

## LEON OF SALAMIS' EXILE

### A Textual Note on Pl. Ep. 7.325c4 (with an Appendix on Xen. Hell. 2.3.39)\*

Abstract: The aim of this article is to re-examine the controversial passage of the Platonic *Seventh Letter*, dealing with Leon of Salamis' alleged exile. This passage raises many philological and historical problems which may be solved by emending τῶν τότε φευγόντων φίλων into τῶν τότε δυστυχούντων φίλων.

Keywords: Plato, Leon of Salamis, Socrates, Xenophon, textual criticism

κατὰ δέ τινα τύχην αὐτὸν τὸν ἐταίρον ἡμῶν Σωκράτη τοῦτον δυναστεύον-  
τές τινες εἰσάγουσιν εἰς δικαστήριον, ἀνοσιωτάτην αἰτίαν ἐπιβαλόν-  
τες καὶ πάντων ἥκιστα Σωκράτει προσήκουσαν· ὡς ἀσεβῆ γὰρ οἱ μὲν  
εἰσήγαγον, οἱ δὲ κατεψηφίσαντο καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὸν τότε τῆς ἀνοσιού  
ἀγωγῆς οὐκ ἐθέλησαντα μετασχεῖν περὶ ἓνα τῶν τότε φευγόντων φίλων,  
ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν αὐτοί.

1. This passage from Plato's *Seventh Letter* mentions the episode of the capture of Leon of Salamis (later followed by his summary execution) at the behest of the Thirty Tyrants: an unjust act in which Socrates refused to take part. The general consensus is that the εἷς mentioned here is Leon and that αὐτοί refers – with the meaning of *ipsi* – to οἱ μὲν ..., οἱ δὲ ..., which is to say that it alludes to the democrats who had been exiled by the Thirty and who, after the latter's fall, had returned to Athens, where some of them were now putting Socrates on trial.<sup>1</sup> But what are we to make of τῶν

---

\*) Here I do not wish to delve into the thorny question of the authorship of the letter. The abbreviation 'Pl.' is simply intended to mark the fact that the text in question belongs to the corpus Platonicum. I would like to thank Prof. Stephan Schröder for his precious and detailed remarks on these pages.

1) To the best of my knowledge, the only scholar who refers αὐτοί to the φίλοι rather than to the democratic exiles (οἱ μὲν ..., οἱ δὲ ...) is Maria Grazia Ciani ap. M. Isnardi Parente / M. G. Ciani, *Platone: Lettere*, Milano 2002, 69. According to Ciani's translation, the people involved in the expression τῶν τότε φευγόντων φίλων are identical with the ones involved in ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν αὐτοί. Leaving aside all the problems that this interpretation shares with the other interpretations

τότε φευγόντων φίλων? According to many interpreters, the φίλοι in question are the friends of the democratic exiles and φευγόντων is simply an attributive participle of φίλων.<sup>2</sup> In this way, it appears that at the time of his arrest Leon himself was in exile, as well as the other φίλοι of the democratic exiles. However, this conclusion raises some problems.

As a matter of fact, Leon's murder was one of the first acts to mark a truly 'tyrannical' turn in the Thirty's rule, leading to a break with Theramenes.<sup>3</sup> The Thirty started indiscriminately targeting democrats, and not just the sycophants who had championed radical democracy in the previous years. One of the measures adopted by the Thirty in this context – in addition to the steps taken against Leon of Salamis, Niceratos and Antiphon – was to exile leading representatives of the democratic faction such as Thrasybulus, Anytus and Alcibiades. With reference to this measure, Theramenes states that, in the light of what was happening, many Athenians with democratic leanings had already opted for exile (Hell. 2.3.42: ἐπεὶ γε μὴν πολλοὺς ἐώρων ἐν τῇ πόλει τῇ ἀρχῇ τῆδε δυσμενεῖς, πολλοὺς δὲ φυγάδας γιγνομένους, οὐκ αὖ ἐδόκει μοι οὔτε Θρασύβουλον οὔτε Ἄνυτον οὔτε Ἀλκιβιάδην φυγαδεύειν).<sup>4</sup> Significantly, no connection is drawn between this fact and Leon's execution.

