



ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ: Process-Product Ambiguity in Thucydides VI

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MISZELLEN

ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ

Process-product Ambiguity in Thucydides VI

One of the most frequently found types of linguistic ambiguity in both Greek and English is process-product ambiguity; that is some nouns do not mark a distinction between whether they convey an action or the result of an action¹. The ambiguity appears in a limited number of nouns, e. g. in English -tion nouns reveal the ambiguity, in Greek -sis nouns, but in neither language does the ambiguity appear exclusively in specific types of nouns: the words 'work' and ἔργον for example or 'thought' and διάνοια are also process-product ambiguous. In some cases the ambiguity is not simply between process and product, but between two senses of the product, namely product as a state and product as a concrete object. The English word 'preparation' will conveniently serve as an introduction to the Greek παρασκευή. Process-product ambiguous nouns like 'preparation' then have at least two distinct senses: 'preparation' can mean both 'the thing prepared' and 'the preparing', where, however, the first may be understood either as a state or an object. The resolution of the inherent ambiguity depends for the most part on syntax and context; sometimes either is sufficient to resolve it, sometimes both are necessary. In other cases the ambiguity is not resolved. Thus:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The army exhibited an attitude of preparation. | product (a state of preparedness) |
| 2. Preparation(s) went on all day. | process (the preparing) |
| 3. Preparation is the best road to success. | ambiguous between 1 and 2 |
| 4. The preparation(s) blew up in the lab. | product (object) |

The purpose of this study is to examine briefly the ambiguity of the word παρασκευή in Book VI of the 'History'. The word occurs more often there

¹ This kind of ambiguity was first discussed by M. BLACK, *Critical Thinking* (New York 1952) 187f., 194–5. W. SELLARS, *Science and Metaphysics* (New York 1968), makes use of the ambiguity in 'representation' to talk about appearances (32–36). Linguists currently deal with ambiguity primarily in order to resolve issues of syntax and semantics. See N. CHOMSKY, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* (The Hague 1964) 49f. and *Syntactic Structures* (The Hague 1969) 49; H. K. ULATOWSKA, *Psycholinguistic Approach to the Study of Ambiguity*, *Papers in Linguistics* 4:2 (1971), 347f., 366 for discussion of devices for 'disambiguating' words and phrases, and W. V. O. QUINE, *Word and Object* (New York 1960) 129. The present study is derived from my dissertation 'Preparation (Paraskeue) in Thucydides' (Pittsburgh 1974). Process-product ambiguity is covered at length on pages 37–51 and in Appendix II.

than in any other book of the 'History': Book I has 12 instances of *παρασκευή*, II 16, III 8, IV 11, V 10, VI 31, VII 13, and VIII 3². Further, *παρασκευή* seems to have embodied an idea important for Thucydides' view of war and military power, for he uses it far more than any fifth- or fourth-century author³. This, to be sure, is in keeping with his fondness for abstract nouns, but it is notable that the word is far less common in works by other historians; that is to say, the historical nature of the subject matter does not adequately account for the frequent occurrences of *παρασκευή* in Thucydides⁴.

Below is a summary of the use of *παρασκευή* in Book VI in respect to process-product ambiguity. I have divided the book into sections which parallel the thematic role of preparation: 1–26, arguments and preparations for the expedition; 27–44, departure of the forces from Athens and their arrival in Sicily; 45–105, decreasing preparation through ineffective actions. Note in the list below that *παρασκευή* in Book VI is used most often of the Athenians (26 times). I have marked the 5 instances where it refers to the Syracusans with an S⁵.

Chs. 1 – 26 Noun: 11 Athenians; 1 Syracusans
 2 Product (1, 1; 25, 1)
 4 Process (8, 3; 9, 1; 24, 2; 25, 2)
 6 Ambiguous (6, 2S; 19, 2; 21, 2; 23, 3; 26, 2 twice)

Chs. 27 – 44 Noun: 12 Athenians; 2 Syracusans
 10 Product (30, 1; 31, 1 [cf. 31, 2], 4; 34, 4, 5; 37, 1, 2; 43, 1; 44, 1, 2)
 2 Process (29, 1; 31, 3)
 2 Ambiguous (34, 9S; 37, 2S)

Chs. 45 – 105 Noun: 3 Athenians; 2 Syracusans
 1 Product (91, 2)
 1 Process (65, 1S)
 3 Ambiguous (68, 1; 79, 3; 86, 3S)

By way of comparison, here are the figures for Book VII:

Noun: 6 Athenians; 7 Syracusans
 6 Process (12, 1S; 36, 1S; 40, 5S; 43, 2; 62, 1S; 63, 3)
 7 Ambiguous (5, 4S; 42, 1; 48, 5S; 55, 2; 65, 1; 67, 2S; 67, 4)

² Note against VI the very few occurrences in VIII, where Athenian *παρασκευή*, which had before resided in ships and money, is in serious difficulty, even when we find that Athens sends out the largest naval contingent of the war. Verbal and adjectival forms are discussed throughout the dissertation.

