Classica Cracoviensia
vol. XXVII (2024), pp. 323–355
https://doi.org/10.12797/CC.27.2024.27.13

Michał Stachura
Jagiellonian University, Kraków

The Discourse on the Difference Between Audacity and Real Fortitude in *De bellis* by Procopius of Caesarea

ABSTRACT: In *De bellis* by Procopius of Caesarea, there are multiple, though quite dispersed, instances of a discourse concentrated thematically on the distinction between true fortitude and audacity, with the latter being a mere semblance of the former, and actually a vice that is just the opposite of fortitude. The weight of this discourse comes from the role played by the virtue of fortitude in Procopius' vision of history – being, on the one hand, the proper motive for preserving the remembrance of martial deeds and, on the other hand, the human-related factor that makes the greatest impact on the course of history. To understand this discourse properly, we need to abandon modern insights (with the mediaeval origin) expressed by concepts such as 'courage' and 'bravery' that blurred the boundary between virtue and emotion. Analysis of this discourse points to a relationship between real fortitude and prudence/integrity, while audacity is related to cowardice in the sense that it turns into the latter instantly in the face of danger (a stereotypical characteristic of villains in Antiquity). Likewise, seeking a certain death would be an act of audacity, not fortitude. However, a closer analysis of individual cases within this discourse shows a surprising rule: nearly all of them are examples of the moral philosophy applied in a perverse manner, to justify often disgraceful acts. Procopius himself, even though considering the reckless risking of one's life as unworthy of fortitude, looks with admiration on all those who choose fighting until the end over accepting the shame of surrender (including also the opponents of Rome such as Vandals, Goths,

and Persians). It appears then that the Late-Antique historiographer had already viewed the Platonic-Aristotelean distinction of fortitude and audacity with some reserve, being closer in spirit to a new conception of fortitude, later on to be expressed by the term 'courage'.

KEYWORDS: Procopius of Caesarea, audacity, fortitude, courage, virtue

In a strange turn of events, scholars – although, like most ordinary people, they tend to yield to various vices rather than nurture virtues – would usually devote more attention to virtues than vices in their research activity. The present article, however, is concerned with a vice, albeit now forgotten and not entirely comprehended, namely the vice of audacity, that once was perceived – on a par with cowardice – in contrast to the virtue of fortitude, and at the same time as a semblance of it which can easily be mistaken for true virtue. In a highly improbable stylisation of the protagonists of his story as ancient rhetors, Procopius of Caesarea repeatedly shows them, expressing a quasi-philosophical discourse on the difference between audacity and true fortitude Although it would seem that such motifs were marginal in his narrative, I would like to prove the point that they play quite a significant role in evaluating the conduct of his protagonists and surpass the moralistic banality of a rhetorical display.

The significance of the virtue of fortitude in *De bellis*

There is at least no doubt that 'fortitude' (as one of the four cardinal virtues) is represented among the most significant subjects of Procopius' work, dealing with the 'wars which Justinian, the emperor of the Romans, waged against the barbarians of the East and the West',[1]

[1] Procop. *De bellis* I 1, 1 (Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 3). Here and further on, I shall refer, generally, to the translation Dewing-Kaldellis 2014, but in a number of places I have felt compelled to modify it or propose a different version, in particular for the clarity of the presentation and the consistency in the use of relevant key terms. The reasons for choosing to do so have been stated – I hope convincingly – in the second section of this article.

as already evident in the prologue to *De bellis*. In its first sentence, in a loose paraphrase of the words opening *Historiae* by Herodotus, the author justifies the sense of his composition by referring to a wish to save for posterity the memory of the 'very grand deeds' (τὰ ἔργα ὑπερμεγέθη) performed in the course of contemporary conflicts.[2] After several sentences, he refers to the same motif once again, stating it is indeed in those wars that the greatest and the most admirable deeds – he ever heard of – were performed (μάλιστα πάντων ὧν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν θαυμαστὰ οἷα).[3] His claim that the wars depicted by him are, in a certain way, the 'greatest' draws on a topos derived from Thucydides,[4] but if the Athenian historian identifies the measure of such greatness with the scale of warfare; Procopius turns to a different criterion. It is revealed further on where he says that acts he describes are most admirable, unless someone refused to praise the contemporary warriors because of their ways of fighting.[5] Namely, a hypothetical critic would refuse to attribute virtue (*arete*) to those contemporary soldiers who used the bow which in Homer is perceived as a weapon of cowards.[6] Procopius argues with this statement, while pointing to the difference between ancient and contemporary archers, by observing that the latter – equipped with swords, spears, and protective gear – ride to battle on horseback and do not hide behind the backs of their comrades.[7] The whole argument is of course a show of erudition in the first place (a clever combination of remarks alluding to Herodotus, Thucydides, and Homer), yet at the same time it indicates that the measure of the 'greatness' of human acts – therefore, also of whether they are worthy

[2] Procop. *De bellis* I 1, 1, Herodotus I.pr. Procopius' words may also be seen as a paraphrase of the initial words in Thucydides (Thuc. I 1, 1) – cf. Basso-Greatrex 2017: 64, yet thematically this sentence is a reiteration (with a different sequence) of the preface to Herodotus' work (author, wars, barbarians and Justinian, commemoration of deeds, instead of: author, commemoration of deeds, barbarians and Hellenes, wars).

[3] Procop. *De bellis* I1, 6–7. The phrase is derived directly from Herodotus (III 122) and Thucydides (I, 13).

[4] Thuc. I 1.

[5] Procop. *De bellis* I 1, 7.

[6] Procop. *De bellis* I 1, 8–10.

[7] Procop. *De bellis* I 1, 11–15.

of being described by historians – is, in the author's view, the virtue manifesting itself in such deeds.[8] There can be no doubt in this particular case that (at least in the first place) the point is the virtue of fortitude revealing itself especially in military actions.

Therefore, the preservation of the memory of valiant deeds becomes the historian's declared objective, while the virtue of fortitude manifesting itself in such deeds becomes the measure of whether they are worthy of being preserved in human memory. Only for this reason alone the question of whether fortitude can be found at the basis of a specific action or some much less praiseworthy and admirable attitude is behind it plays a crucial role from the historian's perspective.