---

advanced so far (cf. my remarks below in this paragraph), it creates an unacceptable repetition: indeed, Ciani herself has sought to avoid it by choosing not to translate one of the participles.

2) Cf. e.g. L. A. Post, *Thirteen Epistles of Plato*, Oxford 1925, 64, J. Souilhé, *Platon: Lettres*, Paris 1926, 29 and A. Carlini, *Platone: Lettere*, Torino 1960, 51.

3) Theramenes' death, which would appear to have occurred in January or February 403 (see A. Fuks, *The Ancestral Constitution. Four Studies in Athenian Party Politics at the End of the Fifth Century B. C.*, London 1953, 77; on the beginning of the Thirty's government in September 404, see R. Stern, *The Thirty at Athens in the Summer of 404*, *Phoenix* 57, 2003, 18–34, at 18–21), represents a real watershed between these two stages in the Thirty's regime. The fact that Leon was captured and executed before Theramenes was put on trial is evident from the speech that Xenophon puts into the latter's mouth (Xen. Hell. 2.3.39). It is worth noting that Xenophon's testimony has been disputed and that according to some scholars Leon's capture and death actually followed Theramenes' trial and death. However, I do not personally share this position: cf. the appendix.

4) Other expulsions from Athens only occurred later on, after Theramenes' death and the capture of Phyle by the democrats led by Thrasybulus. On these events, see P. Cloché, *Les expulsions en Attique avant la prise de Phylé*, *REG* 24, 1911, 63–76.

Theramenes' speech, therefore, does not state that Leon was in exile at the time of his arrest; rather, it seems to suggest that he was not among those people who had gone into exile at the time out of fear of the Thirty. Moreover, no other source reports that at the time of his arrest Leon was living on the island of Salamis in exile.<sup>5</sup> Might it be that all other sources gloss over the matter and that this letter alone records the actual facts? This seems unlikely.

Actually, it must be borne in mind that Salamis had been a sort of Athenian cleruchy since the sixth century:<sup>6</sup> even assuming that in the late fifth century it was possible for an Athenian to go into exile in a cleruchy of Athens, would this have been a wise choice?<sup>7</sup> Indeed, once exiled, Thrasybulus and the other democratic

---

5) The same episode had been briefly recalled shortly before, in a succinct outline of the Thirty Tyrants' rule (324d8–325a3). Besides, see Andoc. 1.94, Pl. Ap. 32c3–e1, Xen. Hell. 2.3.39 and Mem. 4.4.3. In Plato's *Apology* Socrates says that Leon was in Salamis when he was arrested (32c3–6: ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὀλιγαρχία ἐγένετο, οἱ τριάκοντα αὐτὸν μεταπεμψάμενοι με πέμπτον αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν προσέταξαν ἀγαγεῖν ἐκ Σαλαμί-νος Λέοντα τὸν Σαλαμῖνιον ἵνα ἀποθάνοι, cf. also d6–7), but by no means he says that Leon was in Salamis in exile (cf. also D. Nails, *The People of Plato. A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*, Indianapolis 2002, 185). On the problem of identifying this Leon of Salamis with Leon the general who took part in the Battle of Arginusae, see W.J. McCoy, *The Identity of Leon*, *AJPh* 96, 1975, 187–99. In any case, even the testimonies on Leon the general make no mention of exile.

6) On the status of Salamis under Athens, see G. De Sanctis, *Il decreto per la cleruchia di Salamina*, *RFIC* 4, 1926, 49–57.

