

most, the story (and possibly the statuary) may record some failed attempt of the Rhodians to overthrow the Carian-supported oligarchs.<sup>24</sup>

RICHARD M. BERTHOLD  
University of New Mexico

24. I would like to express my gratitude to John K. Davies for a number of valuable criticisms of an earlier draft of this paper.

### “GIVING DESERTION AS A PRETEXT”: THUC. 7. 13. 2

In his letter to the Athenians (Thuc. 7. 11–15), Nikias complains that one of his major problems at Syracuse is the “wasting of the ships’ crews.” In 13. 2 he details the reasons for these losses.

τὰ δὲ πληρώματα διὰ τόδε ἐφθάρη τε ἡμῖν καὶ ἔτι νῦν φθίρεται, τῶν ναυτῶν [τῶν] μὲν διὰ φρυγανισμόν καὶ ἀρπαγὴν καὶ ὑδρείαν μακρὰν ὑπὸ τῶν ἱππέων ἀπολλυμένων· οἱ δὲ θεράποντες, ἐπειδὴ ἐς ἀντίπαλα καθεστήκαμεν, αὐτομολοῦσι, καὶ οἱ ξένοι οἱ μὲν ἀναγκαστοὶ ἐσβάντες εὐθὺς κατὰ τὰς πόλεις ἀποχωροῦσιν, οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ μεγάλου μισθοῦ τὸ πρῶτον ἐπαρθέντες καὶ οἰόμενοι χρηματιεῖσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ μαχεῖσθαι, ἐπειδὴ παρὰ γνῶμην ναυτικόν τε δὴ καὶ τᾶλλα ἀπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἀνθεστῶτα ὀρώσιν, οἱ μὲν ἐπ’ αὐτομολίας προφάσει ἀπέρχονται, οἱ δὲ ὥς ἕκαστοι δύνανται (πολλὴ δ’ ἡ Σικελία), εἰσὶ δ’ οἱ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐμπορενόμενοι ἀνδράποδα Ἷτκαρικὰ ἀντεμβιβάζει ὑπὲρ σφῶν πείσαντες τοὺς τριηράρχους τὴν ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἀφήρηται.

As K. J. Dover<sup>1</sup> says in his note on οἱ μὲν ἐπ’ αὐτομολίας προφάσει ἀπέρχονται, the “prima facie meaning is ‘giving desertion as a pretext.’” The problem is that desertion hardly seems an excuse likely to convince your superior officer that you should be allowed to leave the ranks: it is the *reason* for leaving, not the pretext.<sup>2</sup> But none of the many attempts to emend the passage seems likely, much less persuasive.<sup>3</sup>

Only George Grote appears to have been on the right track in realizing that

I should like to thank Bernard M. W. Knox for making several useful comments on the arguments of this paper, an earlier version of which was written at the Center for Hellenic Studies. I also benefited from conversation with Michael Haslam, who helped me clarify my thinking about this passage, and from suggestions and criticism by the referees of *CP*.

1. *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 4 (Oxford, 1970), p. 389. See p. 388 for the identification of the sailors mentioned at the beginning of the passage and the deletion of the second τῶν. Nikias means here only Athenian sailors, who are to be distinguished both from the slaves and from the foreigners mentioned later in the sentence.

2. K. Weidauer, *Thukydides und die Hippokratischen Schriften* (Heidelberg, 1954), pp. 16–17, tries to make the Greek say precisely this by having *prophasis* here denote Nikias’ explanation of the desertion rather than the deserter’s own excuse. He thus translates, “. . . aus dem Grund, den ich [Nikias] dafür angeben kann, dass sie nämlich überlaufen.” On this argument, Thucydides uses *prophasis* here in its “objective,” Hippocratic sense. Though I agree that *prophasis* is sometimes used by Thucydides in an objective sense, and indeed have argued this point at length (cf. *A Semantic Study of Prophasis to 400 B.C.*, Hermes Einzelschriften, 33 [Wiesbaden, 1975], esp. chap. 4), I do not believe that 7. 13. 2 is such an instance. On this interpretation no sense can be made of the contrast between οἱ μὲν and οἱ δέ, and the parenthetical “Sicily is a large place” is left unexplained. Weidauer addresses neither of these issues; rather, he treats the phrase completely out of context.

