχρῆσθαι, σὺ δὲ φυλάττου χρῆσθαι, λέγε δὲ ἔτι.
>
> (Phryn. *Ec.* 93 Fischer)

> ἀκμήν instead of ἔτι: they say that Xenophon employs it once, but you should beware of using it, and you should say ἔτι.

8 Apart from the one passage in the *Anabasis*, ἐνεός occurs in extant classical Attic prose only at Pl. *Cra.* 422e4, *Tht.* 206d9, [*Alc. II* 140d1].

9 More comprehensive sketches of the nature and transmission of the Atticist lexica can be found in Dickey 2007: 96–100; Matthaios 2015: 290–296; Tribulato 2021: 169–172; Tribulato, Favi and Prauscello 2024: 20–49.

10 Kim 2010: 473; Willi 2014: 47.

11 Kim 2010: 469.

12 See now Gerbi 2024.

> ἀκμήν οὐδεὶς τῶν Ἀττικῶν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔτι, ἢ μόνος Ξενοφῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀναβάσει· Ἕλληνες δὲ χρῶνται.
>
> (Moeris α 149 Hansen)

> None of the Attic authors says ἀκμήν instead of ἔτι, excepting only Xenophon, in the *Anabasis*; the Greeks, however, do use it.

> ἀκμήν· ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔτι. Ὑπερείδης Ὑπὲρ Κρατίνου.
>
> (Antiatt. α 21 Valente)

> ἀκμήν for ἔτι: Hyperides in *On behalf of Cratinus*.

It is possible that the lexica are directly responding to each other (it has been thought that when Phrynichus composed the *Ἐκλογή*, he had the lexicon of the Antiatticist or something like it at his disposal, although in the present case they offer examples taken from different authors),[13] or that the debate surrounding ἀκμήν could trace its origins to another, no longer extant source (the existence of a broader discussion is hinted at by Phrynichus' λέγουσιν "they say").[14] However, for present purposes the exact relation of the lexica to each other is not important. What interests us here is how the entries on ἀκμήν exemplify their polemical discourse, which thrives on both diachronic and synchronic linguistic variation and the presentation of conflicting evidence.[15] To start with, if all Greeks had always said either ἔτι or ἀκμήν for "still", there would be little to argue about. However, this was not the case. First, while ἔτι is the standard classical Attic word for "still", in the later *koiné* ἀκμήν becomes a common equivalent. Moeris is particularly keen on this sort of diachronic change, consistently opposing what "the Attic people" say to what "the Greeks" (by which he means speakers of the *koiné* from his own time) say; he appears to operate on a principle of maximal differentiation: a true Atticist opts for the Attic expressions which differ most from the *koiné*. Secondly, however, the diachronic picture was not quite so neat: after all, already in the 4th century BC authors like Xenophon and Hyperides had used ἀκμήν instead of ἔτι.[16] Faced with this synchronic variation, an Atticist can do various

13 Cf. Matthaios 2015: 292.

14 Cf. Sgobbi 2004: 232.

15 A fuller exposition of the argumentation of the Atticist lexica is offered by Willi 2014: 47–51.

16 At least according to the Atticist lexicographers, for it is questionable whether ἀκμήν was already entirely synonymous with ἔτι. In the case of Hyperides (fr. 116 Jensen) we have no further context, but in the relevant passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.3.26 ὁ ὄχλος ἀκμὴν διέβαινε, "the camp followers where in the very act of crossing") ἀκμήν surely expresses that they were *in the middle of* the crossing (cf. Gautier 1911: 67). It is possible that Phrynichus' qualification, "they

things. The two extreme options are *either* to accept that ἀκμήν "still" is a properly Attic word after all, because unquestionably "classical" authors Xenophon and Hyperides already used it (this is the strategy adopted by the Antiatticist), *or* to deny Xenophon and Hyperides the status of canonical classical authors. There are also various positions in between these extremes: one could, for instance, say that in order for an expression to qualify as good Attic, it is not quite enough that it is attested in only *one* "good" author (note Moeris' μόνος) or only *once* in an author (note Phrynichus' ἅπαξ).

Now, owing to chronological, generic and ideological factors, Xenophon's diction differs quite substantially from that of "core" classical Attic authors like, say, Aristophanes or orators like Lysias and Demosthenes, and in particular shares some salient features with the later *koiné*.[17] This made his works a fertile battleground for the Atticists' wars over words (alongside, for instance, Menander). Of the three lexica under discussion here, Phrynichus' displays the most severe Atticism and, while his comment on ἀκμήν is formulated in fairly neutral terms, he elsewhere rejects Xenophon outright, using harsh language: ὀσμὴ χρὴ λέγειν διὰ τοῦ σ· διὰ γὰρ τοῦ δ, ὀδμή, Ἰώνων. παρανομεῖ οὖν Ξενοφῶν εἰς τὴν πάτριον διάλεκτον λέγων ὀδμή. (*Ec.* 62 Fischer: "One should say ὀσμή 'smell' with σ; for the form with δ, ὀδμή, belongs to the Ionians. So Xenophon offends against his native dialect by saying ὀδμή").[18] By contrast, the Antiatticist adopts a much more liberal view (the name, given to the anonymous author by Ruhnken, should not be taken to imply that he was against Atticism, but merely that he maintains a wider definition of good Attic than stricter practitioners). In his book, Xenophon is an unassailable authority; at one point, he counters the claim that εὐειδής "shapely" is incorrect Attic with an appeal to a single attestation of the word in "the good Xenophon" (ὁ καλὸς Ξενοφῶν), further adding — surprisingly, given modern conceptions of Greek dialects — several occurrences in Herodotus (the word is indeed probably Ionic).[19] Finally, Moeris is also on the whole prepared to accept Xenophon as part of the Attic canon, especially when he can use him to apply his prin-

say", pertains to a discussion about the semantics of the word (rather than, say, implying that Phrynichus had not himself read Xenophon or had been unable to locate the passage).

