

Bakker, Stéphanie Josette: *The Noun Phrase in Ancient Greek*. A Functional Analysis of the Order and Articulation of NP Constituents in Herodotus. Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology, 15. Brill Verlag Leiden, 2009. xii, 322 Seiten. Gebunden, 116,00 EUR. ISBN: 978-90-04-17722-2.

In a study unparalleled in scope and theoretical sophistication, Stéphanie Bakker takes up two issues of the Ancient Greek noun phrase (= NP). First, what determines whether an adjective precedes or follows its head noun? And second, what is the semantic/pragmatic (a strict line between the two is not drawn) contribution of the definite article? The book begins with a brief Introduction, which profiles the corpus (the entirety of Herodotus' *Histories*) and the boundaries of the investigation (only variation within the NP is considered, so predicating and appositional elements are not considered, and hyperbaton is also not discussed). Chapters two through four comprise Part I of the study, which begins with a general discussion of word order in Greek, and then hones in on the position of the modifier in single- and multiple-modifier NPs. Part II (chapters five through seven) is devoted to the use of the definite article. The book concludes with an index of linguistic terms; a bibliography; an index locorum; and general index. The index of linguistic terms is particularly helpful, and will no doubt make the book more accessible to the uninitiated.

Readers, whether classicists or linguists, will gain a lot from this book. The exposition is generally very clear; the book is filled with insight on a theoretical level, as well as in its analysis of textual data; there is a wealth of data (which is translated but not transliterated). My only slight reservation about the book is that the semantic and pragmatic descriptions are not always as precise or full as one would like.

Chapter two briefly reviews various approaches to Greek word order, and concludes that it is unlikely that style, syntax, or semantics plays "a prominent role" (p. 21) in determining the position of an adjective or demonstrative in the NP. Bakker instead advocates a functional (or pragmatic) approach to ordering within the NP, and works specifically with the framework of Functional Grammar (or, as it is now known, Functional Discourse Grammar). While Bakker makes a strong case that the primary factors determining the order of a modifier in an NP are pragmatic, I wonder if she could have offered an even stronger account by incorporating (as opposed to eschewing) style, syntax, and especially semantics. For instance, Devine and Stephens note a highly significant correlation between determining adjective and pronominal position in Herodotus. To which Bakker responds (p. 21): "The highly significant correlation could also be a consequence of the fact that determining adjectives are simply more suitable for pragmatic highlighting than qualifying and quantifying adjectives." I am inclined to agree: indeed, this would have been a perfect opportunity to offer a more powerful analysis that demonstrates how semantic and pragmatic mean-

ing interact. Even if Bakker's claim is true that the position of modifiers is conditioned above all by pragmatic factors, this does not entail that semantics (to say nothing of syntax or stylistics) plays no role.

Chapters three and four are devoted to the position of modifiers in single- and multiple-modifier NPs, respectively. The main claim of these two chapters is encapsulated in the following statement (p. 125): "The various constituents of the NP are ordered in a diminishing degree of saliency from more salient information on the left to less salient information on the right." Precedence, in other words, correlates with saliency. Thus, according to Bakker's model, prenominal modifiers are pragmatically marked, while postnominal modifiers are unmarked (and in this claim she is more or less preceded by the work of Helma Dik). If an NP has more than one modifier, the most salient will precede the less so. Bakker does not offer an explicit, rigorous definition of "saliency" (or "pragmatic markedness," although see p. 88). She does, however, explain how it differs from focus, which she finds insufficiently broad in comparison to saliency (pp. 28-32). Essentially, a modifier is salient if it has one of the following three properties (e.g. p. 56): it is contrastive; it is the most informative part of the NP; or it is the most relevant part of the NP.

Modifiers are prenominal when they are overtly contrastive with another modifier (p. 38):

- (1) ὁ δὲ βασιλῆϊος πῆχυς τοῦ μετρίου ἐστὶ πῆχος μέζων τρισὶ δακτύλοισι. 'The royal measure is greater by three fingers' breadth than the common measure.'