Likewise, virtue is an essential factor, potentially able to influence the course of history. It is most poignantly expressed by Procopius as he turns to considering the causes of the unprecedented – according to his knowledge – success of the Roman army, conquering the powerful Vandal state so rapidly: 'For whether this happened as a result of verdicts of Fate or because of some virtue, one justly marvels at it.'[9] *Tyche*

[8] As indicated in Basso-Greatrex 2017: 67, it is not the Thucydidean size but the Herodotean quality of events that should be decisive whether they are worthy of the historian's pen. In consequence, Procopius' entire argument, with a comparison of the old-time and the contemporary 'archer', is not so much of a technical, military, but of aretelogical nature. This observation remains valid even if we concur with Kaldellis 2004: 21–24, Kaldelllis 2004–2005, that Procopius' exposition should be interpreted as an ironical ridicule of the contemporary era, or with Kruse 2017, that the ancient and contemporary crafts of combat are a metaphor allowing Procopius to represent his own art of historiography as surpassing that of Herodotus and Thucydides (also with such interpretations being considered, the ridicule or praise would concern, in the first place, what is worthy – or unworthy – of praise, as an expression of virtue or a lack thereof). Let us also notice that both interpretation levels (the technical military and the aretelogical) are not unrelated and a peculiar commentary on the prologue may be Procopius' view – as expressed at some place in the text that fortitude only resolves the outcomes of hand-to-hand combat, while any confrontation at a distance leaves no space for fortitude and makes participants totally dependent on Tyche (Procop. *De bellis* VIII 14, 17–18).

[9] Procop., *De bellis* IV 7, 21: τοῦτο γὰρ εἴτε τύχῃ εἴτε τινὶ ἀρετῇ γέγονε, δικαίως ἄν τις αὐτὸ ἀγασθείε. According to the English translation (Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 206): 'Whether this happened by chance or some kind of valour, one justly marvels at it,' which is – in my opinion – a double misinterpretation (or at least overinterpretation): firstly, it reduces the almighty force, i.e., Procopius' Tyche, to a mere 'lucky chance' (which would be a misuse even if we interpreted Tyche as a force acting in a completely

as a factor independent of the human kind and *arete* as a human factor are placed on a par here as potential explanations for that extraordinary and admirable event (in consequence, also worthy of being preserved for posterity to remember). Several times in *De bellis*, the narrator lays down a similar alternative before the reader,[10] although one could reasonably argue that he would rather predict in favour of *Tyche*.[11] However, it may turn out to be false – in his *Secret History*, Procopius suggests that ever since Belisarius committed an act of perjury (thus perverting the virtue of justice), *Tyche* ceased to favour him.[12]

Researchers of Procopius' works have usually concentrated their attention on the former factor. The historian's enigmatic and often mutually contradictory statements about *Tyche* would be supposed to help in solving the mystery of his world-view and perhaps also to clarify the philosophical or theological assumptions at the foundations of the vision of history contained in *De bellis*.[13] Less attention is devoted to the judgements expressed here on human conditioning factors in the course of history – even though it might seem that a human factor operating in history is worthy of at least the same amount of attention as

---

random way); secondly, it interprets *arete* as 'valour', which certainly does not encompass all the content of the notion of 'virtue' in the sense imparted by ancient authors, even if we interpret the presently mentioned virtue clearly as *andreia* (fortitude). In the sentence cited, *arete* is usually rendered as the virtue of fortitude, but it is not obvious as, for instance, we could indicate multiple examples of Belisarius' prudence or justice that significantly contributed to the victory over the Vandals (Prudence: beginning from the foresight shown during a crossing to Africa, through the selection of the landing location at a certain distance from Carthage, the care for winning over the local population's supportive attitude, to the swift fortification of Carthage, taken over without a fight, which became a base for Belisarius' subsequent operations. Justice: in his treatment of the African population, thanks to which it moved to support the Romans in an overwhelming majority – cf. Stachura 2022).

[10] Procop. *De bellis* IV 11, 44, V 24, 6.

[11] Cf. Procop. *De bellis* V 24, 5, VI 29, 32, VIII 32, 29 – the first statement is spoken by Belisarius, while the other two are expressed by the narrator.

[12] Procop. *Historia Arcana* 4, 41–44.

[13] A representative example here may be the approach of Anthony Kaldellis who has entitled one of the chapters in his monograph 'The Struggle Between Virtue and *Tyche* in the *Gothic War*' (Kaldellis 2004: 189–204) only to limit himself there to considering the nature of *Tyche*, with an almost complete omission of the subject of 'Virtue'. On the discussion of meaning of *Tyche* in Procopius cf. Brodka 2022: 145–147.

the supernatural, as exactly a belief in the autonomy of human affairs would be a characteristic feature of the 'classical' outlook on history, presumably distinguishing Procopius against the background of some historians more constricted by the Christian world-view.[14]

As a matter of fact, the only scholar who has turned his attention in the first place precisely on Procopius' presentation of the theme of 'fortitude' is Michael Edward Stewart. It is fair to say that research on this subject constitutes his *oeuvre* – beginning from his doctoral dissertation, through a number of articles and two book-size monographs, over a period of 20 years, his successive publications have continued to offer more in-depth treatment of this subject matter.[15] Nevertheless, there are still possibilities to explore this research field further, especially as Stewart deals with the theme of 'fortitude' from a certain very specific angle – as an aspect of the man-warrior's image, a feature which is instrumental in being the 'real man'. This concentration on the 'gender-like' aspect of the virtue of fortitude relegates some issues to a secondary position in this scholar's discussion, including also the distinction between the true virtue and the audacity as its semblance (and its actual contradiction) that is the subject of the present article. Although the relevant discourse as found in *De bellis* is noticed by Stewart,[16] but – in my opinion – it is not entirely correctly interpreted. A certain sort of an 'original sin' at the basis of various false interpretations in this respect

[14] Procopius' special status as the last great representative of Classical historiography would be supposedly due to granting autonomy to the human affairs and human freedom, which would be allegedly denied by the later historians' embrace of the Christian idea of the Divine Providence (*Pronoia*) as a force entirely in control of the course of history. Let us also take note of an article contesting this view (Van Nuffelen 2017), where the author points out that neither the inevitable verdicts of Fate (*Tyche*) nor the omnipotence of the Divine Providence (*Pronoia*) rule out the human liberty of taking decisions, but they only position such decisions within the supreme order of things.

[15] Cf. dissertation Stewart 2003, monographs Stewart 2016 (in particular, chapter Stewart 2016: 247–313), Stewart 2020; among the articles, the most important findings on the virtue of fortitude and its links to manliness (and with effeminacy), of both individuals and entire nations, can be found in Stewart 2014, Stewart 2015, Stewart 2017.

