Xenophon's *Hellenica* in Procopius' *Wars*: Pharnabazus and Belisarius

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however trained to servitude, the genius of Belisarius
must have secretly rebelled.

THIS INVESTIGATION is an attempt to substantiate a flash of recognition between a passage in Xenophon's *Hellenica* and a corresponding passage in Procopius of Caesarea's *Wars*—a place where one ought not to expect it. Although Procopius has long been acknowledged to have been a reader and imitator of Thucydides and Herodotus, among other canonical authors, so far as the works of Xenophon are concerned he has been believed until recently to have used only the *Cyropaedia*.[1] It comes as a bolt from the blue, therefore, to be reading the *Hellenica* and to be reminded of the *Wars*. Yet recovery of the intertextual dimension of Procopius' work in this instance is vital because it enables that historian to speak, in a work intended for public consumption at a time when the principals were still alive and therefore in a manner that is necessarily oblique, to the allegiances and motivations of a prominent person at a moment of high political intrigue.

[1] G. Greatrex, "Stephanus, the Father of Procopius of Caesarea?" *Medieval Prosopography* 17 (1996) 125–145, at 132 n.12; on Procopius' references to Xenophon in the *Buildings*, K. Gantar, "Prokops 'Schaustellung der Tapferkeit'," *Živa Antika* 11 (1962) 283–286. More recently, A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea* (Philadelphia 2004), cites evidence of allusions to the *Symposium* and *Anabasis* (246 n.57, 247 n.74; see also 251 nn.17–20, 260 n.64, 263 n.130, 265 n.59). On the reception of Xenophon's *Hellenica* in antiquity, see C. Tuplin, *The Failings of Empire* (Stuttgart 1993) 20–29; K. Münscher, *Xenophon in der griechisch-römischen Literatur* (Leipzig 1920), esp. 190–191 on Procopius. On Procopian allusions more generally, see Kaldellis 24–38, with references.

Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 46 (2006) 175–206

Edward Gibbon, whose remark opens this essay and identifies the person at issue,[2] sensed an undercurrent of tension and ambiguity at the moment in question, in 534, when Belisarius as the conqueror of North Africa led the captive king of the Vandals, Gelimer, to Constantinople in putative triumph. For the details of these proceedings Gibbon relied, as we shall also rely, upon Procopius' account, yet in crediting Belisarius on this occasion with an air of surreptitious—or suppressed—defiance, Gibbon also seems to insist that there is more to the story than Procopius was able to tell, at least forthrightly.[3] While it is not the objective of this essay to vindicate either Gibbon's hunch or Belisarius' genius, it will suggest that Procopius' account, by inviting comparisons between Gelimer and Belisarius on the one hand and the strikingly apposite figure of the Persian satrap Pharnabazus in Xenophon's *Hellenica* on the other, does indeed tell more than initially meets the eye, offering a nuanced assessment of the alternatives available to Belisarius in the aftermath of the Vandal conquest and critical insight into his character and aspirations at a consequential juncture in his career and in the fortunes of the regime he served.

I

In late 395 or early 394 B.C. King Agesilaus of Sparta attempted to separate Pharnabazus, the satrap of Phrygia, from King Artaxerxes II of Persia.[4] Xenophon recounts a conference

[2] Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ch. xli (p.1319 ed. Bury [New York 1946]).

[3] Compare Averil Cameron, "Gibbon and Justinian," in R. McKitterick and R. Quinault (eds.), *Edward Gibbon and Empire* (Cambridge 1997) 34–52, esp. 39–40, 43–44: "Gibbon has chosen to defend Belisarius against himself, and inserts his own surmises as to Belisarius' state of mind in a clear attempt to show the latter's heroic nature at points where it seems to be endangered by Procopius' narrative" (44). See also D. Womersley, *The Transformation of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 1988) 235.

[4] The historical background is usefully summarized in P. Cartledge, *Agesilaus and the Crisis of Sparta* (Baltimore 1987) 180–218; compare P. Briant, *Histoire de l'Empire perse* (Paris 1996) 656–664. On Agesilaus' objectives, see the exchange between R. J. Seager, "Agesilaus in Asia: Propaganda and

between the two in which Agesilaus, as quoted in direct speech, contrasts Pharnabazus' present position as a "slave" and a subject of the Persian King with the freedom he would enjoy as a Spartan ally; the mastery that the King exercises over his subjects—Pharnabazus' own "fellow-slaves," as Agesilaus puts it—is the mastery that Pharnabazus might claim for himself by making war upon and subjugating them.[5] Not only would such a bid for sovereignal freedom be cost-free, but Agesilaus also dangles the prospect of material self-aggrandizement at the King's expense (*Hell.* 4.1.35–36):[6]

> καὶ εἰ μὲν ἀλλάξασθαί σε ἔδει ἀντὶ δεσπότου βασιλέως ἡμᾶς δεσπότας, οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγέ σοι συνεβούλευον· νῦν δὲ ἔξεστί σοι μεθ' ἡμῶν γενομένῳ μηδένα προσκυνοῦντα μηδὲ δεσπότην ἔχοντα ζῆν καρπούμενον τὰ σαυτοῦ. καίτοι ἐλεύθερον εἶναι ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι ἀντάξιον εἶναι τῶν πάντων χρημάτων. οὐδὲ μέντοι τοῦτό σε κελεύομεν, πένητα μέν, ἐλεύθερον δ' εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν συμμάχοις χρώμενον αὔξειν μὴ τὴν βασιλέως ἀλλὰ τὴν σαυτοῦ ἀρχήν, τοὺς νῦν ὁμοδούλους σοι καταστρεφόμενον, ὥστε σοὺς ὑπηκόους εἶναι. καίτοι εἰ ἅμα ἐλεύθερός τ' εἴης καὶ πλούσιος γένοιο, τίνος ἂν δέοις μὴ οὐχὶ πάμπαν εὐδαίμων εἶναι;

Objectives," *LCM* 2 (1977) 183–184, and D. H. Kelly, "Agesilaus' Strategy in Asia Minor, 396–395 B.C.," *LCM* 3 (1978) 97–98.

[5] K. Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* (Chicago 2004) 188, cites this passage in connection with the concept of "absolute" or "sovereignal" freedom as it developed in classical Athens: "one of the formative experiences underlying [this development] probably was the intellectual confrontation with the phenomenon of the Persian king's unrestricted power."

[6] P. Krentz, *Xenophon, Hellenica II.3.11–IV.2.8* (Warminster 1995) 207, finds Agesilaus' appeal "hollow," not least because the Spartan focuses upon freedom and wealth to the exclusion of honor, whereas Pharnabazus shows himself to be "a man of honor" (see also section III below). According to D. R. Shipley, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Life of Agesilaos* (Oxford 1997) 181, "Xenophon presents a simplistic pragmatism—the offer of autonomous acquisition of personal wealth and power in exchange for an option to serve the interests of Sparta." H. Nemoto, "The Conference of Agesilaos and Pharnabazos in Xenophon's *Hellenica*," *Classical Studies* 17 (2001) 71–84 (in Japanese; Eng. abstract at 113–114, upon which I am relying), argues that the episode is intended by Xenophon to showcase an encounter between Greek and Persian values.

> And if it were an exchange that you had to make, from the King (βασιλεύς) as master (δεσπότης) to us as masters, I for my part should not advise you to make the exchange; but in fact it is within your power by joining with us to live in the enjoyment of your possessions without performing *proskynesis* to anyone or having any master. And being free (ἐλεύθερος) is worth, in my opinion, as much as all manner of possessions. Yet it is not this that we urge upon you, to be free and poor, but rather by employing us as allies to increase, not the empire of the King, but your own, subduing those who are now your fellow-slaves (ὁμόδουλοι) so that they shall be your subjects. And if, being free, you should at the same time become rich, what would you lack of being altogether happy?

The corresponding passage in Procopius also focuses upon the consequences of a change of allegiance. Procopius' narrative of Justinian's war against the Vandals in Africa relates how the defeated Gelimer took refuge with the Mauri on Mt. Papua during the winter of 533/4. There he was besieged by troops under the command of a Herul named Pharas. Incapable of storming the place, Pharas reportedly addresses a letter to Gelimer appealing for his capitulation. Gelimer's present position of dependence upon the Mauri who are protecting him is compared unfavorably to the benefits he would receive upon submitting to Justinian—enrollment in the Senate and the title of Patrician, an estate and abundant wealth (*Wars* 4.6.17–22):[7]

> τί ποτε ἄρα πεπονθώς, ὦ φίλε Γελίμερ, οὐ σαυτὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ξύμπαν τὸ σὸν γένος ἐς τὸ βάραθρον τοῦτο ἐμβέβληκας, ὅπως δηλαδὴ μὴ γένοιο δοῦλος; πάντως γάρ σε καὶ νεανιεύεσθαι τοῦτο οἶμαι, καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν προΐσχεσθαι, ὡς δὴ ἅπαντα ταύτης τὰ μοχθηρὰ ἀνταλλάσσεσθαι ἄξιον. εἶτα νῦν Μαυρουσίων τοῖς γε ἀτυχεστάτοις οὐκ οἴει δουλεύειν, ὃς τὴν ἐλπίδα τοῦ σώζεσθαι, ἢν τὰ κράτιστα φέρῃ, ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἔχεις; καίτοι πῶς ἂν οὐχὶ τῷ παντὶ ἄμεινον εἴη δουλεύειν ἐν Ῥωμαίοις πτωχεύοντα ἢ τυραννεῖν ἐν Παπούᾳ τε καὶ Μαυρουσίοις; πάντως δέ σοι καὶ τὸ ξυνδούλῳ Βελισαρίῳ εἶναι ὑπερβολή τις ὕβρεως φαίνεται. ἄπαγε, ὦ βέλτιστε

[7] Text: J. Haury and G. Wirth, *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia* (Leipzig 1962–64); translations are based upon H. B. Dewing, *Procopius* (Loeb), with modifications.