17 See Gray 2006; Huitink and Rood 2019: 23–32; 2020; 2024.

18 Cf. Münscher 1920: 171; Sgobbi 2004: 230. The truth of statements on phonological features is difficult to ascertain, owing to the possibility that the manuscripts have gone through a process of atticization. In any case, all manuscripts of Xenophon have ὀσμή on all occurrences (×17), excepting *Smp.* 2.3, where part of the manuscripts read ὀδμή. No modern editor has opted to "restore" ὀδμή on Phrynichus' authority.

19 Antiatt. ε 22 Valente. Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.4 and, e.g., Hdt. 1.35.6, 60.4. As Valente 2015: 47 notes, καλός sounds a tad defensive.

ciple of maximal differentiation. For instance, he approvingly cites the (possibly Ionic) Xenophontic *hapax* γνωστήρ "one that knows" (*Cyr.* 6.2.39), because it provides him with a *recherché* equivalent for common *koiné* γνώστης.[20]

Let us now return to ἐνεός. In this case, we do not have directly corresponding entries in the Atticist lexica, but a variety of sources nevertheless allow us to trace the contours of a debate about the semantics of the word to which the Antiatticist may be contributing. At stake is the original Attic meaning of ἐνεός, which appears to have been disputed in two ways:

1) *"Deaf" or "deaf and dumb"?* A lexicon that ultimately goes back to the second-century polymath Herennius Philo (better known as Philo of Byblos among historians) draws a distinction between an older stage of the language in which ἐνεός and κωφός were synonymous and meant "(deaf and) dumb", and a current stage in which they are no longer synonymous and κωφός only means "deaf" (and ἐνεός probably still means "dumb", though the text does not specify this): κωφὸς καὶ ἐνεὸς ὁ αὐτὸς παρὰ τοῖς ἀρχαίοις ἐλέγετο, ὁ μὴ φθεγγόμενος … [quotations of Hom. *Il.* 14.16 and Hdt. 1.47.3 (an oracle) to back up this meaning of κωφός] … νῦν δὲ κωφὸς ὁ τὴν ἀκοὴν βεβλαμμένην ἔχων (*Div. verb. sign.* κ.105 Palmieri: "κωφός and ἐνεός meant the same in the ancient authors, namely someone who does not speak … But now κωφός is someone who has a hearing impairment"). A further trace of the debate may be preserved in Hesychius' sixth-century *Lexicon* (ε.2908), which glosses ἐνεός as "one who neither hears nor speaks" (ὃς οὔτε ἀκούει οὔτε λαλεῖ). These sources suggest that there was a debate about the question whether κωφός and ἐνεός were or were not synonymous for "the ancients".[21] Such a debate will have had a bearing on the principle of maximal differentiation: although it might be tempting to show off and replace common κωφός "deaf" with rarefied (and therefore prestigious) ἐνεός in your Atticizing compositions, that does not really work if the words mean something different. It may be that the Antiatticist is countering that very point, suggesting that Xenophon in fact had already used ἐνεός in the meaning "deaf" so that it *could* serve as a nice atticizing equivalent of κωφός (even if modern interpreters take the Xenophontic occurrence to mean "deaf and dumb").

2) *"Deaf" or "foolish"?* There appears to have been a further debate about the question whether ἐνεός "deaf and dumb" could also mean "foolish". The sprawl-

20 Moer. γ 25 Hansen. For Moeris' attitude to Xenophon, see Münscher 1920: 174–175.

21 The opposite position to the one which Herennius Philo defends may have been inspired in particular by the disjunctive phrase ὁ μὴ ἐνεὸς ἢ κωφός ("one who is not dumb or deaf") found at Pl. *Tht.* 206d9. From this some Atticists may have inferred that ἐνεός strictly meant "dumb" and κωφός strictly "deaf", and that the words were therefore not in fact synonymous for "the ancients".

ing, loosely Atticist *Onomasticon* of Pollux (5.120) lists ἐνεός among words which mean "crazy" or "stupid", and Hesychius (*Lex.* ε.2907, 2908) twice provides the gloss μωρός. By contrast, an entry in the Byzantine lexicon of Photius, which preserves much older material, offers a conflicting opinion: <ἐ>νεός· οὐχ ὁ ἠλίθιος, ἀλλ' ὁ ἄφωνος (*Lex.* ε.877: "ἐνεός: not one who is 'stupid', but one who is 'without speech'"). It is relevant to note that in *koiné* Greek ἐνεός most often refers to "speechlessness", but as brought about by a lack of understanding, and so shading into "foolishness": clear examples are found in the New Testament: e.g. οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες οἱ συνοδεύοντες αὐτῷ εἱστήκεισαν ἐνεοί, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες (*Act.Ap.* 9.7: "and the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man"); and Heliodorus: e.g. ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐνεοῖς προσεοικότες ἄχρι τίνος ἄναυδοι καὶ ἄπρακτοι καθεδεῖσθε ὥσπερ ἅμα τῷ δυστυχεῖν καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν προσαφῃρημένοι (*Aeth.* 4.19.2: "how long will you sit here like dummies, saying nothing, doing nothing, as if in this calamity your wits had been stolen, too").[22] From that point of view, it is possible that the Antiatticist implies that the meaning "foolish" did not come into play in Xenophon's classical usage of the word and that, following Xenophon's example, ἐνεός can be used in good atticizing prose in the meaning "deaf", without further connotations.