Hdt. 1.178.3

Or when the modifier is new information, while the noun is either given or inferable (p. 42):

- (2) Κορινθίων ἐδέοντο χρῆσαι σφίσι νέας...οἱ δὲ Κορινθιοὶ...διδούσι δεομένοισι εἴκοσι νέας. 'When they (= the Athenians) were asking the Corinthians to lend them ships... The Corinthians... gave them **twenty ships** when they asked for help.'

Hdt. 6.89

Or when the modifier is the most important or relevant part of the NP:

- (3) ἔπειτα μέλλοντος αὐτοῦ διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίην ἀνασκολοπιεῖσθαι ὑπὸ Ξέρξεω βασιλέος, ἢ μήτηρ τοῦ Σατάσπεος ἐοῦσα Δαρείου ἀδελφεῆ παραιτήσατο, φᾶσά οἱ αὐτὴ μέζω ζημίην ἐπιθήσειν ἢ περ ἐκείνον. 'And when on this charge he was to be impaled by King Xerxes, Sataspes' mother, who was **Dareios' sister**, interceded for his life, saying that she would impose a heavier punishment on him than Xerxes.'

Hdt. 4.43.2

Bakker explains (p. 46): “[W]e are told that Sataspes’ mother, who happens to be Dareios’ sister, changed Xerxes’ decision to punish Sataspes to death. To understand how Sataspes’ mother could influence Xerxes, the exact nature of the relation between Sataspes’ mother and the royal house is less relevant than the fact that she was related.”

As useful as these categories are for helping us read texts more precisely, I found myself wondering what, for example, ‘contrastive’ means in both a semantic and pragmatic sense. Do the contrasted elements instantiate the focus of the utterance? I also wondered how salience interacts with non-prototypicality (especially with modifiers that Bakker identifies as the most important part of the NP). And more generally, given that prenominal modifiers are the more marked, do they give rise to any implicatures? Or do they trigger presuppositions that postnominal modifiers do not? These questions are not meant to denigrate the achievements of Bakker’s analysis, but rather reflect the questions that her analysis prompts. As for postnominal modifiers, they receive less attention; essentially postnominal modifiers are less salient than their head nouns (p. 52), and thus do not belong to one of the three prenominal categories above.

Bakker extends her account to include enclitic possessive pronouns (pp. 73-79). The distribution of these forms is both fascinating and complicated. And I agree with Bakker that it cannot be accounted for simply with Wackernagel’s Law (or at least any conventional account of it). But I am skeptical of the claim that prenominal enclitic possessives can be the most “salient” elements of their NP. Isn’t pragmatic markedness the last thing that we should expect from prosodically reduced forms? On this point, see further A. Devine and L. Stephens, *The Prosody of Greek Speech* (Oxford/New York 1994), 475-477.

Part II is devoted to the use of the article in NPs. Chapter five is devoted to the question of when NPs are marked with an article. Bakker begins with an extremely useful and insightful review of the literature on definiteness generally, and on articulation in Greek specifically. She offers (p. 162-163) the following general rule for the use of the article: “[T]he general function of the article in Greek is to mark the discourse referent as identifiable. As in English, the presence of an article indicates the discourse referent can be unequivocally related to an available cognitive structure.”

- (4) ἐν τοσαύτησι δὲ γενεῇσι ἀνθρώπων ὀκτοκαίδεκα μὲν Αἰθίοπες ἦσαν, μία δὲ γυνὴ ἐπιχωρὶή, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι ἄνδρες Αἰγύπτιοι. **τῇ** δὲ **γυναικί** οὐνομα ἦν, ἣτις ἐβασίλευσε, τό περ τῇ Βαβυλωνίῃ, Νίτωκρις. ‘In all these many generations there were eighteen Aithiopians; one woman, native to the country; the rest were all Egyptian men. The name of **the woman** who reigned was the same as that of the Babylonian princess, Nitokris.’ Hdt. 2.100.1-2