3. See Dover’s discussion ad loc. Dover’s own interpretation, taken from Pearson (“*Prophasis and Aitia*,” *TAPA* 83 [1952]: 215) is certainly, as he admits, obscure, and, if not impossible, at least very improbable. To translate the phrase as “some deserting to the enemy and others on a variety of pretexts” is surely to do violence to the Greek. Pearson’s comment is not helpful: “. . . there is no pretence about the troops’ desertion (what Nikias means is that they are leaving without offering any other reason or pretext).”

*prophasis* "does not denote what a man said *before* he quitted the Athenian camp (he would of course say nothing of his intention to any one), but the colour which he would put upon his conduct *after he got within* the Syracusan lines. He would present himself to them as a deserter to their cause . . ." (*History of Greece* [London, 1888], 6:111, n. 1).

This line of reasoning is certainly the correct one, but two objections can be raised against it. First, Nikias says nothing about the foreign volunteers deserting specifically to Syracuse or even to "the Syracusan lines." Indeed, he appears to say nothing about the deserters' place(s) of refuge. Second, Dover (ad loc.) has objected that Grote's solution "does not quite suit the context, where interest is naturally focused on means of escaping from the Athenian force and not on means of making one's way through Sicily."

To take the second objection first, Thucydides focuses no attention upon the "means of escaping from the Athenian force." From Nikias' account, escape seems to be an easy matter: there is never a word about any difficulty faced by slaves and *ἀναγκαστοί*; why should the volunteers, presumably better and more loosely treated, have any trouble getting away?

The first objection, on the other hand, raises a very real problem: where did the deserters go? We are told only that the impressed foreign troops "go, separately (*κατά*), straight to the cities." Which cities? Richard Crawley translates "to their respective cities," that is, they went home. The scholiast glosses: "*τῶν Σικελῶν δηλονότι*," "the cities of the Sicels." Johannes Classen and Julius Steup comment, "nach allen Seiten in die sizilischen Ortschaften." But if we read the phrase *κατὰ τὰς πόλεις* in the light of the preceding parts of Nikias' letter, another solution emerges. In chapters 11 and 12 Nikias writes that the Athenian position in Sicily has eroded seriously since Gylippus' arrival. Many cities in Sicily have joined the enemy<sup>4</sup> and thus declared war on the Athenians, and non-Athenians of all kinds are now deserting the Athenian force. The slaves simply leave and take their chances.<sup>5</sup> The foreigners who served under compulsion depart "to the cities," that is, to the cities in Sicily which are now hostile to the Athenians: only hostile cities could be trusted not to return deserters to their armies.<sup>6</sup> Gylippus has won over so many Sicilian cities to the Syracusan side that Sicily now offers many havens for foreign sailors eager to desert.

The *ἀναγκαστοί* could go without hesitation (*εὐθὺς*) because they had served the Athenians under compulsion and thus needed to fear no reprisals from the hostile cities.<sup>7</sup> But the foreign sailors who had come willingly with the Athenians to Sicily,

4. Cf. 7. 12. 1: . . . καὶ ἐς τὰς ἐν Σικελίᾳ πόλεις Γύλιππος οἴχεται, τὰς μὲν καὶ πείσων ἐνυπολαμβάνειν ὅσαι νῦν ἡσυχάζουσιν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν καὶ στρατιὰν ἐπὶ περὶ ἡν καὶ ναυτικοῦ παρασκευήν, ἦν δηληται, ἄξων.

5. So did more than twenty thousand Athenian slaves when the Lakedaimonians fortified Dekelea and thus offered them a safe refuge (cf. 7. 27. 5), and many Chian slaves when the Athenians "firmly besieged Chios" (cf. 8. 40. 2).