7) The problem was rightly raised by E. Howald, *Die Briefe Platons*, Zürich 1923, 156: “wie kann er nun aber auf Salamis, attischem Reichsboden, verhaftet werden, wenn er φεύγων ist? Trotz der Verbannung und wähnt er sich in Salamis sicher? Ich weiß die Aporie nicht zu lösen.” R. Knab, *Platons Siebter Brief*, Hildesheim 2006, 141–2, has sought to overcome this difficulty by observing that: 1) The fact that after Theramenes' death the Thirty prevented people whose name was not on the list of the 3,000 to access the ἄστυ suggests that they did not exercise complete control over the rest of Attica; therefore, a place like Salamis must have been relatively safe for democrats. 2) Those citizens barred from the ἄστυ, the ἐκκεκληρωμένοι πολῖται, would have already been perceived as exiles on Salamis; hence, even a pro-democratic cleruch like Leon could be seen as an exile. These arguments are untenable, as: 1) The measures adopted by the Thirty after Theramenes' death do not at all imply that they did not govern the rest of Attica: indeed, in conjunction with their restriction of citizenship, the Thirty expropriated farmland (evidently outside the ἄστυ) and arrested those who had sought refuge in Piraeus (Xen. Hell. 2.40,1). 2) The arrest and execution of Leon occurred before the measures recalled by Knab, measures which were only adopted by the Thirty after Theramenes' death (cf. the appendix).

leaders had withdrawn to Thebes.<sup>8</sup> Why should Leon have been so imprudent as to choose a different course of action? What's more, we should bear in mind that Leon was originally from Salamis:<sup>9</sup> to what extent could someone who had fled to his own home be regarded as a real exile?

Finally, it must be admitted that the expression of the simultaneity of these two different exiles, that is to say the exile of the democrats and the one of their friends, sounds quite strange ('one of [their] friends who were in exile at the time when they themselves, because they were in exile, were having a hard time').

2. To make up for these difficulties, some scholars have hypothesised that φευγόντων does not mean 'to go into exile', but 'to be accused'. However, it would be strange for φεύγω to be used with two different meanings at such a short distance, without anything to signal the semantic shift.<sup>10</sup> Besides, Leon was eliminated without any trial (Andoc. 1.94: καὶ ἀπέθανεν ἐκείνος ἄκριτος).

Other scholars have assumed that φευγόντων is not an attributive participle of φίλων, but rather anticipates ὅτε φεύγοντες ἔδυστύχουν αὐτοί, as though it meant τῶν (τῶν) τότε φευγόντων φίλων, ὅτε φεύγοντες ἔδυστύχουν αὐτοί.<sup>11</sup> However, this has the double

8) See Xen. Hell. 2.3.42–44 and 4.1–2, Diod. Sic. 14.32.1 and Plut. Lys. 27.

9) On the fact that Leon of Salamis held Athenian citizenship, despite being originally from Salamis, see McCoy (n. 5) 195–6 n. 45 and A. Natalicchio, *Atene e la crisi della democrazia. I Trenta e la querelle Teramene-Cleofonte*, Bari 1996, 46 n. 3. The *Seventh Letter* (324e1–2) explicitly describes Leon as a citizen (scil. an Athenian).

10) This hypothesis was first formulated by H. Th. Karsten, *Commentatio critica de Platonis quae feruntur epistolis, praecipue tertia septima et octava*, Trajecti ad Rhenum 1864, 52. Against this possibility see already J. Harward, *The Platonic Epistles*, Cambridge 1932, 199 n. 11: "in this context τῶν τότε φευγόντων must mean 'the exiled party'" (such being the meaning of the subsequent φεύγοντες: cf. Xen. Hell. 2.3.42 quoted above). The same objection also holds if we assign φευγόντων the very general meaning of 'to flee, to seek refuge'.