The phrase τῆι γυναικί (p. 163) “is an unequivocal part of the cognitive structure ‘kings of Babylon’ in which she has been explicitly introduced the line before.” One of the most attractive features of Bakker’s analysis is that she is able to offer a unified analysis of a range of functions of the definite article (e.g. in non-referential and generic NPs). For instance, she accounts for the presence of the article in singular generic NPs as follows (p. 205): “[T]he general function of the article is to indicate that the referent can unequivocally be related to some knowledge. In the case of a non-generic NP, this knowledge has to be available [sc., from the discourse—DMG]; the referent of a generic NP, by contrast, is to be related to general knowledge.” She also debunks (pp. 190-199) the widespread (and even time-honored) misconception that predicate NPs are in principle bare (i.e., anarthrous).

Chapter 6 takes up the articulation of modifiers. After reviewing previous analyses, she claims (p. 225) that non-articular modifiers “only serve to fulfill the basic function of a modifier, i.e. modifying the head of the phrase (whether or not with the intention to make the referent identifiable).” By contrast, articular modifiers “undertake the additional task of singling out the intended referent by answering the question ‘which *x* is referred to?’. By the information they provide these modifiers separate the intended referent from other available entities that satisfy the description of the noun.” In sum, non-articular modifiers characterize the referent, while articular modifiers specify the reference (pp. 226, 285).

We see this claim at work in the following examples (quoted on p. 233):

- (5) τῶν ἀμφοτέρων λόγον οὐδένα ποιησάμενος τὸ πρόσω ἐπορεύετο, σὺν δὲ οἱ ὁ **πεζὸς στρατός**. ὁ δὲ ναυτικὸς ἔξω τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον πλέων παρὰ γῆν ἐκομίζετο, τὰ ἔμπαλιν πρήσσω τῷ πεζοῦ. ‘But he took no account of either sign and journeyed onward; **the land army** was with him. His navy sailed out of the Hellespont and travelled along the land, going across from the land army.’ Hdt. 7.57-7.58.1

The article precedes adjective πεζός because it determines the reference of the noun στρατός (i.e., it distinguishes it from the navy). Were the article not present (that is, if the adjective were “predicative”) it would only serve to characterize the noun, without necessarily narrowing its reference, as we see in the following example (discussed on p. 244):

- (6) ...τοῦ δαιμονίου παρασκευάζοντος, ὅκως πανωλεθρίη ἀπολόμενοι καταφανὲς τοῦτο τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι ποιήσωσι, ὡς τῶν μεγάλων ἀδικημάτων μεγάλαι εἰσὶ καὶ **αἱ τιμωρίαι παρὰ τῶν θεῶν**.

‘...the divine powers provided that they (= the Trojans), perishing in utter destruction, should make this clear to all mankind: that **retribution from the gods** (lit. the retribution of the gods) for terrible wrongdoing is also terrible.’ Hdt. 2.120.5

The prepositional phrase *παρὰ τῶν θεῶν* does not distinguish *τιμωρία* of the gods from some other type of *τιμωρία*. This brief summary cannot do justice to the finer points of Bakker’s analysis. While her model seems to have good empirical coverage, there were certain theoretical points that needed to be elaborated in more detail, such as the claim on p. 263 that demonstratives can occur in indefinite NPs.

Bakker is clearly well versed in both the Classics and linguistics literature, but occasionally one misses reference to a useful study. On p. 268, for instance, on the constraint against the collocation of an isomorphic definite article and relative pronoun, see C. Golston, “Syntax outranks phonology: evidence from Ancient Greek,” *Phonology* 12 (1995): 343-368; B. Agbayani and C. Golston, “Phonological movement in classical greek,” *Language* 86 (2010): 133-167.

In sum, there remains much to discover about the semantics and pragmatics of the Greek NP, but this study is both a large step forward, and a solid foundation for future research.

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