[16] Stewart observes those questions particularly in the context of a speech – also analysed hereafter – by the Gothic envoys calling Belisarius to retreat from Rome; cf. Stewart 2016: 284–290, Stewart 2017: 484.

is the common way of rendering some key terms, which even Stewart – with all his subtlety and caution – failed to evade.[17]

Fortitude, audacity, courage – the problem of terminology

The virtue of fortitude (ἡ ἀνδρεία, *fortitudo*) is ordinarily translated as terms such as courage, valour, bravery (or some equivalents existing in other languages). Stewart remarks that 'courage', when used almost automatically to render various Greek terms, is not always the best choice. What he means are the terms not indicative of the virtue of fortitude, including ἡ προθυμία, τὸ θάρσος, and ἡ τόλμα (described below),[18] yet he does not object to rendering ἡ ἀνδρεία as 'courage' (which he also translates as 'manliness', etymologically closer to the Greek original word).[19] Contrary to this, in the further part of his exposition, Stewart appears to regard courage as an overriding concept, comprising both 'courage-manliness' and a 'less rational type of courage', expressed with the term τὸ θάρσος.[20] Thus, one term encompasses, semantically, both the virtue and the states which are evidently not any virtue at all. It seems there is something in our way of thinking that serves up such

[17] Already after the completion of my work on the present article, I acquainted myself with another publication by the same author (Stewart 2022), in which he has analysed – in a broad context of the ancient theory of climatic determinism – statements of Agathias and some other Late-Antique writers (including Procopius), distinguishing the savage audacity of barbarians from the rational and virtue-based courage of the Romans (Stewart 2022: 113–116). His conclusions are convergent, to a certain degree, with those presented in this article, but they render the juxtaposition of *andreia* and *thrasys* as superior and inferior types of 'courage', thus a perfect good and a less perfect one, not in terms of good and evil. As much as I agree that this interpretation may be correct for some of the considered instances of the criticism of *thrasys* as found in *De bellis*, I must add that two possibilities of interpreting the distinction between *andreia* and *thrasys* do not come from the ambiguity of the former term but that of the latter one, which may be understood as a vice contrary to fortitude or an essentially positive stance, yet with no basis in virtue (more explanation can be found in the next section of the present article).

[18] Stewart 2016: 16–17.

[19] With a possible reference to *usus* in Arnold 2014: 117; cf. Stewart 2016: 287, n. 138.

[20] Stewart 2016: 284.

a solution automatically, but I doubt this sort of reflex would have been comprehensible to the man in Antiquity (and a cause for doubt is just the fact that neither ancient Greek nor Latin have a term to express such an overriding concept).

As always when we perceive a difference between our categories of thinking and those which were (or are) peculiar to other historical periods or cultures, we should start out from reflecting on those in which we are ourselves accustomed to view the world and which have become apparently obvious to us. For this reason, let us first notice that the above-mentioned words that we tend to treat as the equivalent to both ἡ ἀνδρεία and, e.g., τὸ θάρσος, even though they derived from Romance languages, they only emerged in the Middle Ages and are not simple transformations of the terms present in ancient Latin. For instance, as 'brave' is etymologically derived from 'barbarus', it most likely denoted, originally, a sort of fury in combat perceived as peculiar to barbarians,[21] i.e., *furor barbaricus*. This one, as arising from failing to control one's urge to fight, was not only perceived – in the light of conceptions prevailing in Antiquity – as having nothing in common with virtue, but it was even regarded as its opposition. In Classical Latin, the adjective *ferox* could be perhaps used as a possible counterpart. Likewise, *ferocitas*, ambivalently recognised as either deplorable 'audacity' or commendable 'courage' cannot be confused with the genuine *virtus*, as it would rather correspond with a type of belligerence making a man start to resemble 'ferocious beasts' (*ferae*), i.e. the type defined by Plato as 'audacity' (see further on).

Another term of relevance here is 'valeur' (as well as the adjective 'valiant') derived from the Latin 'valere', originally denoting strength, but in a further sense – value, in particular the strength or value of courage.[22] This specific ambiguity may have caused H.B. Dewing to choose 'valeur' ('valor', modernised by Anthony Kaldellis) as a rendering of ἡ ἀρετή in Procopius, instead of more obvious 'virtue' here.

Finally, the key term 'courage' derives from the Old French word 'corage', while 'corage' in turn contains (just as several of its counterparts in other Romance languages) the Latin root-word *cor* (heart) in

[21] Onions 1966: 115, Klein 1971: 93, Ayto 1990: 77.

[22] Onions 1966: 968, Klein 1971: 801, Ayto 1990: 553.

its stem, indicating the location of a generative centre responsible for this state.[23] Still, the ancient anthropology (as represented by Plato) did not localise virtues in the heart at all; if anywhere, the purported centre would have been the head as a place of residence for the sentient soul – in view of the fact that virtues (including fortitude) would signify the reason's control over emotions and urges. The heart, or rather the chest in general, was regarded as the centre of an emotion called *thymos* (ὁ θυμός), responsible for both valiant acts and uncontrollable anger in cases where it is not subordinated to reason. The Latin equivalent of ὁ θυμός would be *animus* or *spiritus* (or *ira*, even though rather when talking about *animus* getting out of control).[24] These are therefore the terms which would most accurately correspond to the original semantic range of the word 'courage'.

But if 'courage' can be so easily mistaken for the proper virtue of fortitude, the two notions must have most evidently come to a point of some greater similarity: we now tend to envision 'courage' a little more in terms of virtue, while 'fortitude' is also seen a little more in terms of emotion. The former reveals itself, for example, in the phrase 'Dutch courage' (unfair to the Dutch), where a discernible note of irony indicates the fact that we perceive the chemically stimulated 'courage' as only a caricatured reflection of the real one whose foundations should rest upon a cultivated disposition, which is to say, a genuine virtue. Inevitably, however, the blurring of the boundary between fortitude and courage, virtue and emotion, would also lead to the blurring of the boundary between the opposite notions of cowardice and fear. It originated a romanticised view, so characteristically prevalent in the 19th century, demanding soldiers to be fearless, i.e. to eliminate the feeling of fear.[25]

Another consequence of adopting the modern-day conceptual network is the bipolar juxtaposition of courage and cowardice.[26] It

[23] Ayto 1990: 141 points to the Latin term *coraticus* (not recorded in *TLL*).

[24] Onions 1966: 115, Klein 1971: 93, Ayto 1990: 77.

[25] Cf. Czekalski 2014: 865–866, with some example statements of British, French, Russian, and American authors. In his opinion, a notable exception was the well-known forerunner of the so-called new military history, J.J. Ardant du Picq.