11) F. Novotný, *Platonis Epistulae*, Brno 1930, 154–5: "τῶν semel ponitur pro ἕνα τῶν τῶν τ. φ. φίλων" (differently from what Knab [n. 7] 141 thinks, Novotný did not wish to correct the text by integrating it with a τῶν, but rather interpreted it as if it had two τῶν). Novotný believed that in such a way it was possible to overcome the difficulty raised by Howald with regard to Leon's alleged condition as an exile (on Howald's opinion about this point see supra n. 7).

disadvantage of positing a substantival participle without an article and a repetition of the same concept within a few lines:<sup>12</sup> for, if (τῶν) τότε φευγόντων anticipates ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν αὐτοί, then what need was there for φεύγοντες?

A very different approach was adopted by Wilamowitz. In his view, given the way in which the sentence is construed, it seems as though the φίλοι are Socrates' friends, whereas they ought to be the friends of the democratic exiles. For this reason, he argued that φίλων ought to be corrected to φίλον.<sup>13</sup> This would solve, in addition to the problem flagged by Wilamowitz, that of Leon's alleged exile. Besides, it would have been all too easy to make such a slip, not least given the preceding τῶν τότε φευγόντων. However, the difficulty raised by Wilamowitz strikes me as overly pedantic: while it is true that, from a grammatical standpoint, it is tempting to connect the φίλοι to the subject of the infinitive clause, in the overall context it is quite clear that the author is talking about the φίλοι of the subject of the principal clause (οἱ μὲν ..., οἱ δὲ ...), which is to say the φίλοι of the democratic exiles.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, even with Wilamowitz's correction, it remains the redundancy between τῶν τότε φευγόντων and ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν αὐτοί.<sup>15</sup>

3. All in all, I believe that these many problems can be solved by correcting φευγόντων το δυστυχοῦντων: ὡς ἀσεβῆ γὰρ οἱ μὲν εἰσήγαγον, οἱ δὲ κατεψηφίσαντο καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τὸν τότε τῆς ἀνοσίου ἀγωγῆς οὐκ ἐθελήσαντα μετασχεῖν περὶ ἓνα τῶν τότε δυστυχοῦντων φίλων, ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν

12) Reading the text in the same way as Novotný, Harward (n.10) 199 n.11 finds an all too easy way out by invoking Plato's mature style.

13) See U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Platon*, II, Berlin <sup>2</sup>1920, 408: "Leon war kein Freund des Sokrates, sondern der vertriebenen Demokraten." Wilamowitz's correction, rejected by Novotný (n.11) 155, is included in the apparatus of Souilhé (n.2) 29, and also accepted by A. Maddalena, *Platone: Lettere*, Bari 1948, 25 and n. 1.

14) See e. g. Xen. Mem. 1.1.2: διετεθρύλητο γὰρ ὡς φαίη Σωκράτης τὸ δαιμόνιον ἑαυτῷ σημαίνειν (where ἑαυτῷ refers obviously to Socrates and not to the δαιμόνιον).

15) For this latter reason Wilamowitz's correction was already rejected by Howald (n.7) 156. Besides, maybe ἓνα figures out less appropriate with Wilamowitz's φίλον than with the genitive φίλων.

αὐτοί. That is to say: ‘they killed the man who then refused to take part in the impious arrest of one of (their) friends, who found themselves in difficulty then, when they themselves, insofar as they were in exile, were having a hard time’.

In such a way, on the one hand, we have the democrats’ friends, who do not find themselves in exile, but are still in the territory controlled by Athens; on the other hand, we have the democratic exiles; both, for different reasons, find themselves in difficulty.<sup>16</sup> Besides, it goes without saying that the suggested solution also does away with the problematic allusion to Leon’s exile. Finally, it must be noticed that this solution makes better sense of αὐτοί in ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν αὐτοί: if we link αὐτοί to ἐδυστύχουν (‘they themselves were having a hard time’), it seems only natural to expect to find a δυστυχοῦντων before.

