

Phthonos in the Greek Historians

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CAMWS 2019, Lincoln NE

Table

Author	Herodotus		Thucydides		Xenophon - <i>Hellenica</i>		Xenophon - <i>Anabasis</i>	
total forms	37)	25	26)	22	15)	5	16)	3
φθον-		20		12		3		3
ἄφθον-*	12)	1	4)	0	10)	0	13)	0
ἐπιφθον-		3		4		0		0
ἀνεπιφθον-		0		6		0		0
ὑποφθον-		0		0		2		0
Direct speech		13		16		0		2
Author's judgement		11		5		4		1
Other	1 (letter)		1 (letter)		1 (reported)			0
Total OCT pages		800		597		264		247
Frequency		1 in 32 pages		1 in 27		1 in 53		1 in 83

*almost all uses of ἄφθονος, ἀφθονία (etc.) = abundant / abundance

Selected passages

1. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* Book 2.9.3

δόξειε δ' ἂν καὶ ὁ φθόνος τῷ ἐλεεῖν τὸν αὐτὸν ἀντικεῖσθαι τρόπον ὡς σύνεγγυς ὢν καὶ ταῦτὸν τῷ νεμεσᾶν, ἔστι δ' ἕτερον· λύπη μὲν γὰρ ταραχώδης καὶ ὁ φθόνος ἔστι καὶ εἰς εὐπραγίαν, ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦ ἀναξίου ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἴσου καὶ ὁμοίου.

It would seem that envy also is similarly opposed to pity, as being akin to or identical with indignation, although it is really different; envy also is indeed a disturbing pain and directed against good fortune, but not that of one who does not deserve it, but of one who is our equal and like.

2. Herodotus, Book 1.32.1

ὁ δὲ εἶπε “ὦ Κροῖσε, ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὼν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες ἐπειρωτᾶς ἀνθρωπῆϊων πρηγμάτων πέρι.

“Croesus,” said Solon, “you ask me concerning the lot of man; well I know how jealous is Heaven and how it loves to trouble us.

3. Herodotus, Book 3.30.1

30. Καμβύσης δέ, ὡς λέγουσι Αἰγύπτιοι, αὐτίκα διὰ τοῦτο τὸ ἀδίκημα ἐμάνη, ἐὼν οὐδὲ πρότερον φρενήρης. καὶ πρῶτα μὲν τῶν κακῶν ἐξεργάσατο τὸν ἀδελφεὸν Σμέρδιν ἐόντα πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς τῆς αὐτῆς, τὸν ἀπέπεμψε ἐς Πέρσας φθόνῳ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι τὸ τόξον

μοῦνος Περσέων ὅσον τε ἐπὶ δύο δακτύλους εἴρυσε, τὸ παρὰ τοῦ Αἰθίοπος ἦνεικαν οἱ Ἴχθυοφάγοι, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων Περσέων οὐδεὶς οἴός τε ἐγένετο.

30. By reason of this wrongful deed, as the Egyptians say, Cambyses' former want of sense turned straightway to madness. His first evil act was to make away with his full brother Smerdis, whom he had sent away from Egypt to Persia out of jealousy, because Smerdis alone could draw the bow brought from the Ethiopian by the Fish-eaters as far as two fingerbreadths; but no other Persian could draw it.

4. Herodotus, Book 3.52.5

σὺ δὲ μαθὼν ὅσῳ φθονέεσθαι κρέσσον ἐστὶ ἢ οἰκτείρεσθαι, ἅμα τε ὀκοῖόν τι ἐς τοὺς τοκέας καὶ ἐς τοὺς κρέσσονας τεθυμῶσθαι, ἅπιθι ἐς τὰ οἰκία.

Nay, bethink you how much better a thing it is to be envied than to be pitied, and likewise what comes of anger against parents and those that are stronger than you, and come away to my house.