> Γελίμερ. ἢ οὐ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐξ εὐπατριδῶν γεγονότες βασιλεῖ νῦν ὑπηρετεῖν αὐχοῦμεν;
>
> What in the world has happened to you, my dear Gelimer, that you have cast, not yourself alone, but your whole family besides, into this pit? Is it, forsooth, that you may avoid becoming a slave (δοῦλος)? But this is assuredly nothing but youthful folly, and making of 'liberty' (ἐλευθερία) a mere shibboleth, as though it were worth possessing in exchange for all this misery! And, after all, do you not consider that you are, even now, a slave of the most wretched of the Mauri, since your only hope of being saved, if the best happens, is in them? And yet why would it not be better in every way to be a slave among the Romans and beggared, than to rule (τυραννεῖν) over the Mauri on Mount Papua? But of course it seems to you the very height of disgrace even to be a fellow-slave (ξύνδουλος) with Belisarius! Away with the thought, most excellent Gelimer. Do not we, who also are born of noble families, boast that we are now in the service of an emperor (βασιλεύς)?

What is perhaps most striking in the two passages is the triangular relationship they construct among the addressee, his current or prospective master, and the "fellow-slaves" whose relationship to the addressee is implicated in the defection of the addressee. These relationships are schematized in *fig.* 1. In both accounts it is this latter relationship that contextualizes the issues at stake for the addressee: it is alleged that the transformation of that relationship, should the addressee carry out the proposed change of allegiance, represents the best-case scenario that the addressee might hope to achieve and therefore the strongest case for effecting such a change.

One should also note the broad similarity of context. In both instances, a representative of an invading military force offers, in direct discourse and in a candid and familiar tone, to abet a change of allegiance on the part of his addressee. The addressee is invited to contemplate whether he would prefer to submit to a master or to exercise mastery in his own right. The invader alleges that the proposed change of allegiance would be advantageous for the addressee even if he became impoverished as a consequence of making such an exchange. A fortiori, the prospect of becoming rich as a consequence of

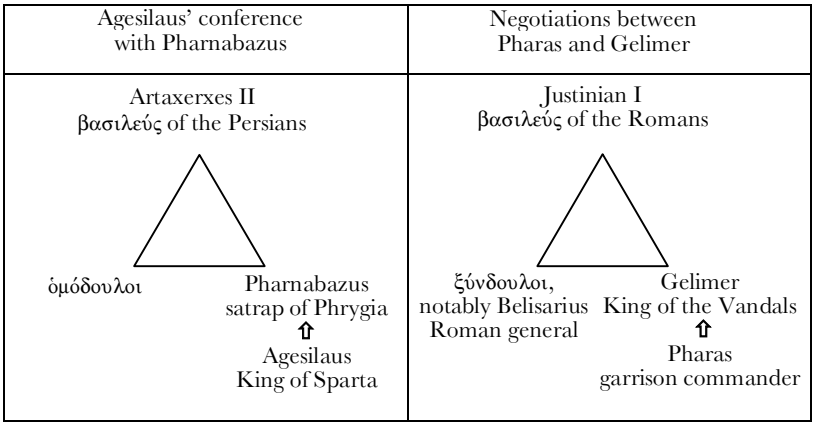

Figure 1

effecting such a change of allegiance is an especially compelling one. To submit to a master (δεσπότης) is to be a slave (δοῦλος); to exercise mastery (ἐλευθερία in the sense employed by both Agesilaus and Pharas) is to make others one's subjects and to reduce them to an indistinguishable state of submission.

These points describe a matrix of observations and judgments that establishes a plausible basis for substantiating a special relationship between these two texts. At the same time, it must be candidly acknowledged that it is difficult to detect any sense in which Procopius is "quoting" Xenophon directly; indeed, he does not even use the same word to describe the condition of being a "fellow-slave."[8] We should also bear in mind that several versions of Agesilaus' encounter with Pharnabazus are known, some or all of which might have been available to Procopius; I will argue below that the *Hellenica* version is to be preferred. If there is an intertextual correspon-

[8] The terms ὁμόδουλος and σύνδουλος are synonyms in Hesychius (Ο 747, Σ 2454); Pollux *Onom.* 3.82 observes that some understand ὁμόδουλος to signify ὁ τῆς αὐτῆς τύχης, σύνδουλος to signify ὁ τοῦ αὐτοῦ δεσπότου ("companion in slavery/slave of the same master," cf. LSJ s.v. σύνδουλος). If Procopius was alive to this distinction, he might have preferred the latter expression to the former precisely because it would underscore Pharas' claim that Gelimer, upon his capitulation, would join Belisarius in subjection to Justinian as δεσπότης.

dence or an allusion in any sense of the term to be discovered here,[9] it is an especially deeply-embedded and elusive one, whose obscurity raises the question why Procopius might have ventured to make it at all.

In brief, my claim is that Procopius is constructing an elaborate historical analogy, one that initially appears to involve Pharnabazus and Gelimer, but comes to focus instead upon the analogous positions of Pharnabazus and Belisarius vis à vis their respective monarchs. I have shown elsewhere the considerable skill with which Procopius was capable of constructing such analogies through carefully-focused classical allusions and mobilizing them for the purposes of characterization and analysis.[10] Where Belisarius' relationship with Justinian was concerned, the political sensitivity of the topic was such that it might only be handled through such an allusion—and a veiled one at that. At this point it may be helpful to sketch out these conclusions more fully.

In the first place, it is apparent that Pharas' deflation of Gelimer's pretensions to sovereignal freedom amid the Mauri on Mt. Papua can only be a meaningful *inversion* of Agesilaus' appeal to Pharnabazus, the effect of which is to demonstrate the *incommensurability* between Gelimer's position and that of Pharnabazus. In the second place, Pharas' claim that Gelimer's submission to Justinian would make Gelimer a "fellow-slave" with Belisarius, positing an equivalence between Gelimer and his conqueror, invites Procopius' reader to compare not only

[9] It should already be clear that by invoking allusion and the intertextual dimension of Procopius' text, I am constructing a correspondence between the *Wars* and the *Hellenica* that is more direct and marked than what Don Fowler has called "a matrix of possibilities constituted by earlier texts … without [which] the text would be literally unreadable": "On the Shoulders of Giants: Intertextuality and Classical Studies," *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin* (Oxford 2000) 115–137, at 117, see also 127–128. See further section II below.

[10] C. Pazdernik, "Procopius and Thucydides on the Labors of War: Belisarius and Brasidas in the Field," *TAPA* 130 (2000) 149–187, substantiating, with support from the scholia on Thucydides, a detailed parallel between Procopius' characterization of Belisarius during the African and initial Italian campaigns and Thucydides' portrait of Brasidas.

Gelimer's position vis à vis Justinian with Pharnabazus' position vis à vis Artaxerxes, but also *Belisarius'* position vis à vis Justinian with Pharnabazus' position vis à vis Artaxerxes. As we shall see, subsequent events in Constantinople lend special force to this comparison. Finally, it is the *commensurability* between Pharnabazus' and Belisarius' positions that is especially striking, when we consider the fact that, as Procopius informs us, Belisarius was suspected of plotting to establish a principality of his own in Africa at the expense of Justinian—an alternative that, as we have seen, parallels the outcome envisaged for Pharnabazus by Agesilaus in Xenophon's *Hellenica*.

In contrast, then, to the lack of viable alternatives available to Gelimer, Procopius' allusion to Xenophon invites his reader to evaluate Belisarius' choices in light of choices made by the Pharnabazus of the *Hellenica*. At the same time, Pharas' contention that Gelimer can expect to share a status indistinguishable from Belisarius' presents the consequences of submitting to Justinian in the starkest terms imaginable.

II

Before proceeding with this argument it will be useful to address a number of potential objections and complications. These may be organized under several heads. The first pertains to the form and content of Pharas' letter as a whole, its historicity, and its relationship to larger themes and structures in Procopius' *Wars*. The second embraces the broader universe of topically similar episodes in ancient historiography that are described below as "defection narratives," including the multiple versions of the Agesilaus-Pharnabazus conference that have already been mentioned. The third involves the metaphors of freedom and slavery, of domination and submission, that are conspicuous features of both of the texts under examination here but that might be expected to function very differently in their respective historical contexts. The fourth will attempt to draw these threads together in order to consider how the recovery of the intertextual dimension of Procopius' work is crucial not only for appreciating his literary artistry and virtuosity but also for informing his readers' responses to his work and orienting it within a larger conceptual framework that makes it meaningful.