³ *Παρασκευή* appears 104 times, about two and a half times the next author's, regardless of the size of the corpus: Herodotus 5, Xenophon, 'Hellenica' 4; Xenophon corpus 12, Pseudo-Xenophon 0, Demosthenes 44, Lysias 9, Plato 20, Euripides 2, Aristophanes 1, Antiphon 3, Andocides 1, Lycurgus 2, Dinarchus 1, Isocrates 10, Isaeus 4, Gorgias 1.

⁴ I have argued that preparation is the basis of power in the 'History'. It is the generic notion under which belongs money, ships, league hegemony, constitutional stability, i.e. the components of preparedness (see especially 52 f., 163 f. and 198–202).

⁵ The figures here are given greater detail in the dissertation (104, 110, 121, 141–142, and a summary on 160).

These figures indicate strongly that Thucydides' use of παρασκευή informs his narrative: Athenian παρασκευή through chapter 44 of Book VI is greater than ever and this is reflected by the 23 instances of the word παρασκευή in these chapters. From 44 to the end of VI the inability of the Athenians to capitalize on their initial advantage, the loss of Alcibiades, and the need for more preparations from home begin to weaken Athenian preparedness. In this section, more than half the book, παρασκευή notably is used only 3 times of the Athenians. In Book VII there is even greater deterioration in Athenian preparedness and preparation while Syracuse is shown to be entering into παρασκευή and in this book significantly παρασκευή is now used more often of the Syracusans (7 times) than of the Athenians (6 times). In the final scenes of VII Athenians can only prepare 'negatively', i. e. to retreat and in the end are without παρασκευή entirely.

The contents of VI, 25 and 26 reveal most concisely Thucydides' awareness of the several possibilities for παρασκευή. Nicias, we recall, failing in his first attempt, has tried again by a ruse to dissuade the Athenians from undertaking the venture, only once again to be thwarted. Now in 25, 1 an unnamed citizen requests that Nicias specify clearly what provisions are needed. The remainder of the two chapters contains the responses of Nicias and the Athenians to this request. Here I list the occurrences of the word παρασκευή in 25 and 26 and give literal translations using the word 'preparation' in every case for παρασκευή.

1. a. ἤντινα αὐτῷ παρασκευῆν Ἀθηναῖοι ψηφίσωνται (VI, 25, 1)
1. b. Whatever preparation the Athenians should vote for him
2. a. τὴν δὲ ἄλλην παρασκευῆν ... καὶ τοξοτῶν ... καὶ ... ἄξιειν (25, 2)
2. b. to gather the rest of the preparation both of archers ... and ...
3. a. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἡ παρασκευὴ ἐγίγνετο (26, 1)
3. b. and after these things the preparation was coming about
4. a. καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐν παρασκευῇ ἦσαν (26, 2)
4. b. and so they were in preparation.

In the first two cases we understand the product sense 'objects to be prepared'. The force of ἤντινα in 1. a. makes the objects indefinite, i. e. whatever has to be prepared; in 2. a. the addition of the genitive τοξοτῶν specifies the objects. 3. a. is ambiguous between the process sense, 'the preparing was coming about', and the product sense, 'the preparation (the state of being prepared) was arising', whereas in 4. a. the product sense, i. e. the state, is stronger than the process sense and announces a transition in the narrative: 'and so they were in a state of preparedness'. This carefully constructed sentence significantly ends this first section of Book VI, namely chapters 1 through 26. The μὲν looks ahead and expects a δέ. The responding δέ (27, 1) introduces the episode of the Herms. In actual fact, the mutilation of the Herms broke in upon the smooth course of the preparations for the expedition. Thucydides has constructed his narrative at this point so that the historical intrusion is also a stylistic one. It is possible to isolate and analyze all the instances of παρασκευή in the book with similar results: Thucydides employs παρασκευή as an abstract noun with no specific object of reference and as one with objects of reference (compare 3 and 4 with 1 and 2 above).