[26] On a different level, it would be right, of course, to make an opposing juxtaposition of the two emotions: courage and fear. This fact is the most emblematic of the ambiguity in the word 'courage'.

makes Aristotle's argumentation of fortitude as a golden mean between cowardice and audacity sound exotic (to us).[27] We could ask spontaneously: 'How could one have a negative view of excess in courage?' The word 'bravado', frequently used here for reasons of explanation,[28] is misleading; acts of bravado are valued in negative terms due to their (potential or actual) results, not as an expression of the vice which would be condemnable as such. Our modern notions, blurring the boundary between virtue and emotion make us discern in fortitude, positioned at the above-mentioned golden mean, some sort of a balance between the two urges or emotions, or possibly a right place along a certain continuum constituted by one emotion which at one pole appears as audacity, while at the other extreme – cowardice.[29] This sort of interpretation could come only from a superficial reception of random passages of the *Ethica Nicomachea* out of context. The comprehensive reading clearly points to Aristotle's perception of 'fortitude' as when reason is in control of impulses.[30] Reverting to Plato's *Laches*, a similar perspective can be encountered – the mindless audacity (ἡ τόλμα, ἡ θρασέα) is something characteristic of both humans and animals, and under no circumstances can it be confused with fortitude (ἡ ἀνδρεία), which is the rational overcoming of fear as based on the knowledge of what is and what is not the thing that should inspire fear in us.[31]

Characteristically, in this trilateral dialogue of Laches, Socrates, and Nikias, it is the Athenian commander Nikias, not Socrates, who explains the difference between audacity and the true fortitude to his interlocutors. It may point to a fact that Plato conceptualises common views of his period rather than expounds his own new ideas. A further piece of evidence to prove that Greeks placed 'fortitude' and 'audacity' in contrast well before Plato is a well-known passage from Thucydides

[27] Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* III 6–7 (1115a–1116a).

[28] The English 'bravado' has, of course, the same derivation as 'brave' but with an additional language intermediary via Spanish (Onions 1966: 115, Klein 1971: 93, Ayto 1990: 77).

[29] Cf. Pears 1980.

[30] The philosopher makes a clear distinction between the two cases: a man of audacity follows his ardour, while a man of fortitude takes advantage of it to achieve his reasonably chosen goal (Aristoteles *Ethica Nicomachea* II 8, 3 (1116b–1117a).

[31] Plato *Laches* 25, 197a–b, cf. Aristoteles *Ethica Eudemea* III 1 (1229a).

on the nature of the struggle among political factions within the *polis* (*stasis*): 'Mindless audacity came [then] to be considered the fortitude of a faithful friend.'[32] This sentence is enigmatic in that it seems to mix up the two levels: 'reasonableness' and noble motivation. It is possible that the adjective 'mindless' (ἀλόγιστος) is used here to highlight this specific, reprehensible audacity (ἡ τόλμα) because in some other instances in Thucydides ἡ τόλμα carries a rather neutral tone.[33]

It is easy to notice here that another problem goes well beyond the aspects of translation, i.e. the complexity of the ancient notion of audacity (as seen, of course, from our modern perspective, because we tend to break down into constituent parts what they viewed as a simple entity, e.g. when we look at the *polis* as a city-state). It is just as significant that 'audacity' also denotes 'impudence', 'arrogance', the extremely condemnable attitude of a deliberate defiance of what is respectable – then, also of the virtue.[34] The model figure for such an *audax* man is Thersites of *Ilias*, an impertinent simpleton reprimanded by Odysseus, whose name is coined from the term *tharsys*.[35] Over time, such an attitude would come to be ascribed especially to those politicians who were perceived as destroyers of *status quo* and, of course, to tyrants.[36] It was already the Old Oligarch who accused his opponents of 'madness' (*mania*),[37] while Plato explains the origin of this condition in his *Republic*: when reason fails to control desires and the latter take control of reason, the soul begins to be tossed between the extremes.[38]

---

[32] Thuc. III 82, 4: τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀλόγιστος ἀνδρεία φιλέταιρος ἐνομίσθε (my own transl.).

[33] Bassi 2003: 31.

[34] As one of the Roman historians puts it: impudent (*audax*) is 'the one who dares to do in the Republic what no good man would dare to do (*is qui in re publica aususestea quae nemo auderet bonus*)' – which is to say, no man of virtue (Velleius Paterculus II 24, 5).

[35] Homer *Ilias* II, 212–270.

[36] It will become quite common among the rhetors from Attica, while in the period of the Late Roman Republic 'audacity' (*audacia*) will be even seen as a primary vice, with *optimates* attributing it to their opponents; cf. Wirszubski 1961,Weische 1966: 32–33.

[37] *Athen. Politeia* I 9.

[38] Plato, *Rep.* IX 2 (573b). Plato is referring here to the lower desires (*epithymiai*), the obvious consequence of the state is also the lack of mastery over *thymos*.

Therefore, the stereotypical 'tyrannical character' will display a tendency to rapid shifts from the excess of mindless audacity to an equally mindless tendency to yield to attacks of paralysing fear.[39] Thus, the bipolar madness of tyrants turns out to combine the two ostensibly opposite vices, both of which remain in opposition to the virtue of fortitude.

The 'audacity' shown on the battlefield does not have to involve all those tyrannical connotations, of course, and it does not have to meet with negative judgements. We are not clearly dealing here with a vice, it is rather more of submitting to *thymos*, which may be an expression of vice if it escapes reason's control. For this reason, there is always some shade of ambivalence over it.[40] Ancient handbooks of warfare tended to caution against the fervent zeal of inexperienced recruits.[41] In *De bello Gallico*, Caesar seems to appreciate audacity (in most cases), but on the other hand he would more often use the word *audacia* to describe the attitudes of savage barbarians rather than of Roman legionnaires.[42] In Ammianus Marcellinus, a clear distinction can be seen: *audacia* understood as an infringement of political hierarchy is always characteristic of the unrighteous,[43] while *audacia* on the battlefield tends to be evaluated with some ambivalence. For instance, Julian's *audacia* is praised as the manifestation of his virtue of fortitude (*fortitudo*),[44] yet it turns out to be a vice when the emperor recklessly risks his life during a skirmish while retreating from the environs of Ctesiphon.[45] In Ammianus, *audacia* in the battle is certainly contrasted with reason[46] and distin-

[39] Cf. e.g. *Paneg. Lat.* II 43, 1. In the same way, Procopius explains the conduct of Theodatus, king of the Goths (Procop. *De bellis* V 7, 12).