1. *Pharas' letter*

The letter is articulated in three parts, the second of which is the passage we have been focusing upon: (i) after addressing Gelimer as a fellow barbarian and deprecating his own literary and rhetorical skills, the Herul commander adduces this own experiences as a human being in offering advice about Gelimer's best interests (*Wars* 4.6.15–16); (ii) Gelimer is urged to prefer submission to Justinian instead of a specious sovereignty on Mt. Papua (17–22); (iii) just as Gelimer has had to bear his present misfortune—Procopius tells us that conditions had reached such a point that Gelimer and his retinue "considered death sweet and slavery (τὸ δουλεύειν) nothing shameful" (14)—it would be perverse not to welcome the good things that fortune (τύχη) is now offering him (23–26).

Although it contains touches of characterization which lend verisimilitude to Pharas' authorship of the letter—in addition to acknowledging that he and Gelimer are fellow *barbaroi*, Pharas also observes that like Gelimer he is nobly born[11]—commentators agree that Pharas' letter is largely or wholly Procopius' invention.[12] Its rhetorical polish and sophistical argumentation belie its ostensible author's claim to be virtually illiterate,[13] and the practice of working up speeches and letters with scant regard for their historicity was an accepted feature of ancient historiography.[14] Procopius himself conspicuously

[11] βάρβαροι: quoted n.13 below; nobly born: 22, ἡμεῖς ἐξ εὐπατριδῶν γεγονότες.

[12] Kaldellis, *Procopius* 187; A. Knaepen, "L'image du roi vandale Gélimer chez Procope de Césarée," *Byzantion* 71 (2001) 383–403, at 401 n.70, following B. Rubin, *Prokopios von Kaisareia* (Stuttgart 1954 = *RE* 23 [1957]) 144 [= 418], and L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Wandalen*[2] (Leipzig 1942) 141 n.2. Compare C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris 1955) 247 n.3.

[13] εἰμὶ μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς βάρβαρος καὶ γραμμάτων τε καὶ λόγων οὔτε ἐθὰς οὔτε ἄλλως ἔμπειρος γέγονα (4.6.15). On the trope of barbarian ignorance, see A. M. Taragna, *Logoi historias: Discorsi e lettere nella prima storiografia retorica bizantina* (Alessandria 2000) 87–88.

[14] See now Taragna, *Logoi*; J. D. Frendo, "Three Authors in Search of a Reader: An Approach to the Analysis of Direct Discourse in Procopius, Agathias, and Theophylact Simocatta," in Claudia Sode and Sarolta Takács (eds.), *Novum Millenium* (Aldershot 2001) 123–135. Compare Rubin, *Prokopios* 83.36ff. [= 357].

partakes of such practices in his narrative of Justinian's Gothic war by reproducing a letter addressed by Belisarius to Justinian during the first siege of Rome that is modeled upon Nicias' famous letter to the Athenians during the Sicilian expedition.[15]

At the same time, there is as yet no consensus as to the content and the subtext of Pharas' letter, as two recent discussions indicate. Both agree that the elocutionary intent of the letter is to persuade Gelimer to submit to Justinian, but they evaluate the consequences of such a submission and the nature of the polity into which Gelimer would be received in starkly divergent terms.

The first of these discussions claims that Pharas' letter validates Justinian's policy of imperial aggrandizement and that Procopius himself subscribes to this judgment:

> Ce discours, habilement mené, permet à nouveau à Procope de justifier l'action impériale. En effet, la clémence de Justinien y est présentée comme légitime, puisque Gélimer est un homme qui supporte noblement les coups du sort—c'est un Barbare de noble naissance qui (comme Pharas) pourrait être un excellent serviteur de l'Empire—, et inéluctable, car voulue par la Fortune.[16]

The second argues that Gelimer's prospective abasement before Justinian is emblematic of the degenerate condition of all

[15] *Wars* 5.24.1–17, Thuc. 7.11–15. Belisarius, however, dwells on the prospects of victory rather than defeat, reversing Nicias' self-pitying assessment: K. Adshead, "Procopius' Poliorcetica: Continuities and Discontinuities," in G. Clarke (ed.), *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Rushcutters Bay 1990) 93–119, at 98–99. The possibility that a letter along such lines, drafted by Procopius as Belisarius' aide-de-camp, might have actually been sent cannot be discounted.

[16] Knaepen, *Byzantion* 71 (2001) 402 [citations omitted]. Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley 1985) 175, without discussing Pharas' letter, finds that the entire episode demonstrates Procopius' conviction "that there was something miraculous about the defeat of Gelimer"; cf. her "Gelimer's Laughter: The Case of Byzantine Africa," in F. M. Clover and R. S. Humphreys (eds.), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity* (Madison 1989) 171–190, at 174: "Procopius … portrays the intervention [in Africa] in crudely black and white terms: the Byzantines have God and the right on their side."

Justinian's subjects. Pharas echoes and amplifies complaints made by other barbarians in the *Wars* to the effect that Justinian's rule is oppressive,[17] and expresses candidly the judgment that Procopius would venture in his own voice only subsequently in the *Secret History*: Justinian, himself "a barbarian in his speech and dress and manner of thinking," had reduced the Roman empire to a condition indistinguishable from the Persian despotism stigmatized by classical authors.[18] Gelimer's changes of fortune, far from providentially legitimizing Justinian's actions, illustrate instead "the bewildering fate of man" and "the supremacy of fortune in human affairs"—"the only 'meaning' that Procopius was willing to derive from the reconquest" of Africa.[19]

The proposition that Pharas' appeal to Gelimer is modeled upon Agesilaus' appeal to Pharnabazus would tend to favor the latter, stigmatizing reading rather than the former, validating one. Yet the parallels between the two episodes in Procopius and Xenophon should not be pressed too far: there is little in Agesilaus' speech that parallels Pharas' stress upon the role of fortune in the third portion of his letter. Evidently Procopius' objective is not to model the entire episode upon this exemplar —to do so would distort his entire narrative of Gelimer's flight and deprive him of the opportunity to invoke τύχη programmatically in this context[20]—but rather to draw pointed and unmistakable comparisons and contrasts between the consequences of such a change for Gelimer and for Pharnabazus, and ultimately for Belisarius, in their respective political contexts.

[17] See further part 3 of this section below.

[18] Kaldellis, *Procopius*, esp. 130–133. Quotation: *Secret History* 14.2, cited by Kaldellis 131; candor of Pharas, identified with Procopius: Kaldellis 132. Compare C. Pazdernik, *A Dangerous Liberty and a Servitude Free from Care: Political ELEUTHERIA and DOULEIA in Procopius of Caesarea and Thucydides of Athens* (diss. Princeton 1997), esp. 178–183.

[19] Kaldellis, *Procopius* 186–188 (quotations at 187).

[20] On τύχη and related concepts in Procopius, see now Kaldellis, *Procopius* 138–140, ch. 5 passim (165–221); also n.49 below.

2. *"Defection narratives": topos and allusion*

Ancient historiography presents innumerable instances in which the consequences of a prospective change of allegiance are contemplated and dramatized. Such episodes, regardless of their historicity, perform the important function of aiding analysis and crystallizing opposing viewpoints.[21] A case in point is the famous "debate" recounted by Priscus of Panium concerning the relative merits of life as a Roman citizen and a subject of Attila the Hun, which informs a subsequent episode in which an imperial deputation attempts to win over Onegesius, one of Attila's principal retainers.[22] Onegesius' reply to this overture casts the issues at stake in terms of a self-serving calculus, likewise employed by Xenophon and Procopius, involving ἐλευθερία and δουλεία on the one hand and (relative) wealth and poverty on the other (Blockley pp.274–275):

> ἢ οἴεσθαι ἔφη Ῥωμαίους τοσοῦτον ἐκλιπαρήσειν αὐτὸν ὥστε καταπροδοῦναι δεσπότην καὶ ἀνατροφῆς τῆς παρὰ Σκύθαις καὶ γαμετῶν καὶ παίδων κατολιγωρῆσαι, μὴ μείζονα δὲ ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν παρὰ Ἀττήλᾳ δουλείαν τοῦ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις πλούτου;
>
> "Or do the Romans think," he retorted, "that they will bring so much persuasion to bear on me that I shall betray my master (δεσπότης), turn my back upon my upbringing amongst the Scythians, my wives and my children and think that slavery (δουλεία) to Attila is not preferable to wealth amongst the Romans?"

Onegesius embraces δουλεία and rejects wealth; Pharas remonstrates with Gelimer for clinging irrationally to ἐλευθερία and poverty; Agesilaus plies Pharnabazus with promises of both ἐλευθερία and wealth: in each negotiation, the valuation of the terms varies, but the consequences of each prospective change of allegiance are evaluated, strikingly, with respect not only to relative material advantage or other narrow and quantifiable

[21] E.g. Tacitus *Ann.* 2.9–10, the confrontation between Arminius of the Cherusci and his brother Flavus (discussed below): if it is fictional, "it is *ben trovato* … vividly suggesting the spiritual gulf between the two sides" (F. R. D. Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus, Books 1–6* [Cambridge 1981] 214).

