STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT LINGUISTICS

II

STOIC AND PERIPATETIC KINDS OF SPEECH ACT
AND THE DISTINCTION OF
GRAMMATICAL MOODS

BY

D. M. SCHENKEVELD*

1. This study is the result of an investigation into the history of the ancient theory of grammatical moods. It is self-evident that accordingly attention will be paid to the Stoic theory on λεκτὰ αὐτοτελῆ and to non-Stoic thought on related notions, viz. Aristotle’s σχήματα λέξεως and the so-called Peripatetic five έιθη λόγου of Ammonius and other authors in late Antiquity. All these theories are concerned with the various ways in which complete and non-complex thoughts are expressed in speech, such as assertions, questions and commands.

Because of a strong probability that the theory of moods originated in Stoic thought I shall concentrate on the λεκτὰ αὐτοτελῆ. A list of terms, definitions and examples, more complete than those given in previous studies, will help in reconstructing the original list of these lekta. Although its authorship remains dubious, we know that Chrysippus had already occupied himself with matters of non-assertoric lekta. This activity points to a rise of status in comparison with Aristotelian logic. For Aristotle mentions a few non-apophantic logoi but no more than this. For this reason it is worthwhile discussing why to Stoics these lekta are neither true nor false and why, nevertheless, they were studied to a considerable extent.

* The abbreviations used in the text and the notes are explained at the end of the article.
If only for chronological reasons, it is right to start with a discussion of Aristotle's σχήματα λέξεως, and methodological motives lead to an exposition of the so-called Peripatetic ἔνδη λόγου immediately thereafter. Here, too, more sources are tapped and links with rhetoric examined. After the paragraphs on the Stoic lekta a comparison of all these kinds of speech act will be embarked on. This is done firstly in the framework of ancient theory, then in terms of Searle’s modern theory of speech acts. These comparisons, especially the second, will show the fundamental differences between the Stoic theory and the two others.

In order to find possible links between a theory of moods and the Stoic one of lekta I shall consider how the lekta come into existence, in particular, whether they are connected with movements/inclinations of the psyche and whether these movements vary in proportion to different lekta. Then the testimonies of a Stoic theory of grammatical moods are examined. These will turn out to be more numerous than is usually held to be the case. Finally, the possibility is considered whether a Stoic theory of moods comprised grammatical moods as well as a specific group of adverbs. The last subject to be discussed is the influence of this theory on the school of Aristarchus.

To a lesser or greater extent, the subject of this study has been treated by Prantl, Steinthal, Koller, Egli and Nuchelmans, to name the foremost authors only1). Nuchelmans’ book on theories of the proposition has especially been a great help.

2. When entering upon the matter of λέξεως as the last μέρος of tragedy (Poet. 1456 b 8 ff.) Aristotle mentions the σχήματα λέξεως, only to dismiss them as irrelevant. Then he refers to Protagoras’ stricture of Homer that in II. 1, 1 the poet had used a form of command instead of a prayer. Protagoras is mentioned elsewhere (D.L. 9, 53) as having divided λόγος into four kinds, prayer, question, answer and command2). These kinds of speech he called παθημένες

1) Prantl I 440 ff. and 550 f.; Steinthal I 317-8 and II 273 f.; Koller 18 ff.; Egli 36 f.; Nuchelmans s.v. kinds of speech.
2) ἔνδη, ἐρωτήσεις, ἀπόκρισις and ἐντολή. According to others (ibid.) Protagoras distinguished seven kinds. For this matter see K. von Fritz, RE s.v. Protagoras, 919, 19-32; Koller 19.