2.2 Hermogenes

If Xenophon had a checkered career in linguistic Atticism, he fared better in the somewhat more relaxed cultural atmosphere of the broader rhetorical tradition. In the final major revision of ancient stylistic theory, Xenophon even became the go-to model for a specific kind of writing. I am referring to the theory of "ideas" or "types" (ἰδέαι) of style, which replaced traditional divisions of style into, for instance, grand, medium and low with a complex and at times bewildering system of as many as twenty "types" of style, each of which is characterized by, among other things, its own specific vocabulary, rhythm, thoughts and figures.[23] In this system, Xenophon is consistently put forward as the chief representative of the "type" called ἀφέλεια ("simplicity" or, better, "studied naïveté"). The second-century rhetorical treatise falsely attributed to Aelius Aristides highlights this association. Its first book, *Περὶ τοῦ πολιτικοῦ λόγου*, focuses on Demosthenes,

22 Cf., e.g., Ach. Tat. 5.19.3, Heliod. *Aeth.* 5.11.2, Cass. Dio 62.16.5; cf. already [Pl.] *Alc. II* 140d1, of uncertain date.

23 For the origins of "idea"-theory, see Hagedorn 1964; Patillon 2002: I.XXIII–LXIV; for its overall nature and application, see Patillon 1988.

while the second, *Περὶ τοῦ ἀφελοῦς λόγου*, is almost entirely dedicated to an analysis of Xenophontic "simplicity".[24] In the later handbook *Περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν* Hermogenes also liberally quotes from Xenophon in order to illustrate the characteristics of ἀφέλεια and the closely related "types" γλυκύτης ("sweetness") and δριμύτης ("subtlety"), both of which are essentially intensified forms of ἀφέλεια (*Id.* 322–45 Rabe).[25]

Furthermore, in the "reading list" of models for imitation with which *Περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν* ends, Xenophon figures prominently in a discussion of so-called "panegyric" rhetoric (which essentially comprises all literature apart from political oratory, including especially philosophy and historiography). While Plato is presented as the most useful author of "panegyric" owing to the great variety of the "types" of style which he displays, Xenophon comes a close second, owing to the "pleasures" (ἡδοναί) brought about by his ἀφέλεια and γλυκύτης (*Id.* 404.23–405.3 Rabe) — the chief characteristics of "panegyric" *tout court*.[26] Indeed, Xenophon excels Plato in ἀφέλεια, for example when he describes in his *Symposium* "the entrances of dancing girls and certain kinds of dances and kisses and other such things" (καὶ ὀρχηστρίδων εἰσόδους καὶ ὀρχημάτων εἴδη τινὰ καὶ φιλήματα καὶ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα), whereas Plato eschews such matters in his own *Symposium*. Then follows the reference to "our" passage from the *Anabasis*:

> τοιοῦτος δὲ ὁ Ξενοφῶν κἀν τοῖς ἱστορικοῖς, οἷος κἀν τοῖς ἄλλοις, οἷον ὅτι χιλὸν ἐστέψαντο, ὅταν λέγῃ, καὶ ὅτι τοῖς παισὶν ὡς ἐνεοῖς διελέγοντο καὶ ὅτι πίνειν ἀπὸ τοῦ κρατῆρος ἐπικύψαντας ἔδει καθάπερ βοῦν· ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα καθ' ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἀφέλειαν ἔχει τὴν ἡδονήν, ᾗπερ οὐχ ὁμοίως ὁ Πλάτων χρῆται.
>
> (Hermog. *Id.* 406.1–7 Rabe)

> Xenophon is similar in his historical works to his other writings, such as when he says that they wore crowns of straw, and that they talked to the children as if they were deaf and dumb, and that they had to drink bending over the bowl like a cow. Such passages and those like it give pleasure because of their exceptional simplicity, such as Plato does not employ in the same way.

The practical application of the "types" of style is often simpler than its convoluted theoretical framework suggests. The mere inclusion of a sympotic scene in a work of historiography presumably suffices to enhance that work's ἀφέλεια. When Hermogenes identifies specific phrases as exemplifying ἀφέλεια, their sim-

24 Scholars now believe these were originally separate treatises that were only combined later, at the latest in the tenth century (Patillon 2002: I.VIII–X).