Contextual considerations in the 'History' can also resolve ambiguity; for example in sentence 4. a. above, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐν παρασκευῇ ἦσαν, it is impossible to ascertain from the syntax alone whether Thucydides means

They were in a state of preparedness.

or

They were in the process of preparing.

since both would be expressed by the same Greek phrase, ἐν παρασκευῇ (for other occurrences of the phrase see II, 17, 5; 80, 3; 101, 2 and VIII, 14, 3).

Since it is clear that the frequency and thematic importance of the term are related and that Thucydides distinguishes his usage of παρασκευή, we are now in a position to deal with the preponderance of occurrences of the noun in the product sense in chapters 27 through 44. Note the product sense occurs 10 times in 27–44 but only 3 times in the rest of Book VI and not at all in Book VII (see list above, p. 119). Thucydides highlights παρασκευή in the structure of these chapters. Briefly, sections 30 to 44, 2 are constructed using a framing technique (see below page 122 for diagram). The whole section is framed by the παρασκευή, which in chapter 30 has gathered at Corcyra and has been ordered to proceed to the Iapygian promontory and in chapter 44, 2 has arrived there. At 30, 1 the wording is simple, 'the rest (ἄλλη) of the παρασκευή' (less the Athenian triremes), whereas at 44 it is 'the entire (ἡ πᾶσα)' that has arrived. Note also that 31, 1 παρασκευή γὰρ αὕτη πρώτη and 44, 1 τοσαύτη ἡ πρώτη παρασκευή, clearly reinforce the frame. In the center of the frame, against this backdrop of the moving mass of troops, the Syracusans debate the Athenian motivations, their sanity, and even the actuality of the crossing. Meanwhile the expedition advances until, with the end of the debate, it has reached the assigned spot. That Thucydides is using a framing technique is also shown by the calculated imprecision in 31, 1, where αὕτη πρώτη allows for two interpretations of πρώτη: 'first of all the other Hellenic forces' and 'first relative to a second', i. e. Demosthenes' troops which had to be sent out when the situation worsened⁶. This latter is clearly the sense of πρώτη in 44, 1. Thus Thucydides undercuts the expedition by stylistically foreshadowing the disaster. Outstanding among the numerous instances of the product sense are those which act as the subjects of verbs of motion (e. g. προσβάλλειν; δια- or ἐκπλεῖν) at the edges of the frame viz. 30, 1; 31, 1; 44, 1, 2. Παρασκευή as a concrete noun capable of acting on its own occurs only in these four passages in the 'History'. It does not occur in this concrete sense even in Book VII, which is both the thematic continuation of VI and traditionally a compositional unit with it. To be sure there are other instances of the product sense of παρασκευή in the 'History' as state or with unspecified objects understood. But only here in VI does the concrete sense mean something more specific than a collection of objects, men, ships, etc. or even loosely 'forces'. It specifically requires the interpretation 'expedition' or

⁶ Though odd, there is no real grammatical problem with the phrase αὕτη πρώτη. Some scholars consider πρώτη an outright gloss or one from 44, 1, and so remove it; others insert ἡ before πρώτη and so make the comparison with Demosthenes' troops explicit. The usage is like I, 1, 2: κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μέγιστη (see diss. 115–117, 249–250).

	Section	Passage
Athenians A	30, 1	... και ὄση ἄλλη παρασκευὴ ξυνείπετο πρότερον εἴρητο ἐς Κέρκυραν ξυλλέγεσθαι ὡς ἐκείθεν ἀθρόοις ἐπὶ ἄκραν Ἰαπυγίαν τὸν Ἴόνιον διαβαλοῦσιν
	31, 1	παρασκευὴ γὰρ αὕτη πρώτη ἐκπλεύσασα ... πολυτελεστάτη ... εὐπρεπεστάτη ...
	31, 4	... και ἐς τοὺς ἄλλους Ἕλληνας ἐπίδειξιν μᾶλλον εἰκασθῆναι τῆς δυνάμεως και ἐξουσίας ἢ ἐπὶ πολεμίου παρασκευῆν.
Digression on Syracusans B	34, 4	... και ἐς λογισμὸν καταστήσοιμεν ὅτι ὀρμώμεθα μὲν ἐκ φιλίας χώρας φύλακες ... τὸ δὲ πέλαγος αὐτοῖς πολὺ περιουῶσθαι μετὰ πάσης τῆς παρασκευῆς
	34, 5	... και ἢ μένοντες πολιορκοῖντο ἂν ἢ πειρώμενοι παραπλεῖν τήν τε ἄλλην παρασκευῆν ἀπολείποιν ἂν ...
	37, 1	... τήν τε ἄλλην παρασκευῆν ὄσην δεῖ ἐπὶ πόλιν τοσῆδε πορισθῆναι, οὐκ ὀλίγην οὖσαν.
	37, 2	... στρατοπέδω τε ἐκ νεῶν ἰδρυθέντι και ἐκ σκηνιδίων και ἀναγκαίας παρασκευῆς οὐκ ἐπὶ πολὺ ὑπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἰππέων ἐξιόντες.
Athenians C	43	... τοσῆδε ἤδη τῆ παρασκευῆ Ἀθηναῖοι ἄραντες ἐκ τῆς Κερκύρας ἐς τὴν Σικελίαν ἐπεραιοῦντο, τριήρεσι μὲν ...
	44, 1	τοσαύτη ἢ πρώτη παρασκευὴ πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον διέπλει.
	44, 2	και προσβαλοῦσα ἢ πᾶσα παρασκευὴ πρὸς τε ἄκραν Ἰαπυγίαν και πρὸς Τάραντα ...