[40] This ambivalence could be illustrated by the *Anthology* by Stobaios, composed of chapters collecting citations that contain respectively, instances of praise (Stobaios X 10) and condemnation (Stobaios X 12) of audacity (ἡ τόλμα).

[41] Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* III 12; cf. Różycki 2021: 64–67.

[42] Rawlings 1988: 188, n. 30.

[43] E.g. Ammianus XIV 7, 6, XIV 7, 17, XXVIII 1, 31, XXIX 1, 25 (audacity towards officials), XIV 9, 6, XX 4, 19, XXI 5, 11, XXI 11, 11, XXI 11, 3, XXI 13, 13, XXVI 4, 3, XXIX 2, 17, XXIX 3, 5, XXX 2, 5 (audacity towards the emperor and usurping the prerogatives held only by the emperor).

[44] Ammianus XXV 4, 10.

[45] Ammianus XXV 3, 6.

[46] Ammianus XVI 12, 10, XXX 1, 5.

guished from the virtue of fortitude,[47] but it does not convey any further negative connotations peculiar to the 'audacity' in the political realm.[48]

It is worth considering, because – as we shall see – a particular feature of the discourse present in *De bellis* is the blurring of the boundary between the 'audacity' of military acts and the 'audacity' as an attitude of arrogance, standing in opposition to virtue and deserving of the utmost condemnation. In at least some cases, war exploits and decisions concerning wartime affairs are depicted as if guided by the stereotypical, tyrannical *furor*. But to follow through the whole discourse properly, we should first make a clear distinction between the meanings of terms used by the historiographer.

In Procopius' work, the virtue of fortitude is expressed as a general rule as ἡ ἀνδρεία[49] or (much more frequently) as simply ἡ ἀρετή, although in certain instances (as we have already seen) it is not quite clear if the historian means to express exactly the virtue of fortitude at a specific place in the text, when this more general term is applied.[50]

[47] Ammianus XXXI 16, 3.

[48] A particularly interesting example is the case of the soldiers of two Gallic legions besieged at Amida, who made a daring night sortie against the besieging Persians (Ammianus XIX 6, 1–12). Their original attitude, when they use threats to force commanders to give approval for their reckless endeavour, would equate them – in the author's eyes – with uncontrollable savage beasts (Ammianus XIX 6, 3–4), yet, when they show fortitude coupled with a strict discipline in the course of an uneven fight, the opinion is changed to such an extent that they are compared to the heroic protagonists of the *Iliad* in the conclusion of the chapter (Ammianus XIX 6, 11). It can be said that during that night combat the vice was forged into a real heroic virtue, acknowledged even by the emperor Constantius II (Ammianus XIX 6, 12; it is even more notable in view of the fact that those legions were formed in Gaul by Magnentius, the emperor's enemy, and deployed to the Eastern front apparently due to apprehensions about their potential disloyalty); cf. Stachura 2024a.

[49] Procop. *De bellis* I 11,5, V 11,20, V 20, 8, V 20, 10, VI 18, 6, VI 18, 7, VIII 3, 7; furthermore ἀνδρείος and ἀνδρείως *ibidem* I 13, 33, I 21, 7, II 21, 14, III 12, 21, IV 2, 17, IV 3, 14, VI 12, 24, VI 26, 13, VII 25, 14, VII 32, 5, VII 36, 22, VII 40, 9, VIII 3, 7, VIII 12, 4, VIII 12, 31, VIII 23, 34. In the same sense, sometimes also ἡ ἀνδρία; cf. Procop. *De bellis* III 4, 20, IV 15, 31. I have used, here and further on, the resources of the *TLG* for finding instances of the particular terms in *De bellis*.

[50] It can be conjectured that the term is used in this meaning at the following places: Procop. *De bellis* I 1, 8, I 7, 31, I 7, 35, I 14, 13, I 14, 15, I 14, 19, I 18, 27, I 18, 31, II 3, 26, II 18, 8, II 20, 26, II 21, 29, II 29, 35, III 3, 6, III 4, 27, III 7, 13, III 13, 7, III 19, 10, III 23, 5, III 25, 14, IV 1, 13, IV 1, 16, IV 1, 17, IV 2, 18, IV 2, 25, IV 2, 27, IV 7,

There is no doubt that the virtue of fortitude is indicated by the verb ἀνδραγαθίζομαι, as it signifies that a person showed fortitude through [their] specific acts or deeds.[51]

The closest to our sense of 'courage' would be, in turn, ἡ προθυμία,[52] i.e. the state of spirit that soldiers should demonstrate in a battle – calls for *prothymia*, almost monotonously reiterated in pre-battle orations, prove that even soldiers with the virtue of fortitude must make an effort of forging it into the actual valour. Moreover, there are a number of other terms denoting bold actions, being displays of either fortitude or reprehensible audacity. A clearly positive overtone is found in ἡ εὐτολμία,[53] usually meaning a noble kind of 'daring', and most instances of τὸ θάρσος,[54] a term also indicating confidence. On the other

21 (but cf. n. 9), IV 10, 13, IV 11, 24, IV 11, 30, IV 11, 44, IV 15, 24, IV 15, 28, IV 24, 14, IV 24, 15, IV 27, 18, V 2, 17, V 8, 43, V 10, 33, V 11, 21, V 12, 14, V 16, 6, V 18, 10, V 18, 12, V 18, 16, V 18, 18, V 20, 9, V 24, 5, V 24, 6, V 27, 21, V 28, 9, V 29, 12, V 29, 39, VI 2, 14, VI 12, 20, VI 13, 14, VI 21, 32, VI 21, 35, VI 23, 11, VI 23, 18, VI 23, 19, VI 26, 13, VI 27, 16, VI 27, 29, VI 28, 16, VI 30, 10, VI 30, 14, VII 4, 6, VII 9, 16, VII 11, 1, VII 11, 25, VII 14, 6, VII 21, 7, VII 22, 5, VII 23, 11, VII 24, 1, VII 28, 10, VII 28, 15, VII 34, 28, VII 36, 2, VII 36, 3, VII 39, 1, VIII 3, 7, VIII 8, 4, VIII 8, 26, VIII 11, 41, VIII 11, 52, VIII 12, 2, VIII 12, 4, VIII 12, 29, VIII 12, 30, VIII 12, 34, VIII 14, 14, VIII 19, 21, VIII 23, 16, VIII 23, 28, VIII 23, 30, VIII 29, 22, VIII 30, 1, VIII 30, 6, VIII 30, 11, VIII 30, 14, VIII 32, 12, VIII 35, 20, VIII 35, 23. In certain instances, however, it may be assumed that the point is not the virtue of fortitude but rather its manifestation in specific circumstances, e.g. when there is an argument to the effect that *arete* 'cannot dwell together with hunger' (Procop. *De bellis* VIII 23, 16).