25 See Rutherford 1998: 66–79; Chiron 2014: 312–317.

26 Worthington 1998: 39.

plicity largely stems from their reference to "simple" (humble or quaint) elements: straw crowns, boys communicating with gestures, and men drinking like cattle. Earlier in the treatise Hermogenes explicitly associates ἀφέλεια with such things as "little children or childlike men, women, country people or other guileless folk" do and say, and γλυκύτης with comparisons of animals to people.[27] In the present passage, he adds two more typically Xenophontic "simple" and "sweet" pleasures: his depiction of character, especially of simple and unaffected individuals, and his occasional use of "expressions that are somehow poetic" (ποιητικαῖς πως λέξεσι), such as πορσύνειν ("provide") (*Id.* 406.7–18 Rabe).[28] The final example clearly shows just how different Hermogenes' approach is from that of the lexica, which often condemn the use of poetic vocabulary in prose.[29]

The treatises on "types" of style which we possess are not concerned with Atticism as such; the terms Ἀττικός and Ἀττικισμός are not part of the critical vocabulary of either Hermogenes or Pseudo-Aristides. Nonetheless, their assessment of Xenophon clearly builds on earlier judgements rooted in the classicizing movement of rhetorical Atticism, which became popular among Greek and Roman elites from the 1st century BC onwards. The founding document of that movement is usually considered to be the preface of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *On Ancient Orators* (1), in which he praises the revival of the "ancient and autochtonous Attic Muse (Ἀττικὴ μοῦσα)", in opposition to an earlier, more bombastic style of oratory which he calls "Asian".[30] In a series of treatises Dionysius seeks to further the classizing trend in rhetoric by advocating emulating the style of the orators, historians and philosophers of classical Greece, albeit in an eclectic and loose way, which rarely seems to demand strict and consistent adherence to "proper" Attic word forms.[31] Dionysius roundly praises Xenophon's style for being "selective and pure in diction, and clear and vivid, and in respect of composition sweet and graceful" (ἐκλεκτικὸς μὲν γὰρ καὶ καθαρὸς τοῖς ὀνόμασι, καὶ σαφὴς καὶ ἐναργής καὶ κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν ἡδὺς καὶ εὔχαρις).[32] Dionysius' terms of praise are interesting in two respects. First, they make clear that we are still a world away from the obsessive nitpicking of the Atticist lexica, at least some of which would

27 *Id.* 323.11–16 and 335.8–12 Rabe (though the latter passage specifically discusses animals being given human traits, while the *Anabasis* passage does the reverse).

28 Cf. *Cyr.* 4.2.47, 7.5.17; the common Attic word is παρέχειν.

29 Thus, we hear complaints that Xenophon expresses himself "in an immoderately poetic fashion" (ποιητικῶς κατακόρως, Phot. *Lex.* ε 2535) or in "a rather/all too (?) poetic manner" (ποιητικωτέρως, Pol. *On.* 3.99); cf. Rubulotta 2024b: 521.

30 See Kim 2010: 472–474; De Jonge 2014.

31 Cf. Kim 2010: 473–474; 2017: 50–51.

32 *De im.* 31,3,2 Radermacher-Usener; cf. *Ep.Pomp.* 4.

hardly deem Xenophon's diction "pure". Secondly, they already seem to point to the qualities of uncomplicated "simplicity" and charming "sweetness", which are seen as the hallmark of Xenophon's style in "idea"-theory.

While rhetorical Atticism always maintained space for Xenophon — in his guises of both philosopher and historian — as a model for imitation, reservations were also expressed. Even Dionysius, despite his general admiration, criticized Xenophon for lacking the sublimity and grandeur that he saw as essential to historiographical prose, qualities he found exemplified in Herodotus.[33] Cicero, who maintained a skeptical stance toward Atticism as a whole, states that certain Atticists took Xenophon for their model, but adds that "while his style may be sweeter than honey, he is far removed from the wrangling of the forum" (*Or.* 32: *cuius sermo est ille quidem melle dulcior, sed a forensi strepitu remotissimus*), and so hardly a suitable model for practising orators. In a later passage, he rejects the imitation of all philosophers for that purpose — including both Plato, despite his acknowledged preeminence in the opposing qualities of "dignity and grace" (*Or.* 62: *et gravitate et suavitate*), and Xenophon, even though "they say that the Muses speak with Xenophon's voice" (*Xenophontis voce Musas quasi locutas ferunt*). Cicero's comments, made in the context of rhetorical Atticism, again appear to foreshadow certain aspects of Xenophon's position in "idea"-theory. His ranking of the "sweet" Xenophon below the "varied" Plato is reflected in Hermogenes' "reading list". More importantly, Cicero's observation of Xenophon's distance from political discourse aligns with Hermogenes' later treatment of Xenophon as a central figure in "panegyric", rather than political, oratory — a distinction that is ultimately mirrored in the structure of Pseudo-Aristides' treatise (whenever it was given its present form), which divides its focus between a Demosthenic (political) first part and a Xenophontic (simple) second part.

The path from Dionysius and Cicero to Hermogenes and Pseudo-Aristides winds through shadows and uncertainties, however. One thing which it would be nice to know is when the sobriquets "Attic bee" and "Attic Muse", the latter of which Dionysius gave to the movement as a whole, came to be attched to the name of Xenophon (and almost exclusively to him) — *if* that is the right way to think about it.[34] This development might be explained by Atticism's fundamental self-definition through qualities like "pure", "plain" and "direct" in opposition to

33 *De im.* 31,3,2 Radermacher-Usener.

34 Cf. Chiron 2014: 317. Diogenes Laertius, cited in Section 1 above, clearly reports an older tradition, and it would be interesting to know whether that tradition goes back to the same source as Cicero's claim that "they say" that the Muses speak with Xenophon's voice.

"Asianic" verbosity:[35] an author already perceived as "simple", as Xenophon was, could naturally emerge as emblematic of Atticist ideals, especially when Atticism was no longer mostly defined in terms of an opposition to Asianism, but rather became associated with broader stylistic virtues. Indeed, we see a parallel transformation in the evaluation of Xenophon's style: we cannot pinpoint exactly when his perceived defects — being too "sweet" and "simple" for grandeur or forensic intensity — were turned into virtues,[36] but this transformation appears connected to a broader shift in rhetorical theory, when the opposition between Atticism and Asianism lost prominence to other divisions such as that between political and non-political ("panegyric") literature. Within this framework, Xenophon's very "limitations" could be recast as exemplary qualities of the panegyric mode, making him the natural counterpart to, for instance, Demosthenes' mastery of political oratory.