'armada' and I would suggest, more precisely, 'the expedition'. If it is not the Athenians' formal word for 'the Sicilian Expedition' (and I have found no inscriptional evidence to suggest that it is), it is certainly Thucydides' term⁷. The English word 'preparation' no longer accommodates a concrete product sense except in chemical terminology, e.g. Preparation H. Hobbes, however,

translated VI, 31, 1: »For this preparation, being the first Grecian power that ever went out of Greece from one only city, was the most sumptuous and the most glorious of all that ever had been sent forth before it to that day«, and his contemporary Shakespeare wrote of another fleet, which by a strange quirk was sailing to a Mediterranean island:

»The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes«
(Othello I. iii, 14).

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⁷ We know of at least three meetings at which definite things were voted upon: Thucydides VI, 8, 2 and MEIGGS-LEWIS 78, b and possibly c (IG: 1² 98 – 99) refer to the first. Thucydides VI, 8, 3 mentions another. MEIGGS and LEWIS do not ascribe the other fragments to a definite meeting. These fragments deal with fine preparations which may belong to the meeting at which Nicias gave his second speech or to one or more subsequent meetings implied in VI, 25 – 26. At least one other is pointed out by Andocides in his defense 'On the Mysteries' 11 – 12; Lamachus' flag ship had already set sail, so it must have been late. The reference to παρασκευή must therefore be to finished preparations: ἀναστὰς δὲ Πυθόνικος ἐν τῷ δήμῳ εἶπεν, »ὦ [ἄνδρες] Ἀθηναῖοι, ὑμεῖς μὲν στρατιάν ἐκπέμπετε καὶ παρασκευὴν τοσαύτην, καὶ κίνδυνον ἀρεῖσθαι μέλλετε«. Pythonicus used παρασκευή; Thucydides used it to introduce both the second assembly and Nicias' second speech as well as the request at 25, 2. This indicates that παρασκευή could very well have been the actual word used or that Andocides borrowed Thucydidean wording. It is used in a formula in the Hellenistic period for a general ἐπὶ τὴν παρασκευὴν, whose duties apparently were the 'preparation and presentation of military machines and stores', W. S. FERGUSON, *Hellenistic Athens* (Chicago 1911) 130 and 'Researches in Athenian and Delian Documents III', *Klio* 9 (1909) 319. The office seems to have come into existence shortly after 297/6 B.C.

ZU SENECAS GEBURTSDATUM

In seinem von eindringendem Verständnis zeugenden Senecabuch versucht der hervorragende französische Senecaforscher Pierre GRIMAL – im Anschluß an F. PRÉCHAC¹ – ebenso wie in seiner vor etlichen Jahren erschienenen Senecastudie² das Jahr 1 v. Chr. als das Jahr von Senecas Geburt zu erweisen³. So recht er hat, wenn er darauf verzichtet, dial. 9, 17, 7⁴ der zahl-

¹ REL 12, 1934, 360 ff.; 15, 1937, 66 f.

² Sénèque², Paris 1957, I Anm. 1.

³ Sénèque, Paris 1978, 56 ff.

⁴ *Qualem Pollionem Asinium oratorem maximum meminimus quem nulla res ultra decumam detinuit*. Zwar ist ziemlich sicher, daß der Plural *meminimus* als *Pluralis auctoris* gemeint ist (= *memini*), doch läßt sich nicht ausmachen, ob eine Erinnerung an Selbsterfahrenes vorliegt (Ellipse des Infinitivs). Und selbst wenn feststände, daß Seneca eine eigene Beobachtung mitteilt, so