As regards the process that might have led to the error, it seems as though what we have here is a rather common ‘Antizipationsfehler’.<sup>17</sup> Upon closer inspection, however, we find that a more

---

16) It seems likely that the φίλοι δυστυχοῦντες who had remained in their homeland included – in addition to Leon – Niceratos and Antiphon, who met a similar fate to Leon (Hell. 2.3.39–40). It is noteworthy that one of Socrates’ persecutors was Anytus, who – according to Theramenes’ speech – was exiled along with Thrasybulus and Alcibiades during the same wave of measures that led to Leon’s execution. It should be said that from Theramenes’ account (Hell. 2.3.39–42) it doesn’t seem that Leon’s death and the democratic leader’s exile were exactly simultaneous, as it appears in the *Seventh Letter*. However, the problem of the simultaneity of these two events is irrelevant for my proposal, since it subsists even if we accept the reading of the medieval tradition. In my view, it is likely that, given the chronological proximity of these events, the author of the letter chose to simplify matters to make the passage more pathetic. On the overall economy of the historical narrative provided by the *Seventh Letter* see also the appendix.

17) Cf. e.g. [Eur.] Rhés. 776–7 (ed. Diggle): ἦπυσσα δ’ αὐτοῖς μὴ πελάζεσθαι (πελάζεσθαι Λ : πλάθειν V) στρατῶ, / κλώπας δοκήσας συμμάχων πλάθειν τινὰς (mentioned by L. D. Reynolds / N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, Oxford<sup>3</sup> 1991, 231), Hp. Morb. 1,9 (ed. Jouanna): εἰ γὰρ σελήνην τε καθαιρεῖν καὶ ἥλιον ἀφανίζειν [...] ὑποδέχονται (ὑποδέχονται θ : ἐπιδέχονται Μ) ἐπίστασθαι κτλ. (mentioned by M. L. West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique*, Stuttgart 1973, 121), B. De Giovanni, *Sulle vie di Marx filosofo in Italia. Spunti provvisori*, Il Centauro 9, 1983, 3: “La importante Postilla (con conclusiva [lege: non conclusiva]) che Eugenio Garin appone al volume *Tra due secoli*.” Besides, in our case the anticipation of the verb φεύγω could have been encouraged by a παράβλεψις generated by the repetition involved in τό τε ... ὅ τε κτλ.

complex process must be at work. The copyist who read the string of words τῶν τότε δυστυχούντων φίλων, ὅτε φεύγοντες ἐδυστύχουν αὐτοί must have taken mental note of the fact that it contained three verbs, one of which was repeated twice. However, he then muddled things up and repeated the wrong word.<sup>18</sup> This confirms that the correction required is precisely δυστυχούντων.

### Appendix

#### *The death of Leon of Salamis in Theramenes' speech (Xen. Hell. 2.3.39)*

As we have seen above, according to the order of events presented in Theramenes' speech by Xenophon Leon's murder was one of the first acts to mark a truly 'tyrannical' turn in the Thirty's rule, leading to a break with Theramenes. However, this order of events has been called into question due to what we read in Pl. Ap. 32c3–e1.<sup>19</sup> Here Plato describes Socrates' refusal to have any-

---

18) This is a well-attested kind of error, at any rate in the form of 'Perseverationsfehler'. William Smith Watt recorded several examples of it from manuscripts transmitting Latin texts: see W.S. Watt, *Error Wattianus*, CQ 54, 2004, 658–60 (e.g. Juv. 9.54, *cui tot montes, tot praedia servas*, where part of the manuscript tradition has *cui praedia*) – hence the name 'error Wattianus' (cf. even G. Zago, *Critica del testo e arte della congettura*, Nuova informazione bibliografica 2, 2014, 307–29, at 316–8).