[22] Priscus fr.11.2, ed. and transl. R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* I (Liverpool 1983) 266–275.

measures of well-being but also to stark choices between competing social and political systems and their animating ideologies.[23]

What, therefore, are the grounds for positing a special and narrow relationship between the texts of the *Wars* and the *Hellenica*, when there are evidently topically similar episodes, such as the one just described from Priscus, that might likewise be adduced?

In his penetrating study of allusion and intertextuality in Latin poetry,[24] Stephen Hinds usefully interrogates the "philological fundamentalism" that attempts to define formal criteria according to which an allusion (that is, a point-to-point correspondence between two texts that an ideal/intended/implied or "full-knowing"[25] reader is equipped to recognize and interpret) might be isolated and distinguished from a topos (comprising a larger constellation of generically/thematically/stylistically/contextually/etc. related texts that collectively constitute a "tradition").[26] Whereas "nothing is more inimical to allusive specificity in the scheme of the philological fundamentalist" than the topos, Hinds proposes to situate both the allusion and

[23] B. Walker, *The Annals of Tacitus* (Manchester 1952) 225, identifies a conventional opposition between the desire for material gain and the desire for liberty in discussing what she describes as Noble Savage figures in Tacitus: "above all they have not been tainted by greed … This, for Tacitus, explains their love of freedom, as greed is at the heart of imperialism, and in Rome tyranny has been at once the fruit of man's rapacity and the cause of its increase. Because the spirit of greed has not yet appeared among them they are swift to defend their liberty against any of their own race who might threaten to destroy it."

[24] S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge 1998) 17–51, esp. 34–47.

[25] J. Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition* (New Haven 1998).

[26] Within this scheme, such intertextual resonances must be filtered out of the zone of "zero-interpretability" that consists of haphazard or accidental confluences among words and phrases and forms the background noise of literary activity (Hinds, *Allusion* 19); yet "the fact that language renders us always already acculturated guarantees that there is no such thing as a wholly non-negotiable confluence, no such thing as zero-interpretability" (34).

the topos within a spectrum that moves "away from philological security and toward the limits of interpretability," and to treat the topos or commonplace as a literary phenomenon that stimulates and mobilizes the search for allusive specificity rather than neutralizing and stymieing it.[27] This reconfiguration of topos and allusion offers a way of appreciating Procopius' engagement with both the totality of his tradition and the specificity of his individual models, rather than obliging us to prefer one to the other.

We must therefore consider both the collective tradition of what might be called "defection narratives," in which the episodes pertaining to Gelimer in Procopius, Pharnabazus in Xenophon, and Onegesius in Priscus (among others) seem to be participating, as well as the particular features of the two passages of Xenophon and Procopius under discussion that point to the former as a uniquely distinctive model for the latter.

As has been noted, several versions of Agesilaus' encounter with Pharnabazus are known, some or all of which would have been available to Procopius. In addition to Xenophon's *Hellenica*, the relevant portions of his *Agesilaus* (3.5) and that of Plutarch (12) are extant. We learn of a fourth version of the episode, no longer extant, attributed to Theopompus in a literary dialogue composed by Porphyry that is quoted by Eusebius.[28] Details are lacking, but the interlocutors' judgment

[27] Hinds, *Allusion* 27, 31, 34ff.

[28] κἀγώ, φησὶν ὁ Νικαγόρας, ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς ἐντυγχάνων αὐτοῦ (sc. Θεοπόμπου) τε καὶ τοῦ Ξενοφῶντος πολλὰ τοῦ Ξενοφῶντος αὐτὸν μετατιθέντα κατείληφα, καὶ τὸ δεινόν, ὅτι ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον. τὰ γοῦν περὶ τῆς Φαρναβάζου πρὸς Ἀγησίλαον συνόδου δι' Ἀπολλοφάνους τοῦ Κυζικηνοῦ καὶ τὰς ἀμφοῖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐνσπόνδους διαλέξεις, ἃς ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ Ξενοφῶν ἀνέγραψε πάνυ χαριέντως καὶ πρεπόντως ἀμφοῖν, εἰς τὴν ἐνδεκάτην τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν μεταθεὶς ὁ Θεόπομπος ἀργά τε καὶ ἀκίνητα πεποίηκε καὶ ἄπρακτα. λόγου γὰρ δύναμιν καὶ διὰ τὴν κλοπὴν ἐξεργασίαν ἐμβάλλειν καὶ ἐπιδείκνυσθαι σπουδάζων βραδὺς καὶ μέλλων καὶ ἀναβαλλομένῳ ἐοικὼς φαίνεται καὶ τὸ ἔμψυχον καὶ ἐνεργὸν τὸ Ξενοφῶντος διαφθείρων. "'I too', says Nicagoras, 'in reading his *Hellenica* and Xenophon's, have detected him in transferring many things from Xenophon; and the mischief is that he has changed them for the worse. For instance, the account of the conference of Pharnabazus with Agesilaus through the mediation of Apollophanes of Cyzicus, and their conversations

that the Theopompan treatment fails to improve upon the Xenophontine original counts against its prospects as an exemplar for Procopius.

Here then is an illustration of the differing ways in which authors may work up the same, relatively narrow set of data—and do so under circumstances in which earlier treatments of that material were available to be consulted and compared—and also an initial test of the proposition that Procopius is alluding distinctively and specifically, not to the Agesilaus-Pharnabazus conference in general, but to Xenophon's treatment of that encounter in the *Hellenica* in particular.[29]

For convenience we will refer to Xenophon's version in the *Hellenica* as X_H, in the *Agesilaus* as X_A, and to Plutarch's version as P. In X_A, Agesilaus' encounter with Pharnabazus is adduced as an illustration of the Spartan king's εὐσέβεια: the Persian could speak and deal forthrightly with Agesilaus because Agesilaus was, and was known to be, a trustworthy fellow and a respecter of oaths. There is no scope for discussion of the merits of one regime and way of life over another nor of the consequences of a change of allegiance, and consequently little that Procopius might have drawn upon.[30]

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with each other under a truce, which Xenophon in his fourth book recorded very gracefully and in a manner becoming to both, Theopompus has transferred into the eleventh book of his *Hellenica,* and deprived of all vigor, and movement, and effect. For while, in order to hide his theft, he strives to throw in and to display forcible and elaborate language, he appears slow, and hesitating, and procrastinating, and destroys the animation and vigor of Xenophon'" (Eus. *Praep.Evang.* 10.3.9–11, ed. Mras = *FGrHist* 115 F 21; transl. E. H. Gifford [Oxford 1903]).

[29] P. R. McKechnie and S. J. Kern, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Warminster 1988) 10 (see also 178), suggest that what Porphyry rejects as a derivative rewriting of Xenophon might in fact have been "an independent account which lacked the features Porphyry liked in Xenophon (the rather lively conversation which points up the characters of the actors)." If true, this conjecture would make it even less likely that Procopius used Theopompus as a source.

[30] Without pressing the point, there is psychological plausibility in the idea that Procopius as a participant in Belisarius' African campaign should have preferred the account of a participant in Agesilaus' Asiatic campaign

In both X_H and P the tone of Agesilaus' appeal to Pharnabazus is candid and familiar. Their parley proceeds from Pharnabazus' claim that he and the Spartans have been φίλοι and allies in the past, and concludes with Agesilaus expressing the hope that the two can become φίλοι in spite of Sparta's hostility to the Great King.[31] The conversation likewise turns upon the opposition between δουλεία and ἐλευθερία as metaphors for evaluating a prospective change of allegiance on the part of Pharnabazus. Yet in the two accounts the consequences of such a change for Pharnabazus strikingly diverge.

X_H and P agree that Pharnabazus' present position with respect to Artaxerxes is that of a δοῦλος, subject to a master. But P's Agesilaus refrains from equating Pharnabazus' prospective ἐλευθερία with mastery (12.6–7):

> ἡμεῖς, εἶπεν, ὦ Φαρνάβαζε, καὶ φίλοι πρότερον ὄντες βασιλέως ἐχρώμεθα τοῖς ἐκείνου πράγμασι φιλικῶς καὶ νῦν πολέμιοι γεγονότες πολεμικῶς. ἐν οὖν καὶ σὲ τῶν βασιλέως κτημάτων ὁρῶντες εἶναι βουλόμενον, εἰκότως διὰ σοῦ βλάπτομεν ἐκεῖνον. ἀφ' ἧς δ' ἂν ἡμέρας σεαυτὸν ἀξιώσῃς Ἑλλήνων φίλον καὶ σύμμαχον μᾶλλον ἢ δοῦλον λέγεσθαι βασιλέως, ταύτην νόμιζε τὴν φάλαγγα καὶ τὰ ὅπλα καὶ τὰς ναῦς καὶ πάντας ἡμᾶς τῶν σῶν κτημάτων φύλακας εἶναι καὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας, ἧς ἄνευ καλὸν ἀνθρώποις οὐδὲν οὐδὲ ζηλωτόν ἐστιν.