[51] Procop. *De bellis* I 14, 19, I 18, 22, III 19, 6, III 25, 16, IV 1, 14, IV 11, 41, IV 11, 46, IV 15, 24, IV 15, 35, IV 27, 16, V 20, 10, V 28, 13, VI 12, 20, VI 23, 31, VII 4, 13, VII 25, 21, VIII 12, 10, VIII 14, 17, VIII 16, 26, VIII 23, 16, VIII 23, 22, VIII 30, 11.

[52] Along with προθυμέομαι, πρόθυμος. Procop. *De bellis* I 18, 24, I 18, 25 (here as an attempt at giving a positive interpretation to a behaviour which is clearly an example of audacity) II 30, 16, III 15, 33, IV 1, 10, IV 1, 11, IV 1, 15, IV 2, 26, IV 15, 39, IV 20, 9, V 24, 21, V 28, 7, V 28, 8, VI 3, 29, VI 23, 29, VIII 8, 5, VIII 8, 7, VIII 14, 16, VIII 14, 18, VIII 23, 5, VIII 23, 23, VIII 28, 10, VIII 30, 1, VIII 30, 20, VIII 31, 9, VIII 32, 12 (here distinguished from ἀρετή); ἡ προθυμία may also denote ardour or a willing action, not necessarily in military contexts (e.g. Procop. *De bellis* VI 7, 3).

[53] Procop. *De bellis* II 16, 6, IV 1, 13, IV 3, 9, IV 18, 6, 28, 8, V 29, 4, VI 12, 22, VII 4, 4, VII 24, 12, VII 25, 15, VII 36, 21, VIII 30, 13, VIII 31, 8, VIII 35, 21. In a positive sense ('most bold'): εὐτολμότατοι used in Procop. *De bellis* II, 8, 11, V 10, 6, VI 3, 8, VI 21, 30 (λίαν εὔτολμοι) VII 1, 14, VII 24, 24.

[54] Clearly negative, meaning audacity only in Procop. *De bellis* IV 15, 26, VII 34, 19, VIII 23, 26, VIII 32, 8.

hand, negative overtones are almost always found in τὸ θράσος[55] and in a large part of the instances of ἡ τόλμα (including some semantically related words).[56] and then these should be construed as indicative of audacity as a fault of character or at least a reproach towards rashness.[57] Of course, it should be observed that audacity (τὸ θράσος) may appear to people as a manifestation of fortitude (ἡ ἀνδρεία) or noble risk-taking (ἡ εὐτολμία),[58] but – on the other hand – a plan that appears to be a crazy audacity (ἡ τόλμα) prevails thanks to the fortitude behind it (ἡ ἀρετή).[59]

Before I begin to discuss some illustrative examples, I should provide one more explanation here. The present discussion is not aimed at the critical evaluation of existing translations. For example, I do not put forward a proposition of rendering the virtue of fortitude exclusively as the noun 'fortitude' (or its counterparts in other modern languages) in the name of the required precision and accuracy in translation. Such a rendering would sound artificial, bombastic, or old-fashioned. However, precision ought to be maintained throughout our discussion and

---

[55] Procop. *De bellis* I 3, 17, IV 21, 15, V 7, 11, V 20, 8, V 20, 10, VI 1, 33, VI 10, 7, VI 16, 4, VI 18, 2, VII 17, 3, VII 25, 14–15, VII 27, 5, VII 34, 34, VIII 12, 11, VIII 23, 23, VIII 30, 4; in addition θρασύνομαι I 3, 12, V 29, 12, VI 3, 16, VI 30, 18, VIII 23, 25; θρασύς I 5, 25, III 10, 7, VIII 8, 12 (positive or neutral meaning: τὸ θράσος II 9, 5; θρασύς I 11, 4). The difference between τὸ θάρσος and τὸ θράσος is defined by the mindlessness of the latter; examples cf. Liddell, Scott 1996: 804.

[56] Procop. *De bellis* I 24, 33, II 19, 10, IV 26, 7, VII 4, 5, VIII 23, 24; in addition τολμάω I 7, 28, I 21, 18, I 24, 33, I 24, 53, II 5, 14, II 8, 31, III 10, 7, IV 1, 24, V 8, 17, VII 25, 15, VII 30, 4, VII 30, 10; ὁ τολμητής II 22, 1, τὸ τόλμημα IV 28, 12. Neutral or positive overtones: ἡ τόλμα in Procop. *De bellis* IV 11, 35, V 18, 26, VI 16,12, VII 24 1, VII 26, 1, VIII 35, 34; in addition τολμάω I 4, 23, I 18, 39, I 25, 30, I 26, 5, III 6, 7, III 10, 7, III 20, 16, V 10, 9, VI 1, 12, VI 3, 15, VI 4, 24, VI 23, 8, VI 23, 15, VII 38, 7, VIII 14, 29, VIII 32, 19, VIII 35, 3; ὁ τολμητής I 24, 52, V 2, 13, VI 10, 10.

[57] There are significant cases where these terms acquire a negative shade in connection with figures whose conduct it is used to characterise: with Khosroes (Procop. *De bellis* VIII 8,12), John of Cappadocia (Procop. *De bellis* III 10, 7), and Theodora (Procop. *De bellis* I 24, 33, here, spoken by the empress as a self-ironical admonition, but it is worth mentioning the hypothesis in Meier 2004: 99–104 that Theodora's entire speech is supposed – as intended by Procopius – to make an understated association of the imperial couple's reign with the tyranny of Dionysius in Syracuse).

[58] Procop. *De bellis* V 11, 20, VII 24, 14–15, VIII 12, 10–11, cf. further on.

[59] Procop. *De bellis* VII 24, 1, VII 26, 1.

analysis of the subject. In this instance, we must not, even if unconsciously, transfer the broad and somewhat blurred sense of the word 'courage' into the discourse in Procopius, who – as we shall see – not only makes a clear-cut distinction between fortitude and audacity, but also draws some far-reaching consequences from that difference. For this reason, where it is absolutely clear that the virtue of fortitude is being discussed or referred to, I have consistently used the terms 'fortitude' and 'virtue', evading the use of such ambiguous designations as 'bravery', 'courage', or 'valour'/'valor'. Similarly, where Procopius – in my opinion – describes audacity as a vice as well as the resulting conduct, all in a negative context, I have referred to 'audacity', which may of course also include some random acts of reckless bravado ('rashness').