19) Moreover, according to Emile de Strycker "[t]he wording used by Xenophon is carefully chosen so as not to suggest that these men [scil. Leon, Niceratos and Antiphon] had already been arrested and executed at the time when Theramenes was speaking" (E. de Strycker / S. R. Slings, *Plato's Apology of Socrates. A literary and philosophical study with a running commentary*, Leiden / New York 1994, 164). De Strycker further clarifies his perspective in n. 38: in his view, the expression ἀποθνήσκοντος ... Λέοντος τοῦ Σαλαμίνιου means 'in the eventuality of the execution of Leon of Salamis', and not 'since Leon is dead'. Given that Theramenes appears to be presenting Leon's death as a possibility rather than as an established fact, we are to conclude that Leon did not die before Theramenes' trial. Now, regardless of whether the genitive absolute is assigned a causal or hypothetical meaning, the interpretation of Xenophon's text proposed by de Strycker is untenable. His error stems from the fact that he has failed to adequately take into account the context which this genitive absolute is placed in: ἐπεὶ δὲ γε οὗτοι ἤρξαντο ἄνδρας καλοῦς τε κάγαθούς συλλαμβάνειν, ἐκ τούτου καὶ ἠρξάμην τάναντία τούτοις γινώσκειν. ἦδειν γὰρ ὅτι ἀποθνήσκοντος μὲν Λέοντος τοῦ Σαλαμίνιου, ἄνδρὸς καὶ ὄντος καὶ δοκοῦντος ἰκα-

thing to do with Leon's capture. Socrates adds that this refusal had no negative consequences for him, as shortly afterwards (διὰ ταχέων) the Thirty Tyrants' government fell. On this basis, Luciano Canfora has argued that the chronology which appears from the *Apology* is not congruent with the one of Theramenes' speech in the *Hellenica*.<sup>20</sup> According to Canfora, we have to trust the witness of the *Apology* and not Xenophon's words. In fact, this latter would have anticipated the capture and execution of Leon – which only occurred after Theramenes' trial and death – just to emphasize on Socrates' model the distance between Theramenes and the Thirty.<sup>21</sup>

In my view, there is actually no contradiction between our sources and no reason to doubt Xenophon's testimony, at least with regard to this point:

1) Whereas, in the speech that Xenophon puts in his mouth, Theramenes provides a detailed narrative of the measures taken by the Thirty up until then, the *Apology* passage takes into account the whole span of the Thirty's government but only focuses on a

---

νοῦ εἶναι, ἀδικούντος δ' οὐδὲ ἓν, οἱ ὅμοιοι τούτῳ φοβήσονται κτλ. Theramenes states that, at the time when the Thirty launched a full-blown persecution of respectable citizens with democratic leanings, he knew that Leon's death would cause dismay among those Athenians who found themselves in the same situation (the verb ᾗδειν expresses the awareness that eventually led Theramenes to distance himself from the Thirty). For this reason, Theramenes had foretold that Leon's death would cause a rift in the citizen body. We might wonder if this is only a post eventum prophecy adopted by Theramenes at the time of the trial. However, it would only make sense for Theramenes to state this during his trial if the audience could acknowledge that he had been right in his prediction. In order for de Strycker's interpretation to have any plausibility at all, Theramenes ought to have stated something along the lines of: 'at this time I know that, if they were to kill Leon, the following consequences would ensue'.

20) L. Canfora, *Il mondo di Atene*, Roma / Bari 2011, 388. The same position is taken up again by L. Canfora, *La guerra civile ateniese*, Milano 2013, 119. The same reasoning, based on the *Apology* passage, is developed by de Strycker, who goes so far as to measure the temporal distance between Leon's death and the fall of the Thirty as "no more than a few weeks" (de Strycker / Slings [n. 19] 164).