Formerly the Spartans were φίλοι of the King, while now they are πολέμιοι; their position obliges them to strike at the King through Pharnabazus. Yet "from the day when you shall deem yourself worthy to be called a friend and ally of the Greeks instead of a slave of the King, consider this army, these arms and ships, and all of us, to be guardians of your possessions and of

(G. L. Cawkwell, "Agesilaus and Sparta," *CQ* 26 [1976] 62–84, at 63) over subsequent efforts by armchair historians.

[31] Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.32, 34, echoed at 37–38; Plut. *Ages.* 12.4–5, 8–9. The theme of allegiance as a function of φιλία predominates in V. Gray's reading of X_H (*The Character of Xenophon's Hellenica* [Baltimore 1989] 52–58). Pharas also addresses Gelimer as φίλος (*Wars* 4.6.17) and draws attention to their similar backgrounds (15, 22). As Knaepen, *Byzantion* 71 (2001) 401 n.72, notes, "le ton du discours est amical." See also J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire* II (London 1923) 138 ("a friendly message"); Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* ch. xli (1316, "the humane and friendly epistle of Pharas").

your liberty, without which nothing in the world is honorable or even worthy to be desired."[32]

Here Agesilaus proposes to make his Spartans the guardians (φύλακες) of Pharnabazus' liberty and thus imputes to Pharnabazus a corresponding dependence upon the Spartans; in contrast, we have seen above how the Agesilaus of X_H proposes to abet Pharnabazus in establishing a principality of his own at Artaxerxes' expense. Whereas the Agesilaus of P proposes as φίλος καὶ συμμάχος to rescue Pharnabazus from subjection to a master, the Agesilaus of X_H proposes alliance as a means, by enabling Pharnabazus to subjugate his own "fellow-slaves," of making Pharnabazus a master in his own right.[33]

On this basis, X_H presents a clearer affinity with Procopius' treatment of Pharas' letter than P. By positing sovereignal freedom (ἐλευθερία in the sense of mastery over others) as the alternative to δουλεία for Pharnabazus and Gelimer, these two accounts envisage defection as representing, not a change of allegiance from one great power to another, but rather the possibility of establishing or maintaining oneself as an autonomous geopolitical actor in the face of hegemonic power. Nor is this distinction an inconsequential one: as we have seen,[34] X_H's Agesilaus explicitly draws such a distinction himself when he declares that he is not enjoining Pharnabazus to exchange the Spartans for Artaxerxes as masters and that Pharnabazus would be ill-advised to make such an exchange.

By the same token, Priscus' account of the abortive negotiations with Onegesius fails to demonstrate this same affinity with either X_H or Procopius' treatment of Pharas' letter because it confronts Onegesius with the alternative of choosing between

[32] Text R. Flacelière and E. Chambry (Paris 1973); transl. B. Perrin (Loeb).

[33] In X_H, Agesilaus offers Pharnabazus "the positive and material incentives of *gaining* autonomy, wealth, and power"; in P, Agesilaus "promises only to *defend* [Pharnabazus'] possessions and freedom in the future" (Shipley, *Agesilaos* 186 ad 12.7; original emphasis). "While Xenophon presents a simplistic pragmatism … Plutarch describes a politically realistic offer of protection" (181; cf. n.6 above). See also Briant, *Histoire* 662–663, who follows the account in X_H.

[34] *Hell.* 4.1.35, quoted 177 above.

the Huns and the Romans and not with the possibility of establishing himself as a master in his own right.

What such episodes have in common is the dilemma of either resisting or collaborating with a hegemonic order. Procopius' Gelimer, no less than those barbarian chieftains confronting the Roman imperial order in the pages of Tacitus, stigmatizes incorporation within that order as commensurate with servitude.[35] When Arminius of the Cherusci dismisses the military decorations earned by his brother Flavus in the service of Roman arms as *vilia servitii pretia* ("the cheap rewards of servitude," *Ann.* 2.9–10),[36] or when Caractacus of the Catuvellauni asks the emperor Claudius, *nam si vos omnibus imperitare vultis, sequitur ut omnes servitutem accipiant?* ("for if you would rule the world, does it follow that the world must welcome servitude?" 12.37), these figures participate in a discourse of resistance to hegemony that is premised upon the valorization of freedom as the aspirational norm of individuals and communities and a corresponding stigmatization of submission as connotative of servitude. This discourse originates, as Kurt Raaflaub has demonstrated, in the politically and ideologically transformative confrontation between the *poleis* of archaic Greece and Achaemenid Persia; Matthew Roller has examined the manner in which it shaped the character of the incipient Principate;[37] its role in the development of Western civic consciousness and in contemporary geopolitics scarcely requires elaboration.

3. *The master-slave metaphor in context*

For his part, Procopius witnessed a wide-ranging transvaluation of terms connoting dependence and submission that

[35] *Wars* 4.2.9–10, Gelimer's speech before the decisive battle at Tricamerum: οὐχ ὑπὲρ δόξης ἡμῖν, ἄνδρες Βανδίλοι, οὐδὲ ἀρχῆς στερήσεως μόνον ὁ ἀγών ἐστιν … ἀλλ' ὁρᾶτε δήπουθεν ὡς ἐς τοῦτο ἡμῖν περιέστηκε τύχης τὰ πράγματα ὥστε, ἢν μὴ τῶν πολεμίων κρατήσωμεν, τελευτῶντες μὲν κυρίους αὐτοὺς καταλείψομεν παίδων τῶνδε καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ χώρας καὶ πάντων χρημάτων, περιοῦσι δὲ ἡμῖν προσέσται τὸ δούλοις τε εἶναι καὶ ταῦτα ἐπιδεῖν ἅπαντα.

[36] See also n.21 above.

[37] Raaflaub, *Discovery*; M. B. Roller, *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton 2001) 213–287.

was the product not only of changes in the manner in which emperors displayed their power in late antiquity but also of the influence of distinctively Christian idioms for describing inclusion and authority in the community. His works testify to the extent of these changes. Disgruntled barbarians may complain in the *Wars* of their threatened enslavement by Justinian: a case in point is the bitter charge offered by envoys of the Armenians to the Sasanid king that Justinian has enslaved a neighboring people, the Tzani, who were formerly independent (καὶ Τζάνους τοὺς ὁμόρους ἡμῖν αὐτονόμους ὄντας δεδούλωται).[38] Yet Procopius can speak approvingly in the *Buildings* of the miraculous cure of an infection in the emperor's knee effected by the relics of certain martyrs "enslaved to God" (δεδουλωμένοις θεῷ, 1.7.14),[39] the healing power of which was one expression of the mediating role played by such "enslaved" holy men in interceding with God on behalf of humanity; in the same work he describes the capitulation of the Tzani[40] as an embrace of civilization and Christianity, "accepting for themselves a servitude free from care in exchange for a dangerous liberty" (πρὸ τῆς ἐπικινδύνου ἐλευθερίας τὴν ἄπονον δουλείαν ἑλόμενοι σφίσι, 3.6.6). Depending upon the context, therefore, δουλεία could be invoked metaphorically either to validate submission to legitimate authority[41] or to stigmatize the tyrannical oppression of the weaker by the stronger.

[38] *Wars* 2.3.39. The Armenians likewise identify themselves as "slaves and fugitives" (δοῦλοί τε καὶ δραπέται, 2.3.33), after Justinian's attempt to govern them through a provincial governor rather than their native satraps.

[39] A much more stigmatizing tone, in contrast, attaches in the *Buildings* to the δουλεία endured by the Persians, mentioned by Procopius in a digression on the history of Armenia, who after the conquest of Persia by Alexander "remained quietly in subjection" (δεδουλωμένοι) while the Parthians rose up against the Macedonians (3.1.5).

[40] Their suppression in the 520s (described by Procopius at *Wars* 1.15.19–25) became a centerpiece of Justinianic propaganda: Pazdernik, *TAPA* 130 (2000) 155, with references.

[41] See also *Buildings* 1.2.11, Procopius' description of the equestrian statue of Justinian in the Augustaeum in Constantinople: καὶ φέρει μὲν χειρὶ τῇ λαιᾷ πόλον, παραδηλῶν ὁ πλάστης ὅτι γῆ τε αὐτῷ καὶ θάλασσα δεδούλωται πᾶσα ("and in his left hand he holds a globe, by which the sculptor signifies that the whole earth and sea are subject to him").

Understanding the import of Pharas' letter to Gelimer, and consequently the evaluation expressed there about the nature of Justinian's regime, accordingly hinges upon distinguishing between these ambiguous and contradictory senses attaching to the political and ideological connotations of the master-slave metaphor in the sixth century. Procopius' allusions to classical historiography suggest a means of resolving this impasse by inviting the reader of the *Wars* to evaluate invocations of the master-slave metaphor in light of values apparent in his source-texts, in which servility is invariably a condition to be deplored.

4. *The intertextual dimension of Procopius' work*

Taken together, these considerations suggest that Procopius' implied or intended reader is one who is equipped and disposed to find meaning in contemporary events by seeking out parallels and exemplars from the classical past; to evaluate Belisarius, in particular,[42] in the light of analogous or paradigmatic historical figures; and to mobilize topical familiarity as a stimulus in the search for allusive specificity, especially where artful set-pieces such as speeches and letters are concerned.