6. It is worth remembering that in the armistice which the Athenians and Lakedaimonians signed in 423, the two sides agreed (4. 118. 7) "not to receive deserters in this period [of armistice], whether free or slave." It is clear that before the treaty Athens and Sparta had each given refuge to the other's deserters, because they were at war with one another. Hostile cities furnish safe refuge for deserters.

7. Note what happened in 427 when the Corcyraeans, torn by stasis, hastily prepared a fleet against an attacking force of Peloponnesian vessels (3. 77. 2): "When [the Corcyraean] ships went out in a straggling fashion, two immediately (*εὐθὺς*) deserted to the enemy, while in others the sailors

"excited by the prospect of high pay and expecting rather to conduct a profitable piece of business than to carry on a war," are in an altogether different position. They are bound to be regarded as opportunists of the worst sort, come to Sicily for private gain on the coattails of the powerful Athenians. Compare what the Mytilenaeans say to the Spartans when they "desert" their privileged position in the Athenian empire and ask the Spartans to accept and assist them in their revolt (3. 9, in Crawley's translation):

Those who revolt in war and forsake their former confederacy are favourably regarded by those who receive them, in so far as they are of use to them, but otherwise are thought less well of, through being considered traitors to their former friends. Nor is this an unfair way of judging, where the rebels and the power from whom they secede are at one in policy and sympathy, and a match for each other in resources and power, and where no reasonable ground [*πρόφασις ἐπιεικής*] exists for the rebellion.

The position of Mytilene qua city is analogous to that of the volunteer sailor qua individual. Since they had been (relatively) free members of the Athenian empire, the Mytilenaeans know that their revolt is likely to be regarded with suspicion by those who receive them (*οἱ δεξάμενοι*). They therefore need a "suitable explanation" (*πρόφασις ἐπιεικής*) of their conduct. This is exactly the case with the foreign sailor who had served as a volunteer in the Athenian army. In giving himself up to a city in Sicily hostile to Athens he too would require a *prophasis*. His excuse is desertion: "I renounce the Athenian cause and espouse yours—use me as you see fit." Note that *αὐτομολία*, *αὐτόμολος*, and *αὐτομολῶ* generally carry the active connotation of "going over to the enemy," while *λιποστρατία*, *λιποταξία*, and their verbs have only the more passive meaning of "deserting."<sup>8</sup>

For those volunteers who have deserted and need a place of refuge, there is an alternative solution. Rather than seeking refuge with the enemy they escape "however they can (Sicily is a large place)." In other words, they simply lose themselves in the great expanse of Sicily—no excuses, no explanations or personal confrontations of any kind, simply anonymity. The point of the parenthesis now becomes clear: even for the deserter who chooses to avoid the numerous cities in Sicily now allied to Syracuse, the vast size and population of Sicily provide plenty of places in which to hide.

HUNTER R. RAWLINGS III  
*University of Colorado*

fought among themselves, and there was no order in anything that was done." Who deserted? Clearly those ships in which a substantial majority of crewmen were members of, or at least sympathizers with, the aristocratic faction. They would have had no difficulty convincing the Peloponnesians that they served against their will (*ἀναγκαστοί*).

8. Cf. especially J. E. Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus*, and E.-A. Bétant, *Lexicon Thucydideum*, s.vv., and the passages cited in each; and *Suda*, s.vv. *αὐτομόλως*, *αὐτομολῆσαι*. See also Classen-Steup's commentary, 74:237.

## THE RITUAL IN SLAB V-EAST ON THE PARTHENON FRIEZE

No ancient author refers directly to the Parthenon frieze. Pausanias, in his description of the external statues of the Parthenon, mentions only the pediments on the western and eastern ends. Early travelers, like Cyriacus of Ancona in 1447 and Francis Vernon in 1676, conceived differing opinions on the frieze. Cyriacus thought it represented the Athenian populace in a victory parade from the time