21) By contrast, S. Usher, Xenophon, Critias and Theramenes, *JHS* 88, 1968, 128–35, at 133–4, noted: "The first argument against the hypothesis that the speech is the free creation of Xenophon himself is the presence in it of references to specific individuals who fell victims of the Thirty – Leon of Salamis, Niceratos, son of Nicias, and Antiphon. Since these men are important only as examples of the excesses of the Thirty, why are they chosen by Xenophon if they were not used by Theramenes himself?"



specific event, namely the capture and execution of Leon. This in itself entails a narrative contraction of the actual course of historical events: it is as though the whole experience of the Thirty were encapsulated in this episode – the rest is downplayed. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that everything which occurred after the Leon affair is cursorily summed up through the formula διὰ ταχέων. Significantly, even what occurred before this episode is compressed into a fleeting phrase, ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὀλιγαρχία ἐγένετο, οἱ τριάκοντα αὐτῷ μεταπεμψάμενοί με κτλ. – which, paradoxically, could suggest that the event involving Leon occurred shortly after the Thirty's rise to power: curiously enough, scholars have focused exclusively on διὰ ταχέων.<sup>22</sup>

2) Even when it comes to the actual duration of the Thirty's government, the expression διὰ ταχέων used in the *Apology* is not enough to allow us to date the Leon affair to the final stage of the regime: as is widely known, the Thirty's government was a short-lived one, which lasted only eight months (cf. Xen. Hell. 2.4.21). It is quite plausible to assume that someone who, like Socrates, was evoking this political experience a few years later (399), had the overall briefness of the Thirty's government in mind when using the expression διὰ ταχέων, regardless of when the Leon episode may have occurred. This is all the more plausible in the light of the fact that, even in the account that Xenophon puts into Theramenes' mouth, the execution of Leon is said to have occurred not immediately after the Thirty's rise to power, but only at a later stage, when the oligarchs started targeting also other people apart from

---

22) In the footsteps of Eduard Schwartz, Luciano Canfora has rightly emphasised that we must take account “[del]la ‘densità narrativa’ come strumento che ci può orientare nel valutare la genesi di ciò che leggiamo nelle opere storiografiche degli antichi” (Canfora [n. 20] 269). ‘Narrative density’ gives us a sense of how much an author knows about a certain fact (based either on first-hand experience or on the perusal of well-informed sources); but it also gives us a sense of how much an author wishes to say or to omit, and of how much he wishes to give the impression of knowing. However, an appreciation of ‘narrative density’ must go hand in hand with a careful evaluation of the temporal expressions used by an author (L. Canfora, *Totalità e selezione nella storiografia classica*, Bari 1972, 56). It is interesting to note that precisely for this reason, according to A. P. Dorjahn / W. D. Fairchild, *On Xenophon, Hellenica 2.3.24–49*, CB 61, 1974, 60–2, at 61–2, Xenophon faithfully reproduced Theramenes' defence speech.

the sycophants who had supported the previous radical democracy. Therefore, the expression διὰ ταχέων used in the *Apology* would in any case refer to an even briefer period than the eight months in which the Thirty were in power.

3) Even if we were to grant that in constructing this speech Xenophon adopted a favourable attitude to Theramenes,<sup>23</sup> this sympathy does not at all imply that he went as far as to commit an anachronism by anticipating a ‘State crime’ that had caused a considerable stir among the people of Athens to the period before Theramenes’ trial. Xenophon could have cast Theramenes in a good light by simply portraying his staunch attempt to distance himself from the Thirty at the time of their ‘tyrannical’ turn. In fact, committing such a gross anachronism would have proven counter-productive in terms of the attempt to embellish Theramenes’ position: anyone who noticed it (and it would have been difficult not to), would have been led to doubt the reliability of Theramenes’ speech as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