Such a reader, confronted by the evident artificiality of Pharas' letter and its tendentious invocation of the master-slave metaphor in the context of Belisarius' African triumph, might well embark upon such a search. For one who has eyes to see, there are features of Procopius' account that are redolent of the encounter between Agesilaus and Pharnabazus, notably Procopius' elaborate digression contrasting the stereotypically oriental habits of the Vandals with the austere—one is tempted to say, Spartan—lifestyle of the Mauri.[43] Yet in this instance the

[42] The *Wars* could be described simply as a book about Belisarius: see the references compiled by Cameron, *Procopius* 134 n.3.

[43] "For of all the nations which we know that of the Vandals is the most luxurious (ἀβρότατον), and that of the Mauri the most hardy (ταλαιπωρότατον)" (*Wars* 4.6.5). Vandals wear gold and "Medic" clothing, delight above all in the hunt, and dwell in παράδεισοι (6–9); Mauri sleep upon the ground and subsist on a diet of unmilled cereals (10–13). At the conference between Agesilaus and Pharnabazus, the latter finds the Spartans resting on the bare ground and sends away the expensive carpets upon which the Persians are accustomed to sit, for "he was ashamed to indulge in luxury (ἐντρυφῆσαι), seeing as he did the simplicity (φαυλότης) of Agesilaus" (*Hell.*

texts withhold philological security, resist efforts to construct a "paper trail" that would link them together indisputably, maintain a zone of "plausible deniability." These are catch-phrases drawn from the lexicon of modern political intrigue, but Procopius is writing against a backdrop of political intrigue, one in which expressing oneself too clearly might have unfortunate consequences.

III

It was suggested above that the most striking feature of the Agesilaus-Pharnabazus conference in the *Hellenica* and the Pharas-Gelimer correspondence in the *Wars*, and a likely reason why the former might have been attractive to Procopius as a model, is the triangular relationship they construct among the addressee, his current or prospective master, and the "fellow-slaves" whose relationship to the addressee is implicated in the defection of the addressee. By Agesilaus' lights, the best case for Pharnabazus is one in which Pharnabazus subjugates his fellow-slaves; by Pharas' lights, one in which Gelimer and Belisarius become fellow-slaves. It goes without saying that these are outcomes that also suit the interests of the invader, whose solicitude for the addressee is necessarily qualified by self-interest and whose advice, accordingly, should possibly be taken at less than face value.

It is clear, then, that because of the exigencies of the two situations the terms of the two appeals are inverted in crucial respects: whereas Pharnabazus is urged to abandon his allegiance to a βασιλεύς, Gelimer is urged to submit to a βασιλεύς.[44] In repudiating the Great King as master (δεσπότης), and thus abandoning the servitude that is the condition of all of the

4.1.30). Krentz, *Hellenica* ad loc., comments: "the contrast between Persian wealth and Spartan simplicity was familiar to a Greek audience." See also P. Briant, "History and Ideology: The Greeks and 'Persian Decadence'," transl. A. Nevill, in T. Harrison (ed.), *Greeks and Barbarians* (New York 2002) 193–210, esp. 202ff.

[44] Kaldellis, *Procopius* 131–132, citing M. Whitby, "The Persian King at War," in E. Dabrowa (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East* (Krakow 1994) 227–263, at 243, notes a comparable Procopian allusion to Herodotus that likewise turns upon an ironic inversion of usage.

King's subjects, Pharnabazus will make himself not only free (ἐλεύθερος), but, by subjugating his former fellow-slaves (ὁμοδοῦλοι), also a master in his own right. Pharas, in contrast, chides Gelimer for clinging to a delusionary state of freedom and mastery amid the Mauri on Mt. Papua: by absurdly aspiring to exercise sovereignal freedom (τυραννεῖν) over such wretches, he is denying the reality that his dependence holds him in thrall (δουλεύειν) to them; better to accept the condition of the slave among the Romans, thus assimilating himself to the status of a fellow-slave (ξύνδουλος) as notable as Belisarius himself.

Just as the terms describing the trajectory contemplated for Pharnabazus, from slavery to freedom and mastery, are thus almost precisely the negation of those describing that of Gelimer, so too it emerges that the situations of Pharnabazus and Gelimer are by no means commensurable: the *best* outcome that Gelimer can hope for lies in submitting to Justinian, whereupon his situation will be something comparable to the situation that Pharnabazus *presently* enjoys. The Persian presently is a fellow-slave; Gelimer should hope to become a fellow-slave. Whereas Agesilaus can confidently assert that freedom would be worth purchasing even at the cost of one's possessions, Pharas can merely claim that servitude and poverty among the Romans would be preferable to a specious rulership amid the horrifying conditions on Mt. Papua.[45] For the Spartan, to be free and poor is better than to be rich and enslaved; for the Herul, to be poor and enslaved within Justinian's realm is better than to be the petty dictator of an embattled enclave outside of it. Even were we to grant Pharas' premise, the paucity of options available to Gelimer raises the question whether the

[45] Rubin, *Prokopios* 144 [= 418], is reminded of Caesar's remark upon encountering a humble Iberian village on the way to taking up his propraetorship in Further Spain: ἐγὼ μὲν ⟨μᾶλλον ἂν⟩ ἐβουλόμην παρὰ τούτοις εἶναι πρῶτος ἢ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις δεύτερος ("I would rather be first among these people than second at Rome," Plut. *Caes.* 11.4 Ziegler; cf. *Reg. apoph.* 206B). Comparison of this passage and Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.35 with *Wars* 4.6.20 underscores how starkly, and perhaps deliberately provocatively, Pharas inverts conventional wisdom.

prospect of submission to Justinian—Gelimer's best-case scenario—is anything to be welcomed on its own merits.

Is Gelimer therefore merely being presented with the opportunity to choose the lesser of two evils, or is submission to Justinian depicted as an objectively desirable and/or legitimate outcome? The key to resolving this question—which is certainly one that Procopius needed to handle with considerable discretion and care—lies in the exemplary value of Belisarius as a prospective "fellow-slave" of Gelimer. Pharas cites the condition of Belisarius as an ironic rejoinder to the Vandal king's delusions of mastery: who is Gelimer to aspire to a condition better than that of Gelimer's conqueror?[46] To the extent that Belisarius' status is legitimate and desirable, it follows that Gelimer will succeed to a comparable standing. But this is not Pharas' claim. To reproach Gelimer for aspiring to a condition better than Belisarius' skirts the question whether Belisarius' condition is anything to be aspired to.

Similarly, Pharas points to his own situation: who is Gelimer to aspire to a condition better than that of other well-born barbarians who find themselves answering to Justinian? But is Pharas' condition anything to be aspired to? It is true that he declares how he and others like him "boast" (αὐχοῦμεν) that they serve Justinian. Pharas does not present himself, however, as one to whom circumstances have presented opportunities to make affirmative choices. He begins his letter on a note of self-deprecation: he is himself βάρβαρος and barely literate, "but whatever necessity (ἀνάγκη) compells me, being human, to know, having learned from the nature of events (ἐκ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων φύσεως), I am writing" (4.6.16). Pharas presents his analysis of the alternatives available to Gelimer within the framework of what the exigencies of the situation demand; pragmatism, not principle, informs his advice, and he conveys

[46] Belisarius is made to employ comparable logic after the defeat of the Vandals in a letter demanding the surrender of the fortress at Lilybaeum, which had been ceded to the Vandals by the Ostrogoths: "yet how could you seem not to act contrary to the ways of men, if not long ago you ceded the fortress to Gelimer, but now decide to wrest from the emperor, Gelimer's master (βασιλέα δὲ τὸν τοῦ Γελίμερος κύριον), the possessions of the slave (τὰ τοῦ δούλου κτήματα)?" (*Wars* 4.5.13).

the impression that he is himself a graduate of the school of hard knocks.

Close examination of Pharas' words, moreover, reveals that the Herul commander's "boast" is qualified and hedged in a manner that at a minimum ought to make the reader wary of accepting it at face value. The expression that announces Pharas' boast, αὐχοῦμεν, is surprisingly rare in Greek literature in the form (first person plural, present active indicative) in which it is employed here, and entirely absent from earlier Greek historiography; yet it is comparatively abundant in Procopius' *Wars*, which accounts for six out of twenty-three attestations in the entire TLG corpus,[47] the sixth of which is an excerpt from Procopius in a later compilation: *Wars* 4.2.17, 4.6.22 (our passage), 4.11.39, 5.29.12, 6.28.11 (= Constantine Porph. *De leg.* p.108 de Boor).