2.3 Philostratus

The final passage which refers to "our" section of the *Anabasis* is found in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Philostratus describes the banqueting habits of the Indo-Parthian king Phraotes, whose guest Apollonius is; after dinner, it is time for a symposium:

> ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἱκανῶς ἔχωσιν, ἐσφέρονται κρατῆρες ἀργυροῖ τε καὶ χρυσοῖ, δέκα συμπόταις ἀποχρῶν εἷς, ἀφ᾽ ὧν πίνουσι κύψαντες, ὥσπερ ποτιζόμενοι. μεταξὺ δὲ πίνοντες ἐπεσάγονται ἀγερωχίας ἐπικινδύνους καὶ οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ σπουδάζειν· παῖς γάρ τις, ὥσπερ ὁ τῶν ὀρχηστρίδων, ἀνερριπτεῖτο κούφως συναφιεμένου αὐτῷ βέλους ἐς τὸ ἄνω, καὶ ἐπειδὴ πολὺ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς γένοιτο, ἐκυβίστα ὁ παῖς ὑπεραίρων ἑαυτὸν τοῦ βέλους, καὶ ἁμαρτών τι τοῦ κυβιστᾶν ἕτοιμα ἦν βεβλῆσθαι· ὁ γὰρ τοξότης πρὶν ἀφιέναι περιᾔει τοὺς ξυμπότας ἐπιδεικνὺς τὴν ἀκίδα καὶ διδοὺς ἔλεγχον τοῦ βέλους. καὶ τὸ διὰ σφενδόνης δὲ τοξεῦσαι, καὶ τὸ ἐς τρίχα ἰέναι, καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ σκιαγραφῆσαι βέλεσιν ἀνεστῶτα πρὸς σανίδα, σπουδάζουσιν ἐν τοῖς πότοις, καὶ κατορθοῦσιν αὐτὰ μεθύοντες. οἱ μὲν δὴ περὶ τὸν Δάμιν ἐξεπλήττοντο αὐτὰ ὡς εὔσκοπα καὶ τὴν ξυμμετρίαν τῆς τοξείας ἐθαύμαζον, ὁ δὲ Ἀπολλώνιος, ξυνεσίτει γὰρ τῷ βασιλεῖ ὁμοδιαίτῳ ὄντι, τούτοις μὲν ἧττον προσεῖχε, …
>
> (Philostr. *VA* 2.28.2–29.1)

> When they are satisfied, bowls of silver and gold are carried in, each one enough for ten guests, and they bend over to drink from them like animals being watered. As they drink, they exhibit shows of skill that are dangerous and to be pursued with care. A boy, like the

35 Kim 2010: 272.

36 This is the felicitous way in which Rutherford 1998: 65–66 casts the problem.

> one that accompanies dancing girls, was tossed nimbly into the air while an arrow was simultaneously shot upward, and when the boy was high above the ground he somersaulted, lifting himself over the arrow, sure of being hit if he just missed his leap. For before shooting the archer went round the diners showing the point and letting them test the arrow. Shooting through a hoop, aiming at a hair, and outlining one's own son with arrows while he stands against a board, these things they pursue earnestly during their drinking, and they succeed at them even when drunk. Damis and the others were amazed by this sharpness of eye, and admired the accuracy of the shooting, but Apollonius, who was eating with the king at the same table, paid less attention to these things.

The passage starts with a clear allusion to Xenophon's image of a man drinking from a bowl like an ox from a trough, even if there is little direct verbal correspondence (κρατῆρες … ἀφ᾽ ὧν πίνουσι κύψαντες, ὥσπερ ποτιζόμενοι ≙ τὸν κρατῆρα, ἔνθεν ἐπικύψαντα ἔδει ῥοφοῦντα πίνειν ὥσπερ βοῦν).[37] There follows a similarly loose, but equally undeniable, reminiscence of Xenophon's *Symposium* (2.8, 11) in which a dancing girl and a boy engage in perilous performances.[38] Both allusions seem to carry a parodic undertone, escalating the original scenarios. In Xenophon, the drinking image describes a makeshift solution born of necessity, here it describes general Indian drinking habits. Similarly, the performances, while spectacular in Xenophon (involving hoops being thrown into the air and a girl somersaulting in and out of a hoop set around with swords), become even more extravagant and dangerous in Philostratus.