---

23) See e.g. Ch. Tuplin, *The Failings of Empire*, Stuttgart 1993, 44: “for readers of *Hellenica* 2.3.11–7.5.27 Theramenes remains in the mind as a sympathetic figure.” This contrasts with the critical attitude that Xenophon had previously adopted towards Theramenes (e.g. in *Hell.* 1.7.4–6). According to Canfora (n.20) 383 this ‘ideological’ difference is revealing of the fact that up to 2.3.9 Xenophon is drawing upon Thucydides’ notes, also adopting the latter’s critical attitude towards Theramenes. By contrast, the section on Theramenes’ trial and death would reflect Xenophon’s personal view. But according to M. Sordi, *Teramene e il processo delle Arginusae*, *Aevum* 55, 1981, 3–12, at 6, the contradiction “non è di Senofonte, ma di Teramene, che, per difendersi cerca di ridurre la sua iniziativa ad una legittima difesa [scil. during the Arginusae affair]”. Sordi’s position has been taken up by A. Grigolon, *Senofonte e gli ‘appunti’ di Tucidide*, *Aevum* 76, 2002, 49–61, at 57 and n.32, who also subscribes to the idea that up to *Hell.* 2.3.9 Xenophon is drawing upon Thucydides’ notes. However, Xenophon’s favourable attitude towards Theramenes is not confined to the passage coinciding with the latter’s defence speech. The attempt made by F. Skoczylas Pownall, *Shifting viewpoints in Xenophon’s Hellenica: the Arginusae episode*, *Athenaeum* 88, 2000, 499–513, at 512, to resolve these contradictions strikes me as unconvincing: “By his treatment of Theramenes, Xenophon hints that characters in the *Hellenica* can be seen from more than one viewpoint, and that these viewpoints can be mutually contradictory.”

24) The other (supposed) discrepancies identified by Canfora (n.20) 385–7 in Theramenes’ speech are nowhere as gross as the anachronism that would derive from the insertion into the speech of a reference to an event that everyone knew had only occurred after Theramenes’ death.

4) Xenophon's text is no more open to the suspicion of tentativeness than the *Apology*, where it would have been very much in Plato's interest to downplay Socrates' involvement with the Thirty's regime. If anything, the suspicion here is even stronger, as the fact of invoking the short time within which the regime fell seems like an *excusatio non petita* adopted by Socrates, in a vague and hasty way, to explain why no negative consequences came of his refusal to cooperate (καὶ ἴσως ἂν διὰ ταῦτα ἀπέθανον, εἰ μὴ ἡ ἀρχὴ διὰ ταχέων κατελύθη). Indeed, as Krentz notes, "[h]e (or Plato) emphasizes that he did not carry out the Thirty's order to arrest a prominent citizen, Leon of Salamis. But he did not try to prevent others from arresting Leon, nor did he endeavour to warn Leon himself. He went home".<sup>25</sup> De Strycker himself is forced to admit: "It is debatable, however, whether Critias would have been in a hurry to inflict harsh punishment on Socrates, who had been on cordial terms with many members of the Athenian nobility for years and had always criticised democracy, the less so since seizing his property would have yielded no profit whatsoever; the fact that Leon had been eliminated was probably what mattered most".<sup>26</sup>

In support of his interpretation of the *Apology* passage (akin to Canfora's reading), de Strycker also invokes the *Seventh Letter*. In the narrative of the Thirty Tyrants' regime (324c2–325a7), after the account of Leon's arrest and of Socrates' refusal to take part in it, we read: χρόνῳ δὲ οὐ πολλῷ μετέπεσε τὰ τῶν τριάκοντά τε καὶ πᾶσα ἡ τότε πολιτεία. According to de Strycker, the expression χρόνῳ δὲ οὐ πολλῷ supports the 'restrictive' interpretation of διὰ ταχέων in the *Apology*. In actual fact, however, observations (1), (2) and (3), which I have made with regard to the *Apology*, also apply to the passage from the *Seventh Letter*, whose structure is the same as that of the *Apology*. Besides, in this case too a significant narrative contraction occurs with the leap from the Thirty's rise to power to Leon's arrest: καὶ ὄρων δήπου τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν χρόνῳ ὀλίγῳ χρυσὸν ἀποδείξαντας τὴν ἔμπροσθεν πολιτείαν – τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ φίλον ἄνδρα ἐμοὶ πρεσβύτερον Σωκράτη κτλ.

San Marino

Andrea Beghini

25) P. Krentz, *The Thirty at Athens*, Ithaca / London 1982, 83.

26) de Strycker / Slings (n. 19) 164.