Can it be accidental that in each of these passages the boastful speaker is a barbarian? In the first instance the speaker is Gelimer himself, addressing his troops before the decisive battle of Tricamerum: "we boast (αὐχοῦμεν) that we surpass the enemy in manliness and far exceed them in number" (4.2.17).[48] The event would prove that boast an empty one. Pharas' use of the same expression, αὐχοῦμεν, in the aftermath of Tricamerum now becomes, at least for Gelimer and for the reader of the *Wars*, an ironic (and perhaps a derisive and sarcastic) echo of Gelimer's earlier brave talk. Consequently Pharas' own boast is problematized. If indeed Pharas is sincerely boasting of his allegiance to Justinian, has the reader been authorized to consider whether that boast, like Gelimer's, will prove to be an empty one? Alternatively, might there be a basis for concluding that Pharas' boast is insincere—that Pharas is in some sense

[47] These assertions have been reconfirmed most recently by a search of the web version of the TLG <www.tlg.uci.edu> on 7 June 2005. A search for *auchoumen-* returned twenty-three citations, the earliest being Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 6.15.123); an additional seven are prior to Procopius' floruit: Menander Rhetor *Peri epideiktikon* p.430 Spengel; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 33 *PG* 36.224 (μεγαλαυχοῦμεν); Eus. *V.Const.* 2.31.2; Greg. Nys. *V.Macr.* 21 (μεγαλαυχοῦμεν); Apollinaris *Fr. in Psalm.* 60; Lib. *Decl.* 21.1.29; Cyril Alex. *Comm. in Ioan.* I 703 Pusey (ἐπαυχοῦμεν).

[48] See also n.34 above.

purposefully participating in the derisiveness and sarcasm that both Gelimer and Procopius' reader, being mindful of Gelimer's earlier brave talk, are equipped to perceive?

Either of these conclusions would offer powerful support for a stigmatizing reading of Pharas' letter. Conversely, a third possibility seemingly required by a validating reading, that Pharas' boast is to be taken at face value as a sincere statement of allegiance to Justinian that is authorized or endorsed by Procopius himself, is destabilized by the repeated and marked fashion in which such boasts are undermined in the course of the events narrated in the *Wars*. Thus at 4.11.39 the commanders of the Mauri, before their defeat at the hands of Solomon, echo Gelimer at Tricamerum in boasting of their superior numbers; at 5.29.12 the ill-starred Gothic king Vittigis boasts of his forces' superiority in ἀρετή, in numbers, and in all other respects during the course of his unsuccessful siege of Belisarius at Rome; at 6.28.11 Frankish envoys boast (inconclusively, in the event) to the same Vittigis, now besieged by Belisarius at Ravenna, that their army of 500,000 fighting men will bury the imperial forces by storm.

So stereotyped is such "barbarian brave talk" in the *Wars* that, in a sense, Pharas need not have witnessed Gelimer's speech at Tricamarum in order to have responded to it so dismissively at Mt. Papua. Such talk is part of a rhetorical arsenal reserved exclusively for barbarian commanders, exclusively in Procopius' *Wars*.[49] Pharas' letter participates in this narrow rhetoric but also deforms and subverts it, making it a rhetoric of submission rather than of defiance, a puncturing of wishful thinking about autonomy and sovereignal freedom. Indeed, Pharas' letter as a whole may be characterized as a sardonic deflation of pretensions—surely of Gelimer's pretentions, and perhaps those of Justinian as well.

[49] Hence Rubin, *Prokopios*, finds the speech of the commanders of the Mauri (4.11.38–46) "strotzt von Topoi und Propaganda" (147 = 421) and of the Franks (6.28.9–15) "topisch auf prahlerisches Barbarentum abgestimmt" (189 = 463). Compare also 1.17.32, 6.28.17, and 7.34.16–18, in which speakers refer derisively to the insincerity or the self-delusion inherent in such boasts.

If to submit to Justinian is to submit to the dictates of necessity and "the nature of events," therefore, it need not follow that these dictates are benign or the imperatives of a benevolently-ordered universe.[50] Presented in this light, submission to Justinian has the character of resignation rather than affirmation, and indeed it is ultimately resignation, and not the persuasiveness of Pharas' appeal—Gelimer replies to Pharas, "I think it unbearable to be a slave (δουλεύειν) to an enemy who wrongs me" (4.6.27)—that causes the Vandal king to surrender himself to the imperial forces.[51]

What, then, of Belisarius' condition? Commentators have long recognized a linkage between Pharas' characterization of Belisarius as a "fellow-slave" of Gelimer and Procopius' account of the celebrations at Constantinople in 534 marking the victory over the Vandals.[52] Gelimer, having been dressed up in a garment of royal purple, was included with other war-

[50] Procopius will suggest subsequently in the *Secret History* that submission to Justinian and Theodora is a demonstration of the irrational and capricious nature of τύχη: their subjects tolerated the antics of the imperial couple, in particular Theodora's demand that she receive *proskynesis* and be addressed as δέσποινα, "because, I suppose, all of them had been made submissive by the thought that these matters were so ordained for them," ἀλλὰ πάντες, οἶμαι, τῷ ταῦτα οὕτω δεδόσθαι κεκλιμένοι (10.9); the *Buildings*, in constrast, characterizes submission to Justinian as a flight from a dangerous liberty to a servitude free from care (3.6.6, discussed 193 above), but such an ameliorating interpretation is not offered in the *Wars*.

[51] Alluding to Pharas' invocation of his own humanity, Gelimer also protests the implication that Justinian's will is irresistible: "and yet it is not unlikely, since though he is an emperor he is even so a man (καὶ αὐτῷ ἀνθρώπῳ γε ὄντι, καὶ βασιλεῖ), that something should befall him which he would not choose" (28). Only after holding out through the winter did Gelimer capitulate, laughing immoderately at the absurdity of human fortune. On antinomic responsion between such letter-pairs, see Taragna, *Logoi* 112–125, esp. 119.

[52] *Wars* 4.9. On the connection between this and Pharas' letter, Rubin, *Prokopios* 144 [= 418]; Pazdernik, *Dangerous Liberty* 179–183; Kaldellis, *Procopius* 132–133. On the celebrations themselves, M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians* (Göttingen 2003) 150–165; M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge 1986) 124–129; S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1981) 73–76.

captives, ἀνδράποδα, in the procession of spoils that wound its way through the city to the hippodrome (4.9.12):

> ἀφικόμενον δὲ αὐτὸν (sc. Γελίμερα) κατὰ τὸ βασιλέως βῆμα τὴν πορφυρίδα περιελόντες, πρηνῆ πεσόντα προσκυνεῖν Ἰουστινιανὸν βασιλέα κατηνάγκασαν. τοῦτο δὲ καὶ Βελισάριος ἐποίει ἅτε ἱκέτης βασιλέως σὺν αὐτῷ γεγονώς.
>
> And when Gelimer arrived at the imperial box, they stripped off the purple and compelled him to fall prone on the ground and perform *proskynesis* before the emperor Justinian. This also Belisarius did, as a fellow suppliant of the emperor with Gelimer.

The spectacle of submission Justinian presented in the hippodrome not only reaffirmed and reenacted Belisarius' subordination to himself, but also contrived to have Belisarius and Gelimer put on a par, their indistinguishable subjection confirmed in their joint acknowledgment of Justinian's preeminence. This image of victor and vanquished joined in the act of *proskynesis* cannot fail to resonate with Pharas' mocking deflation of Gelimer's pretensions to sovereignty on Mt. Papua. The proposition that submission to Justinian is constitutive of δουλεία is vindicated by imperial ceremonial. Pharas was not far wrong, it seems, in calling Belisarius a fellow-slave with Gelimer.

It remains to be determined whether the appreciable effect of these proceedings is to elevate Gelimer (the "validating reading") or to diminish Belisarius—and, by implication, all of Justinian's subjects (the "stigmatizing reading"). Are such gestures of submission to be embraced affirmatively, or performed grudgingly and under duress, as a lesser evil than outright defiance would entail? On the basis of Procopius' account, we may presume the latter of Gelimer: the Vandal, overborne by the weight of necessity (κατηνάγκασαν), endured the ceremony while reciting again and again the verse from Ecclesiastes (1:2) "vanity of vanities, all is vanity."[53]

[53] *Wars* 4.9.11. Kaldellis, *Procopius* 141, makes the attractive suggestion that Gelimer should be understood to be performing, on behalf of Justinian, the function traditionally allotted in the ancient Roman triumphs to the slave who accompanied the victorious general in order to remind him that

In contrast, Belisarius' attitudes are opaque. Procopius tells us that the general had seized the opportunity presented by Gelimer's capture to return to the capital in order to defend himself against accusations that he was plotting to establish a kingdom for himself in Africa—accusations no doubt bolstered by reports that the victorious general had seated himself on Gelimer's throne in Carthage and dined at his table.[54] In view of such suspicions, the general will undoubtedly have welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate unwavering loyalty in so public a fashion.

Gibbon, as we have seen, found it impossible nonetheless to believe that Belisarius' compliance was ungrudging: "however trained to servitude, the genius of Belisarius must have secretly rebelled."[55] Yet in opting to abide in subjection, Belisarius is perhaps to be condemned as weak-willed or even cowardly: unlike Gelimer, but not unlike Pharnabazus, Belisarius was presented with an opportunity to bid for sovereignal freedom; yet Belisarius elected to perform *proskynesis* and to acknowledge a master.

In his appeal to Pharnabazus, as has been noted above, Agesilaus rejects out of hand the suggestion that Pharnabazus should contemplate exchanging one master for another and describes the freedom that is within his grasp in the following

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he was mortal. Gelimer's earlier remarks about Justinian's mortal fallibility (above, n.51) would lend support to this idea.

[54] *Wars* 4.8.1–8; cf. 3.20.21, 3.21.1ff. Procopius declines to say whether Justinian gave credence to the accusations, but stresses that the emperor presented Belisarius with a choice whether to return with the captives or not (4.8.3–4).