5. Herodotus, Book 3.80

Ὅτανης μὲν ἐκέλευε ἐς μέσον Πέρσησι καταθεῖναι τὰ πρήγματα, λέγων τάδε. “Ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ ἓνα μὲν ἡμέων μούναρχον μηκέτι γενέσθαι. οὔτε γὰρ ἡδὺ οὔτε ἀγαθόν. εἶδετε μὲν γὰρ τὴν Καμβύσειω ὕβριν ἐπ’ ὅσον ἐπεξῆλθε, μετεσχίκατε δὲ καὶ τῆς τοῦ Μάγου ὕβριος. κῶς δ’ ἂν εἶη χρῆμα κατηρημένον μούναρχῆ, τῇ ἕξεσι ἀνευθύνῳ ποιέειν τὰ βούλεται; καὶ γὰρ ἂν τὸν ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν πάντων στάντα ἐς ταύτην ἐκτὸς τῶν ἐωθότων νοημάτων στήσειε. ἐγγίνεται μὲν γὰρ οἱ ὕβρις ὑπὸ τῶν παρεόντων ἀγαθῶν, φθόνος δὲ ἀρχῆθεν ἐμφύεται ἀνθρώπῳ. δύο δ’ ἔχων ταῦτα ἔχει πᾶσαν κακότητα· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὕβρι κεκορημένος ἔρδει πολλά καὶ ἀτάσθαλα, τὰ δὲ φθόνῳ. καίτοι ἄνδρα γε τύραννον ἄφθονον ἔδει εἶναι, ἔχοντά γε πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ. τὸ δὲ ὑπεναντίον τούτου ἐς τοὺς πολιήτας πέφυκε· φθονεῖ γὰρ τοῖσι ἀρίστοισι περιουσί τε καὶ ζώουσι, χαίρει δὲ τοῖσι κακίστοις τῶν ἀστῶν, διαβολὰς δὲ ἄριστος ἐνδέκεσθαι. ἀναρμοστότατον δὲ πάντων ἦν τε γὰρ αὐτὸν μετριῶς θωμάζης, ἄχθεται ὅτι οὐ κάρτα θεραπεύεται, ἦν τε θεραπεύη τις κάρτα, ἄχθεται ἅτε θωπί. τὰ δὲ δὴ μέγιστα ἔρχομαι ἐρέων· νόμαιά τε κινεῖ πάτρια καὶ βιᾶται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους. πλῆθος δὲ ἄρχον πρῶτα μὲν οὔνομα πάντων κάλλιστον ἔχει, ἰσονομίην, δεύτερα δὲ τούτων τῶν ὁ μούναρχος ποιέει οὐδέν· πάλῳ μὲν ἀρχὰς ἄρχει, ὑπεύθυνον δὲ ἀρχὴν ἔχει, βουλευμάτα δὲ πάντα ἐς τὸ κοινὸν ἀναφέρει. τίθεμαι ὧν γνώμην μετέντας ἡμέας μούναρχῆν τὸ πλῆθος ἀέξειν· ἐν γὰρ τῷ πολλῷ ἓνι τὰ πάντα.”

Otanes was for giving the government to the whole body of the Persian people. “I hold,” he said, “that we must make an end of monarchy; there is no pleasure or advantage in it. You have seen to what lengths went the insolence of Cambyses, and you have borne your share of the insolence of the Magian. What right order is there to be found in monarchy, when the ruler can do what he will, nor be held to account for it? Give this power to the best man on earth, and it would stir him to unwonted thoughts. The advantage which he holds breeds insolence, and nature makes all men jealous. This double cause is the root of all evil in him; sated with power he will do many reckless deeds, some from insolence, some from jealousy. For whereas an absolute ruler, as having all that heart can desire, should rightly be jealous of no man, yet it is contrariwise with him in his dealing with his countrymen; he is jealous of the safety of the good, and glad of the safety of the evil; and no man is so ready to believe calumny. Of all men he is the most inconsistent; accord him but just honour, and he is displeased that you make him not your first care; make him

such, and he damns you for a flatterer. But I have yet worse to say of him than that; he turns the laws of the land upside down, he rapes women, he puts high and low to death. But the virtue of a multitude's rule lies first in its excellent name, which signifies equality before the law; and secondly, in that it does none of the things that a monarch does. All offices are assigned by lot, and the holders are accountable for what they do therein; and the general assembly arbitrates on all counsels. Therefore I declare my opinion, that we make an end of monarchy and increase the power of the multitude, seeing that all good lies in the many."

6. Thucydides, Book 2.35.2

χαλεπὸν γὰρ τὸ μετρίως εἰπεῖν ἐν ᾧ μόλις καὶ ἡ δόκησις τῆς ἀληθείας βεβαιοῦται. ὁ τε γὰρ ξυνειδῶς καὶ εὖνους ἀκροατῆς τάχ' ἂν τι ἐνδεεστέρως πρὸς ἃ βούλεται τε καὶ ἐπίσταται νομίσειε δηλοῦσθαι, ὁ τε ἄπειρος ἔστιν ἃ καὶ πλεονάζεσθαι, διὰ φθόνον, εἴ τι ὑπὲρ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἀκούοι. μέχρι γὰρ τοῦδε ἀνεκτοὶ οἱ ἔπαινοί εἰσι περὶ ἐτέρων λεγόμενοι, ἐς ὅσον ἂν καὶ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος οἴηται ἰκανὸς εἶναι δρᾶσαι τι ᾧ ἤκουσεν· τῷ δὲ ὑπερβάλλοντι αὐτῶν φθονοῦντες ἤδη καὶ ἀπιστοῦσιν.