A further parodic nod to Xenophon can perhaps be detected in Philostratus' assertion that the acrobatic tricks that are performed are "not beyond the realm of the serious" (οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ σπουδάζειν): after all, the whole point of Xenophon's *Symposium* (1.1) was to relate not merely "the serious acts" (ἔργα … τὰ μετὰ σπουδῆς πραττόμενα) of great men, but also "those done in play" (τὰ ἐν ταῖς παιδιαῖς), and the inclusion of the performance is generally believed to contribute to the playful side of the work — an opinion which was clearly shared by Hermogenes, who, as we have seen in Section 2.2 above, thought that the performers and their exploits added a typically Xenophontic charm. A final subversive note may be struck by the contrasting responses of the onlookers: the guests in Xenophon's *Symposium* are completely hooked and "were afraid that the dancing girl might

37 The allusion was noted by Wyttenbach 1820: 390 (I thank Gerard Boter for pointing it out to me).

38 Münscher 1920: 149. The definite article in the phrase, παῖς … τις, ὥσπερ ὁ τῶν ὀρχηστρίδων, may be generic ("some boy, *of the kind* that accompany dancing girls"), but it seems an odd collocation; indeed, not all manuscripts and editions read ὁ. If it is sound, I wonder whether there is in fact an allusion to *the* (very) boy accompanying two girls in Xenophon's *Symposium* (2.2), suggesting that he walked straight from Xenophon's pages into Philostratus'.

suffer some mishap",[39] but the guests of Phraotes coolly admire the performer's technical skill, while Apollonius himself is not interested at all — so much for the importance of "play" to serious men.

Whatever we make of these allusions, the passage opens a window onto creative Atticist writing, which is marked by a more playful and irreverent attitude than the more rigid approaches of linguistic and rhetorical Atticism and their preoccupation with the ranking of suitable models. Xenophon was one of the most influential classical authors in the Atticist literature associated with the Second Sophistic, where he was constantly imitated, emulated and reworked, although a modern comprehensive overview is lacking.[40] A specific question, which has not been sufficiently answered, is whether literary practice was influenced by rhetorical theory. It is intriguing to note — but, given the state of our knowledge, also not more than that — that Philostratus' allusions to Xenophon's *Anabasis* and *Symposium* juxtapose exactly the same two passages as Hermogenes' discussion of Xenophon's ἀφέλεια in *Περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν*, discussed in Section 2.2 above. If this is not a coincidence, it could simply reflect a list of "sympotic scenes" from Xenophon that was once compiled in the service of criticism or emulation. But it is also possible that Philostratus directly reacts to Hermogenes. If, as has recently been argued,[41] Philostratus rejected Hermogenes' "idea"-theory, the point may be just to show that "simple" imagery and language can be used to construct a scene that, as we have seen, is at once more ridiculous, more intense and in a certain sense more serious than the Xenophontic original.

3 Bemused: modern responses to Xenophon

In the previous section, I have offered a *précis* of various kinds of ancient responses to Xenophon's language and style and of how to read them. I have tried to show how a proper appreciation of ancient attitudes to Xenophon requires constant oscillation between close attention to the detailed and sometimes seemingly trivial points which our sources tend to raise and the construction of a broader narrative of Xenophon's place in Greek literary culture under the Roman Empire. Another main point to have emerged from the discussion is that ancient com-

39 *Smp.* 2.11, incidentally, a section cited by twice Ps.-Arist. *Περὶ τοῦ ἀφελοῦς λόγου* 41, 58.

40 For now, Münscher 1920 will have to do; see also Bowie 2017 for further references. Detailed studies of Tonnet 1988 and Rubulotta 2025 treat Xenophon's influence on Arrian and Aelius Aristides, respectively.

41 Demerre 2021.

ments on Xenophon's diction and style usually say more about the commentator than about Xenophon. To put it simply, a question such as whether Xenophon is an "Attic Muse" or should not be regarded as a "lawgiver of Attic usage" is meaningless when it is approached with modern ideas about the Attic dialect in mind.

I emphasize this point because earlier scholars of Xenophon — who could for the most part not yet make use of the elaborate scholarly apparatus which has accrued around ancient scholarly texts and of the considerable recent advances in our understanding of "Atticism" — tended to take ancient statements more or less at face value, so that it became desirable to reconcile conflicting judgements. The prevailing approach has been to assume that it was mostly the level of scrutiny which determined whether ancient critics' assessments were positive or negative: Xenophon's reputation as one of the foremost historians and philosophers from the classical age almost automatically guaranteed him a place among the great Athenian authors in the admiring eyes of later Greeks, but closer examination time and again revealed that his Attic usage in fact left much to be desired. This is, for example, how Sgobbi, the author of the most recent survey of Xenophon's literary reputation in antiquity, still interprets the ancient evidence:

> molti critici antichi, evidentemente consapevoli dei limiti dell' effettivo atticismo senofonteo, ascrissero sì Senofonte all' atticismo, ma lo fecero *tout court* senza ulteriori spiegazioni, in modo da evitare il rischio di indebolire l'effettiva portata di tale giudizio nel momento in cui si fosse dato corso ad una più minuta analisi linguistica.
>
> (Sgobbi 2004: 249)

There is perhaps some truth to this statement. For instance, Diogenes Laertius speaks in vague terms about the "sweetness" of Xenophon's style, while Helladius takes issue with a linguistic detail. However, it is clearly not the whole story. Rhetorical evaluations of Xenophon's style could be as detailed and (in our view) pedantic as grammarians' assessments (Hermogenes, after all, picks up on three specific phrases), while not every grammarian who registered Xenophon's employment of an unusual word felt compelled to condemn his Attic (whatever the Antiatticist's point, he is not saying that ἐνεός is wrong). However, what makes Sgobbi's claim really problematic is that he appears to suppose that there actually was a commonly agreed standard of "atticismo" in antiquity: as we have seen, that is not the case.