[55] Others have sought an ameliorating interpretation: Lord Mahon (P. H. Stanhope), *The Life of Belisarius*[2] (London 1848) 134, following the twelfth-century chronicle of John Zonaras (*Epit.hist.* p.164 Büttner-Wobst), declares that in prostrating himself Belisarius was demonstrating to Gelimer that the gesture was the customary behavior of an imperial subject, not that of a war-captive. Some who have reimagined the scene focus upon Justinian's emotions and motives rather than those of Belisarius: the hero of R. Graves' *Count Belisarius* (New York 1938: 264) stolidly withstands Justinian's ingratitude, while that of L. M. Chassin's *Bélisaire* (Paris 1957: 83) is somewhat insulated from his monarch's vindictiveness on account of the adulation of the crowd.

terms: "to live in the enjoyment of your possessions without performing *proskynesis* to anyone or having any master" (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.35). We have also noticed how Agesilaus goes on to make the stronger claim that it is worth being free even if one lacks possessions. It follows that the free man, regardless of whether he has possessions, is one who does not have to perform *proskynesis* to a master, and that this condition is objectively and unconditionally to be preferred to the alternative. For Agesilaus (as for any Greek of the classical period) the demand for ritual submission is emblematic of the despotic regime that Pharnabazus is urged to abandon.

The Xenophontine intertext, with its stress upon the emblematic value of *proskynesis*, substantiates scholarly intuition about the thematic linkage between Pharas' letter and its sequel in the hippodrome at Constantinople: it is Justinian's demand for ritual submission, staged in a manner that demonstrates the equivalent positions of Gelimer and Belisarius, that corroborates Pharas' characterization of the two as fellow-slaves. At the same time, however, Agesilaus' remarks stigmatizing *proskynesis* problematize Belisarius' decision to persist in submission to Justinian. If *proskynesis* is fit only for those who are presented with no better alternative than to submit to a master[56]—exactly Gelimer's position on Mt. Papua, according to Pharas—then Belisarius' deliberate refusal to grasp after sovereignal freedom and mastery in his own right would seem to carry the taint of servility.[57]

[56] Procopius would go on to comment on the issue in his own voice in the *Secret History* (30.21–30), where he denounces innovations in court protocol that include the expectation that *proskynesis* in the form of complete prostration be offered to both the emperor and the empress, that the imperial couple be addressed exclusively as "master" and "mistress" (δεσπότης, δέσποινα), and that public officials be identified as "slaves" (δοῦλοι) rather than by their customary titles. Discussion by Kaldellis, *Procopius* 128–142; Pazdernik, *Dangerous Liberty* 229–235. See also n.50 above. Procopius' own testimony makes it clear that officials complied with this expectation, and the possibility should not be excluded that many did so ungrudgingly. Epigraphical and other evidence supports this conclusion, which I intend to explore in detail in a separate study.

[57] This judgment might gain support from the damning portrait of the general that Procopius would subsequently construct in the *Secret History*;

Such a conclusion is tempered, however, when one considers the course pursued by Pharnabazus himself in response to Agesilaus' appeal (Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.37):

> ἐγὼ τοίνυν, ἔφη, ἐὰν βασιλεὺς ἄλλον μὲν στρατηγὸν πέμπῃ, ἐμὲ δὲ ὑπήκοον ἐκείνου τάττῃ, βουλήσομαι ὑμῖν καὶ φίλος καὶ σύμμαχος εἶναι· ἐὰν μέντοι μοι τὴν ἀρχὴν προστάττῃ (τοιοῦτόν τι, ὡς ἔοικε, φιλοτιμία ἐστίν), εὖ χρὴ εἰδέναι ὅτι πολεμήσω ὑμῖν ὡς ἂν δύνωμαι ἄριστα.
>
> "Well then," said he, "if the King sends another as general and makes me his subordinate (ὑπήκοος), I shall choose to be your friend and ally; but if he assigns the command to me,—so strong, it seems, is the power of ambition (φιλοτιμία)—you may be well assured that I shall war upon you to the best of my ability."

Agesilaus accepts this response in a cordial spirit and pledges to direct his forces elsewhere. In the terms initially presented by the Spartan, the Persian embraces slavery rather than freedom; in the terms of his own reply, however, Pharnabazus prefers to await future events, and to that extent elects for the moment not to choose among the alternatives presented to him. His present situation is not so intolerable that he lacks prospects for satisfying his own φιλοτιμία, but at the same time he is also clear that he would not endure the degeneration of status that subordination to another commander would entail.[58]

Agesilaus insists that all of Artaxerxes' subjects persist in an indistinguishable state of servility as fellow-slaves, and Pharas echoes this judgment with respect to Justinian. Yet for his part Pharnabazus proves capable of drawing finer distinctions of status and of identifying a space within which his own aspirations for honor might be satisfied. Procopius' allusion to Xenophon opens up a comparably nuanced understanding of the corresponding choices made by Belisarius, in which Vivienne Gray's assessment of Pharnabazus should be taken into ac-

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summarized by Kaldellis, *Procopius* 142–146, who concludes: "the humiliation of Belisarius exemplifies the failure of manhood and rise of servility that Procopius associated with Justinian's regime" (146).

[58] His loyalty would earn him marriage to a daughter of Artaxerxes in 388 (*Hell.* 5.1.28).

count: "a man so moved by the desire for honor could not properly be called a slave of the king when he so clearly was his own man and had the freedom of choice his reply indicated."[59]

Such a plausible and rehabilitating reconstruction of Belisarius' motives might very well account for Procopius' interest not only in constructing an intertextual correspondence between his text and that of the *Hellenica* but also in concealing and obscuring that correspondence. For it is clear that the political climate of the time would not permit a frank discussion of the alternatives available to Belisarius after the Vandal conquest. Procopius' necessarily veiled allusion to the *Hellenica* would seem to instruct his reader to deplore the despotic tendencies of the Justinianic regime, but also to take a pragmatic approach in engaging that regime. For Belisarius, who would go on to lead another captive king to Constantinople after the capitulation of the Goths at Ravenna in 540,[60] such pragmatism must have seemed, at least at certain moments of his storied career, amply justified by the course of events.

In rebuffing Agesilaus, Pharnabazus suggests that the way to survive and possibly even to prosper under despotism is to combine a canny opportunism with a studied ambivalence, to avoid either submitting or defying when it is possible to do so, or to confuse and confound submission and defiance.[61] Even

[59] Gray, *Character* 56. Pharnabazus prefaces his response to Agesilaus by seeking leave to speak plainly (ἁπλῶς, 4.1.37), a gesture borrowed from Herodotus, as Gray (54) makes clear. She points to two additional instances in the *Hellenica* (6.1.4–16, 7.4.6–10) in which rejecting an invitation to abandon an existing alliance "without good cause" merits admiration and praise from the spurned party (54–55, followed by Krentz, *Hellenica* 207).

[60] Intrigue similarly attended upon Belisarius' capture of Ravenna from the Goths, who were reported to have tendered the offer of the throne to him: H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley 1988) 349–350 and n.670. There is reason to believe that two differing offers were made, the first for the emperorship and a subsequent appeal to become "the king of the Goths and Italians" (*Wars* 6.29.18–20; also 6.29.26–28, 6.30.25–26).

[61] Compare *Secret History* 11.25, with reference to Samaritans who converted to Christianity in the face of Justinianic persecution, "thinking it foolish to suffer for the sake of a stupid doctrine" (παρὰ φαῦλον ἡγησάμενοι κακοπάθειάν τινα ὑπὲρ ἀνοήτου φέρεσθαι δόγματος); see also *Wars* 5.3.5–9. In this connection see F. Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and

Gelimer, forced to choose the lesser of two evils, succeeded in imparting a subversive subtext to his own spectacle of submission, for in alluding to Ecclesiastes he succeeds in puncturing his own delusions of mastery and those of the master whom necessity has obliged him to acknowledge.[62]

Procopius' *Wars* likewise masks the line distinguishing submission from defiance, offering readers who are ideologically predisposed to validate the Justinianic regime (or to attribute such a predisposition to the author of the work) opportunities to affirm their views, yet undercutting such readings with a subversive, stigmatizing undertone sustained by carefully-focused inter- and intratextual allusions. Appreciating such a work entails not only recovering its defiant subtext, but also integrating it within an evolving political and social context in which new constructions of identity, authority, and legitimacy were supplanting those rooted in the classical past.[63]

February, 2006

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Rome," *AJP* 105 (1984) 174–208, at 201–203, discussing Philostratus *VS* 560–561: for Philostratus, to speak your mind to power and chance the consequences "is simple foolishness. It throws away life without any real gain or, worse still, gives the tyrant an immediate chance to prove you wrong simply by sparing you" (203).

[62] Kaldellis, *Procopius* 141.

[63] I am grateful to Kent Rigsby and to the anonymous referees of *GRBS* for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay. Its outlines were presented at the 137th Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association in Montreal (2006) and to colleagues at the Center for Hellenic Studies, and I profited from the feedback I received on both occasions. Miriam Aukerman has been a constant source of advice and support.