The discourse on audacity and true fortitude in *De bellis*

A philosophical or quasi-philosophical discourse turns up, as a general rule, in *De bellis* not as part of the narrator's own commentary, but it is spoken by the protagonists of the narrative in question, becoming a way of character-building in the story and expressing the points of view (not necessarily shared by the narrator) attributed to those figures.[60] At the same time, the very distinction between audacity and the true fortitude as well as considerations on the nature of 'audacity' are presented as a commonly accepted truth, even above the boundaries of cultures if the argumentation referring to that truth is supposed to convince Persian or Gothic warriors. It is all the more interesting – as we shall see – in that the narrator seems to contest this (alleged) *communis opinio* on one particular point.

A noteworthy thing here is that calls for the besieged to surrender turn out, on several occasions, as opportunities for Procopius to formulate his quasi-philosophical exposition. The best-known example is the letter to Gelimer, the last king of the Vandals, from Pharas, the commander of a Herulian unit in Roman service. Initially in a coy tone, describing himself as 'a simple barbarian', Pharas writes that he does

[60] Brodka 2022: 38.

not know how to express himself in a more sophisticated manner, only to follow up this introduction with delving into a (relatively) profound deliberation over the values of freedom and bondage or the proper approach to fortunes and misfortunes ordained by Fate.[61]

The other two calls for surrender to be considered here are not inferior in the complexity of the argumentation.[62] The first one is addressed, on behalf of the Gothic king Vitiges, to Belisarius (besieged in Rome) and is spoken by a Gothic envoy named Albis. This message is delivered in public, in the presence of Belisarius, his officers, as well as the Roman senators,[63] hence there are as if two recipients and two messages. As Vitiges was aware of growing discontent among the inhabitants of Rome in the face of an unfolding siege, he wished to drive a wedge even further, by means of his envoy's words, between them and the 'Romans' from Constantinople. That is why he presents an offer of safe evacuation from the city to the Roman commander in the presence of the leaders of the local community, not to the officer himself. Describing the Eastern-Roman soldiers as invaders, he aims to antagonise the people of Rome and the troops defending the city, but he also intends to offend the Eastern Romans (Byzantines), perhaps even wishing to evoke some distrust of their own emperor. The blame for the invasion is not laid on the 'civilian' population of Rome or even Belisarius, but on Justinian himself, whose fortitude is questioned here – remaining in the safety of his 'fortified camp' (namely, beyond the walls of Constantinople), the emperor 'inflicts the evils of war upon his own subjects'.[64] As if unwittingly, the envoy remarks

[61] Procop. *De bellis* IV 6, 5–26, cf. Pazdernik 2006, Stachura 2024b.

[62] It could be said, with a dose of sarcasm, that this is most evidently something to the effect of the early examples of Germanic philosophical thought as all these philosophical arguments are reported as spoken by Germanic figures: Herulian officer Pharas, envoys from the king of the Goths Vitiges, and another envoy, of *magister militum* Bessas (a Goth by origin). Likewise, the other passage in question is a speech by the Gothic commanders cheering on their soldiers before launching an attack on the Romans. But spitefulness would be out of place here – as pointed out in Signes-Codoñer 2003: 221–226, Procopius would readily bring up certain views as being uttered by barbarians-adversaries of Rome, e.g. when he wishes to criticise the emperor's politics in a vicarious way.

[63] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 8–14.

[64] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 12.

on the 'life of soft luxury' of the Old Rome's citizens,[65] drawing the senators' attention to the hardships of the siege, but on the other hand, making the officers of an outnumbered Eastern-Roman corps realise the mediocre combat value of potential recruits.

We are in particular interested here in the course of a perversely moralising argumentation pointing to a difference between the true fortitude and audacity: 'Long ago, O general, mankind has made true and proper distinctions among the names of things. One of these distinctions is this, that audacity (τὸ θράσος) is different from fortitude (ἡ ἀνδρεία). For when the former takes possession of a man it brings him into danger with dishonour, but the latter adequately brings him a reputation for virtue.'[66] If Belisarius was guided by fortitude indeed, Albis sneeringly suggests he should prove it by attacking the numerically vastly superior Gothic troops assembled at the city walls.[67] But otherwise: 'If you came to attack us because you were possessed by audacity, certainly you now regret the thoughtless undertaking. For the opinions of those who have made a desperate venture tend to change when they find themselves in serious straits.'[68] In this spirit, the decision of withstanding the siege should be understood as cowardice: 'Is it not monstrous that you should sit in Rome hemmed in as you are and in abject terror of the enemy?'[69] The offer of leaving the city in safety

[65] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 11. A broader context for this motif in the envoy's speech is made up by the ideology of the Gothic rulers of Italy, according to which the martial Goths are the guardians of the ancient Romans' descendants living in peace (cf. Arnold 2014, Stewart 2017).

[66] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 8–9 Πάλαι, ὦ στρατηγέ, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εὖ τε καὶ καλῶς διώρισται τὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ὀνόματα· ἐν οἷς ἓν τόδε ἐστί, θράσος κεχώρισται ἀνδρείας. τὸ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν οἷς ἂν προσγένοιτο, ξὺν ἀτιμία ἐς κίνδυνον ἄγει, τὸδὲ δόξαν ἀρετῆς ἱκανῶς φέρεται. Transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 299, modified: for the reasons I have explained in the second section of this article I choose 'audacity' instead of 'rashness' (τὸ θράσος), 'fortitude' instead of 'bravery' (ἡ ἀνδρεία) and 'virtue' instead of 'valor' (ἡ ἀρετή). I have started the second sentence from 'For' (as translated at Dewing 1919: 197) in order to put a stronger emphasis on its logical connection with the first one.

[67] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 10.

[68] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 10–11 εἰ δέ γε θράσει ἐχόμενος ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὥρμησαι, πάντως σοι καὶ μεταμέλει τῶν εἰκῆ πεπραγμένων. τῶν γὰρ ἀπονενοημένων αἱ γνῶμαι, ὅταν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι γένωνται, μετανοεῖν φιλοῦσι. Transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 299.