It is important to counter this interpretation of the ancient evidence, because it has long had an unhealthy impact on modern critics' views of Xenophon's literary achievement. At least some of the blame must go to Blass' influential treatment of Xenophon in *Die attische Beredsamkeit*, in which he continually appeals to ancient scholarship (and treats Xenophon just after Plato, who together with

Demosthenes represents the absolute zenith of Greek prose for Blass). Blass begins by crediting Xenophon with being "von Natur ein hervorragendes schriftstellerisches Talent", which shows itself especially in his ability to write "schlicht und anmuthig" — an obvious echo of ancient views of Xenophon's style as "simple" and "sweet".[42] However, he goes on to argue that Xenophon's "simplicity" often borders on carelessness: with reference to the quotation from Helladius, Blass claims that Xenophon usually reached for the first word that came to mind and, owing to the long time he spent away from Athens, that often happened to be dialectal word: "Er würde sich aber sorgfältig vor dem Gebrauch derselben gehütet haben, wenn er einem Rhetor gleich mit bewusster Kunst die Sprache behandelt hätte".[43] Blass also adopts the ancient view that Xenophon tended to overdo the "gracefulness" a little by including overtly poetic expressions even when the context did not require them, unfavourably comparing him to Lysias in that respect; referring to Hermogenes, he gives Xenophon's use of πορσύνω in evidence.[44] Essentially, then, Xenophon is a nice enough author — just as long you do not study him too closely.

Assessments to this effect can easily be multiplied. On the one hand, it is not difficult to find references to Xenophon's "simple" or "graceful" style (*vel sim.*), though it is rarely made clear what such terms really mean and they can sound a little condenscending.[45] On the other hand, the alleged "impurity" of Xenophon's Attic has been much commented on. The influence of the combined statements by Helladius about Xenophon's itinerant lifestyle and by Phrynichus about his alleged use of an Ionic word (ὀδμή; see Section 2.1 above) proved deadly.[46] Critics saw it as an invitation to a parlour game whose aim was to catch out Xenophon's "mistakes". Sauppe, the most enthusiastic player, counted 99 Ionicisms, 63 Doricisms, 316 poeticisms, and 401 more words not usually found in the "best" classi-

42 Blass 1892[3]: 476.

43 Blass 1892[3]: 477.

44 Blass 1892[3]: 477. Note that, unlike Blass', Hermogenes' tone is not censorious.

45 Cf. e.g. Norden 1974[1909[2]]: I.101–102 ("ein Naturredner und kein Kunstredner"); Higgins 1977: 2 ("Lucid and graceful, Xenophon's style tries, as a rule, not to call attention to itself"); Gray 2014: 336 ("le style simple de Xénophon rabaisse la grandeur et porte aux nues la simplicité" — though in the same, very good, paper Gray takes due account of the considerable variety in Xenophon's style).

46 Cf. Rutherford 1881: 160–161, who connects the two. Note that Helladius' is the *only* statement to this effect (and it is an odd one, given what we know of the discrepancy between spoken and literary language in ancient Greek) and that Phrynichus is the *only* critic explicitly attributing an Ionicism to Xenophon (and a highly uncertain one at that).

cal authors, but in large part shared between Xenophon and *koiné* Greek.[47] Richards was bemused by Xenophon's "bizarre diction": "Now Attic, now Ionic, now poetry, now prose".[48] For Phrynichus' editor, Rutherford, Xenophon "is past praying for" and "must be regarded as outside the limits of Attic law" (inadvertently (?) echoing Phrynichus' use of legal vocabulary, παρανομεῖ, in the quotation cited in Section 2.1 above); true to the spirit of Phrynichus, Rutherford can think of no more biting insult to hurl at Xenophon than the suggestion that "it is quite possible that the manuscripts do not misrepresent him when they exhibit ποῦ with a verb of motion and ποῖ with a verb of rest".[49] While few scholars would today express themselves in quite such stark terms, a standard reference work which is still much used today breezily disqualifies Xenophon as "eccentric and unreliable as a guide to Attic prose usage, whether from artistic incapacity or the variety of his linguistic experience as an exile".[50] One of Xenophon's best commentators in recent decades resignedly acknowledged that "modern analysis of Xenophon's prose has not essentially progressed beyond the observations of the ancient critics".[51]

At least since Blass, then, modern critics dealing with Xenophon's language and style have anchored their judgments in a specific interpretation of what their ancient counterparts have to say on the matter. In this chapter I have attempted to put some much-needed distance between the two, opening up avenues for a fresh interpretation of Xenophon's language — and of his ancient critics.[52]

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47 Sauppe 1866: 298. The best analysis of Xenophon's language along these lines is that of Gautier 1911.

48 Richards 1907: 159.

49 Rutherford 1881: 115–116, 203. He does not give examples, but cf., e.g. *Hier.* 3.2 ἤν που ἀπίῃ (ἀπῇ Cobet), *Cyr.* 7.5.68 ὀπότε δὲ ἐξίοι που (ποι Schneider). Most editors in fact believe that the manuscripts do misrepresent Xenophon in this respect.