For it is a hard matter to speak in just measure on an occasion where it is with difficulty that belief in the speaker's accuracy is established. For the hearer who is cognizant of the facts and partial to the dead will perhaps think that scant justice has been done in comparison with his own wishes and his own knowledge, while he who is not so informed, whenever he hears of an exploit which goes beyond his own capacity, will be led by envy to think there is some exaggeration. And indeed eulogies of other men are tolerable only in so far as each hearer thinks that he too has the ability to perform any of the exploits of which he hears; but whatever goes beyond that at once excites envy and unbelief.

7. Thucydides, Book 7.77

“Ἐτι καὶ ἐκ τῶν παρόντων, ὧς Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ ξύμμαχοι, ἐλπίδα χρῆ ἔχειν (ἤδη τινὲς καὶ ἐκ δεινοτέρων ἢ τοιῶνδε ἐσώθησαν), μηδὲ καταμέμφεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἄγαν αὐτοὺς μήτε ταῖς ξυμφοραῖς μήτε ταῖς παρὰ τὴν ἀξίαν νῦν κακοπαθίαις. Ζκάγώ τοι οὐδενὸς ὑμῶν οὔτε ῥώμη προφέρων (ἀλλ' ὁρᾶτε δὴ ὡς διάκειμαι ὑπὸ τῆς νόσου) οὔτ' εὐτυχία δοκῶν που ὕστερός του εἶναι κατὰ τε τὸν ἴδιον βίον καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄλλα, νῦν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κινδύνῳ τοῖς φαυλοτάτοις αἰωροῦμαι· καίτοι πολλὰ μὲν ἐς θεοὺς νόμιμα δεδιήτημαι, πολλὰ δὲ ἐς ἀνθρώπους δίκαια καὶ ἀνεπίφθονα. Ζἀνθ' ᾧ μὲν ἐλπίς ὁμῶς θρασεῖα τοῦ μέλλοντος, αἱ δὲ ξυμφοραὶ οὐ κατ' ἀξίαν δὴ φοβοῦσιν. τάχα δὲ ἂν καὶ λωφήσειαν· ἰκανὰ γὰρ τοῖς τε πολεμίοις ἠτύχηται, καὶ εἴ τῳ θεῶν ἐπίφθονοι ἐστρατεύσαμεν, ἀποχρώντως ἤδη τετιμωρήμεθα. ἦλθον γὰρ που καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς ἤδη ἐφ' ἐτέρους, καὶ ἀνθρώπεια δρᾶσαντες ἀνεκτὰ ἔπαθον. καὶ ἡμᾶς εἰκὸς νῦν τὰ τε ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου ἐλπίζειν ἠπιώτερα ἔξειν (οἴκτου γὰρ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀξιώτεροι ἤδη ἐσμὲν ἢ φθόνου), καὶ ὁρῶντες ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς οἷοι ὀπλῖται ἅμα καὶ ὅσοι ξυντεταγμένοι χωρεῖτε μὴ καταπέπληχθε ἄγαν, λογίσεσθε δὲ ὅτι αὐτοὶ τε πόλις εὐθύς ἐστε ὅποι ἂν καθέζησθε, καὶ ἄλλη οὐδεμία ὑμᾶς τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ οὔτ' ἂν ἐπιόντας δέξαιτο ῥαδίως οὔτ' ἂν ἰδρυθέντας που ἐξαναστήσειεν.

“Even in your present condition, Athenians and allies, you should still have hope—in the past men have been saved from even worse straits than these—and not blame yourselves too much either for your reverses or for your present unmerited miseries. I myself, who have the advantage of none of you in strength of body—nay, you see how I am afflicted

by my disease—and who was once thought, perhaps, to be inferior to no one in good fortune as regards both my private life and my career in general, am now involved in the same danger as the meanest among you. And yet my life has been spent in the performance of many a religious duty toward the gods and many a just and blameless action towards men. Wherefore, in spite of all, my hope for the future is still confident, and our calamities do not frighten me as much as they might well have done. Perhaps they may even abate; for our enemies have had good fortune enough, and if we have roused the jealousy of any of the gods by our expedition we have already been punished sufficiently. Others have ere now, we know, gone against their neighbours, and after acting as men will act, have suffered what men can bear. It is therefore reasonable that we also should now hope that the divine dispensations will be more kindly towards us—for we are now more deserving of the gods' pity than of their jealousy—and, furthermore you should, when you look upon yourselves and see what fine hoplites you are and what a multitude you are when marching in battle array, not be too greatly dismayed; nay, remember that wherever you establish yourselves you are at once a city, and that in all Sicily there is no other city which could either sustain an attack from you or drive you out if you once made a settlement anywhere.