50 Bers 1984: 13.

51 Pomeroy 1994: 14.

52 Heartfelt thanks to Olga Tribulato and Gerard Boter, who answered specific queries; any shortcomings are mine.

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Appendix: νομεῖς/νομέας

> ὅτι ἱππεῖς μὲν καὶ νομεῖς δεῖ γράφειν καὶ λέγειν τὴν εὐθείαν τῶν πληθυντικῶν, οὐκέτι δὲ καὶ τὰς αἰτιατικάς, ἀλλ' ἱππέας καὶ νομέας. εἰ δὲ καὶ Ξενοφῶν εἴρηκε τοὺς νομεῖς, οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν, ἀνὴρ ἐν στρατείαις σχολάζων καὶ ξένων συνουσίαις εἴ τινα παρακόπτει τῆς πατρίου φωνῆς. διὸ νομοθέτην αὐτὸν οὐκ ἄν τις ἀττικισμοῦ παραλάβοι.
>
> (Helladius *apud* Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 279, 533b23–28)

> [Helladius' states] that one should write and say the nominative plural as ἱππεῖς ("riders") and νομεῖς ("shepherds"), but not also the accusatives, and instead use ἱππέας and νομέας. If even Xenophon said [accusative plural] τοὺς νομεῖς, it is not at all surprising, if a man who

> spent time on campaigns and mixing with foreigners debases some aspects of his native dialect. Therefore one should not use him as a lawgiver of Attic usage.

On the only occurrence of the accusative plural of νομεύς in Xenophon's corpus (*Cyr.* 1.1.2), modern editors opt for νομέας with the majority of manuscripts (GFpr have νομεῖς), probably correctly. The epigraphical evidence, gathered by Threatte (1996: 247–248), starts showing up the replacement of the accusative plural forms in -έας of nouns in -εύς by forms in -εῖς from about 325 BC, before the forms in -εῖς become normal in the 3rd century BC and the *koiné* (since the language of official inscriptions tends to be conservative, the change may have set in somewhat earlier, however). I add that the emergence of accusative forms in -εῖς is likely to have started in Attic, on analogy of the equivalence between the nominative and accusative plurals of the *ι*-stems in that dialect (cf. πόλεις/πόλεις), and so after the nominative plural in -εῖς had already more or less completely usurped the older forms in -ῆς by the second half of the 4th century BC; this likely origin of the paradigmatic leveling of nouns in -εύς throws further doubt on Helladius' explanation (if there is any "foreign" element in τοὺς νομεῖς, rather than merely something "newfangled", it resides in the fact that νομεύς may be an Ionicism for the more common Attic ποιμήν; cf. Gautier (1911: 197) — it would not be the first time that a late scholar like Helladius got the wrong end of the stick).

The medieval manuscripts, meanwhile, do waver between -έας and -εῖς, as shown by Sauppe (1869: *s.v.* "Accusativus"), Lipka (2002: 52), and Sgobbi (2004: 250–252, focussing on ἱππεύς — even though, strictly speaking, Helladius' formulation does not imply that Xenophon ever wrote τοὺς ἱππεῖς). But it would be wrong to accord too much weight to the manuscripts, given scribes' (conscious and unconscious) habit of modernizing the texts which they copied. In the specific case of τοὺς νομεῖς at *Cyr.* 1.1.2, corruption through assimilation is also likely, given that two instances of nominative νομεῖς occur in the context immediately preceding the accusative. Lipka's (2002: 52) claim that the number of cases of -εῖς in manuscripts of Xenophon "render it unlikely that we are here dealing with a blunder by a scribe" has little value until it is backed up by statistics for several other authors. Even Sgobbi's (2004: 234) contention that "[l]e parole di Elladio lasciano intendere che il critico ebbe dinanzi un testo con la forma νομεῖς", carries little weight in my view: Helladius need not have read Xenophon at all, but may merely be echoing earlier debates from the 2nd-century heyday of linguistic Atticism. As Sgobbi (2004: 251–252) himself notes, we have another source which speaks to the same problem (and brings in a third form): ἔστι δὲ καὶ παρὰ τῷ Ξενοφῶντι τοὺς νομῆς διὰ τοῦ η ("in Xenophon there is also τοὺς νομῆς, spelled with η", Hdn. *G.G.* III 2 324.27–8 = Choer. *G.G.* IV 1 220.4–5). It cannot be decided whether this observation originates with the great 2nd-century grammarian Herodian or with another of

his Byzantine excerpter Choeroboscus' sources, but it suggests that Helladius was referring to a well-known problem and that Xenophon had played a role in earlier formulations of that problem.

Here the trail goes cold. As far as I know, the specific point is not discussed elsewhere, but casting the net a little wider, we can add Moeris, who mentions the accusative plural in -έας (ι 18 Hansen: ἱππέας μακρῶς Ἀττικοί· βραχέως Ἕλληνες, "ἱππέας is pronounced long in Attic, but short in common Greek"), though not opposing it to -εῖς, but rather claiming that the α in -έας should be long (it indeed was originally, as could be ascertained by ancient grammarians from metrical texts) instead of short (as it was in the *koiné* of Moeris' contemporaries, but also already often, if only artificially, in lyric parts of classical Attic tragedy — which made it possible to claim that the short vowel was in fact proper old Attic after all); see further Vessella (2018: 144–146). The existence of an ancient debate on vowel length may perhaps help explain why Helladius' comment explicitly refers to both the orthography and the pronunciation (γράφειν καὶ λέγειν) of the relevant forms. Phrynichus, meanwhile, claims for a word in -υς that both -εις and -εας are Attic, but that the latter is "more Attic" (*PS* 73.4–5 de Borries: ἡμίσεας καὶ ἡμίσεις: ἄμφω μὲν Ἀττικά. Ἀττικώτερον δὲ τὸ ἡμίσεας). If one wants an explanation for how the problem of -έας/-εῖς became tied up with Xenophon, I would suggest that the manuscripts of many authors must have displayed considerable morphological inconsistency for the nouns in -εύς (and others) early on, but that this was not overlooked (or corrected) in the case of Xenophon by Atticist scholars who had *already* decided that Xenophon's Attic was not "pure".