8. Thucydides, Book 1.75.5

πᾶσι δὲ ἀνεπίφθονον τὰ ξυμφέροντα τῶν μεγίστων περὶ κινδύνων εὖ τίθεσθαι.

And no man is to be blamed for making the most of his advantages when it is a question of the gravest dangers.

9. Thucydides, Book 1.82.1

Οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἀναισθήτως αὐτοὺς κελεύω τοὺς τε ξυμμάχους ἡμῶν εἴαν βλάπτειν καὶ ἐπιβουλεύοντας μὴ καταφωρᾶν, ἀλλὰ ὄπλα μὲν μήπω κινεῖν, πέμπειν δὲ καὶ αἰτιᾶσθαι μήτε πόλεμον ἄγαν δηλοῦντας μήθ' ὡς ἐπιτρέψομεν, κὰν τούτῳ καὶ τὰ ἡμέτερ' αὐτῶν ἐξαρτύεσθαι ξυμμάχων τε προσαγωγῆ, καὶ Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων, εἴ ποθὲν τινα ἢ ναυτικοῦ ἢ χρημάτων δύναμιν προσληψόμεθα (ἀνεπίφθονον δέ, ὅσοι ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων ἐπιβουλεύόμεθα, μὴ Ἑλληνας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ βαρβάρους προσλαβόντας διασωθῆναι), καὶ τὰ αὐτῶν ἅμα ἐκπορίζόμεθα.

Yet assuredly I do not advise you that you should blindly suffer them to injure our allies and allow their plotting to go undetected, but rather that you should adopt the following course: Do not take up arms yet, but send envoys to them and make complaints, without indicating too clearly whether we shall go to war or put up with their conduct; also in the meantime, let us proceed with our own preparations, in the first place by winning allies to our side, Barbarians as well as Hellenes, in the hope of obtaining from some quarter or other additional resources in ships or money (for those who, like ourselves, are plotted against by the Athenians are not to be blamed if they procure their salvation by gaining the aid, not of Hellenes only, but even of Barbarians); and let us at the same time be developing our resources at home.

10. Thucydides, Book 6.83.2-3

πᾶσι δὲ ἀνεπίφθονον τὴν προσήκουσαν σωτηρίαν ἐκπορίζεσθαι. καὶ νῦν τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀσφαλείας ἔνεκα καὶ ἐνθάδε παρόντες ὀρῶμεν καὶ ὑμῖν ταῦτα ξυμφέροντα.

But no one can be reproached because he makes provision for his proper safety. And now when for the sake of our own security we have come here also, we see that your interests also are the same as ours.

11. Thucydides, Book 8.50.5

θορυβούμενος δὲ ὁ Φρύνιχος καὶ πάνυ, ἐν τῷ μεγίστῳ κινδύνῳ ὧν διὰ τὸ μήνυμα, ἐπιστέλλει αὐθις πρὸς τὸν Ἀστύοχον, τά τε πρότερα μεμφόμενος ὅτι οὐ καλῶς ἐκρύφθη, καὶ νῦν ὅτι ὅλον τὸ στράτευμα τὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐτοῖμος εἶη τὸ ἐν τῇ Σάμῳ¹ παρασχεῖν αὐτοῖς διαφθεῖραι, γράψας καθ' ἕκαστα, ἀτειχίστου οὔσης Σάμου, ᾧ ἂν τρόπῳ αὐτὰ πράξειε, καὶ ὅτι ἀνεπίφθονόν οἱ ἤδη εἶη περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς δι' ἐκείνους κινδυνεύοντι καὶ τοῦτο καὶ ἄλλο πᾶν δρᾶσαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθίστων αὐτὸν διαφθαρήναι.

Phrynichus was exceedingly disturbed, since he was in the very greatest danger on account of the information he had given; he accordingly wrote again to Astyochus, reproaching him because his former information had not been concealed, as in honour it should have been, and adding that now he was ready to furnish the Lacedaemonians the opportunity to destroy the whole Athenian army at Samos, stating in detail how he could do this, since Samos was without walls; it was not culpable in himself, he concluded, now that he was in danger of his life through their actions, to do this or anything else rather than perish himself at the hands of his bitterest enemies.

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