[69] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 12 πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον, σὲ μὲν οὕτω καθειργμένον τε καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους κατεπτηχότα ἐν Ῥώμῃ καθῆσθαι. Transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 299.

is represented with the tone of provocative ridicule: 'For we deem it neither holy nor worthy of humane manners to press hard upon those who have converted to prudence.'[70] The stance ascribed to Belisarius is a classic bipolar *furor* of a villain: he passes from a mindless 'audacity' straight into a fit of paralysing fear at the moment when he comes to realise the extent of a danger he exposed himself to. In fact, according to the envoy's words, the Roman commander would have already proved his cowardice by restraining from attacking the Goths standing in the open field and now he can only choose between a cowardly decision to stay in the besieged city and a retreat in the face of his enemies who 'taught him a new way of prudence'.

A message addressed to the Persian garrison of the besieged Petra by the *magister militum* Bessas is delivered in even more dramatic circumstances. As the final act of the confrontation over the pivotal fortress in Lasica draws near, the Persians – cut off from their native land and any hope for rescue – prepare themselves for certain death. To minimise his losses and recruit excellent warriors for the emperor, Bessas presents the Persians with a proposal of entering Roman service. This offer is delivered, on his orders, by an anonymous Roman soldier addressing the Persians from under the walls. Procopius gives it an ornate phrasing in the form of a moral admonition.[71] 'Most noble Persians, what has come over you that you are clinging to destruction, courting death with such an irrational passion and conspicuously dishonoring the practice of virtue?'[72] 'For it is not fortitudinous (ἀνδρεῖων) to resist the inevitable nor wise to refuse to submit to those

[70] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 13: τὸ γὰρ ἐπεμβαίνειν τοῖς τὸ σῶφρον μεταμαθοῦσιν οὔτε ὅσιον οὔτε ἄξιον τρόπου τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου εἶναι νομίζομεν. Transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 299, modified: 'monstrous', as proposed here by Dewing 1919: 199, seems to me more appropriate than 'absurd', as it ridicules Belisarius' attitude overtly, not just the specific situation he is currently in.

[71] Procop. *De bellis* VIII, 12, 4–13.

[72] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 4: Τί πεπονθότες ἐφ' ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς, ὦ βέλτισται Πέρσαι, τὸν ὄλεθρον διατείνεσθε τοῦτον, ἐπιτηδεύοντες τὰ θανάσιμα σπουδῇ ἀλογίστῳ καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα διαφανῶς ἀτιμάζοντες. (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 488, modified: 'the practice of virtue' seems to me closer to the verbal sense of τῆς ἀρετῆς τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα than 'valiant deeds'; it is also the choice made by Brodka 2015: 354).

who have won'[73] – he continues. Risking one's life for some sheer bravado (ἡ ἀλαζονεία) is described as lunacy (ἡ ἀπόνοια),[74] willing persistence in a state of danger with no prospect of gaining any benefit is not a display of fortitude (ἀνδραγαθίζομαι) but a sheer death wish.[75] It is only at the end that the word 'audacity' turns up (τὸ θράσος): 'Wise people do not consider an audacious daring (τὸ θράσος) which under the pretence of boldness (τὸ δραστήριον)[76] leads to a foolish death (ὁ θάνατος ἀνόητος) as a praiseworthy deed.'[77] Once again, yielding to lunacy is a distinctive sign of audacity, but here it is simply about a mindless search for one's death, a fight for vainglorious fame, with no chance for achieving any success. What it involves is that the real virtue is inseparably connected with reasonableness. Another noteworthy point is the tone of moral superiority, like the one found in the first speech, linked with the offer of sparing the opponent: 'We expect, as is customary for Christian Romans, to feel compassion for you though you throw life to the winds, and look upon it as a trivial matter'.[78]

Both orations are obviously Procopius' creations, but it is also obvious that, as the narrator, he is detached from the appraisal of the reality presented there. The Persians' decision to die in battle is described

[73] VIII 12, 4 οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνδρεῖων τὸ τοῖς ἀμηχάνοις ἀντιστατεῖν, οὐδὲ ξυνετὸν τὸ μὴ βούλεσθαι τοῖς κεκρατηκόσιν ὑπείκειν. (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 488, modified: maybe 'fortitudinous' seems a little bit awkward in modern English, but for reasons of precision I have chosen the possibly nearest translation of the adverb ἀνδρεῖων instead of the descriptive 'manly thing'.

[74] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 6.

[75] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 10.

[76] Although τὸ δραστήριον is seemingly used as an equivalent of fortitude here, it would usually rather mean a dynamic or perhaps even audacious act (cf. Liddell, Scott 1996: 448).

[77] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 11: τὸ δὲ εἰς θάνατον ἀνόητον θράσος τοῦ δραστηρίου πρόσχημα οὐκ εὐπρεπὲς τοῖς γε σώφροσιν εἶναι δοκεῖ. (my own translation; I think it better highlights the terms discussed in the article than 'senseless daring that leads to death under a pretense of being dynamic merits no praise, at least in the judgment of thinking men' given by Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 488).

[78] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 8: θανατώντων φειδόμεθα καὶ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἐνδιαθυπτομένους τε καὶ βλακευόντας ἐλεεῖν ἀξιοῦμεν, ᾗ Ῥωμαίοις Χριστιανοῖς νόμος. (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 488). The term βλακεύω once again points to stupidity.

simply as a manifestation of virtue (δι᾽ ἀρετὴν).[79] The Gothic envoys' allegations are countered by Belisarius himself in his response following their speech,[80] while the defenders' fortitude is emphasized repeatedly in the account of the battle for the City.[81] Although these two orations turn out to be morally perverse, they refer to a view that is represented as commonly recognised (by Romans, Goths, and Persians), linking true fortitude with prudence, and audacity with a suicidal, mindless arrogance, which is only a semblance (but essentially a contradiction) of virtue.

Another notable example of discourse describing the nature of 'audacity' can be found as part of the most common type of orations in *De bellis* – where commanders encourage and cheer on their soldiers before fighting.[82] These do not necessarily appear to be the most appropriate place for a censure of audacity as their primary purpose is to instil combat fervour in subordinate soldiers (*prothymia*). The criticism of 'audacity' can be found then in characteristics of the opponent: the point is to persuade their own soldiers to believe that the enemies display only a semblance of fortitude and their audacity shall quickly transform into fear in a confrontation with the truly valiant warriors.

This speech[83] is delivered by the Gothic commanders Gibal and Gundulf, and comes just before the most precisely described naval battle in *De bellis*. The Romans, as portrayed in their words, turn out to be a clinical example of the proximity between arrogance, cowardice, and madness. 'These accursed wretches' once driven from Italy 'were hiding in we know not what corners of the Earth', but they have now dared (τετολμήκασιν) to confront the Goths once again. Yet it is only

[79] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 2; a little earlier in the text, he credits both sides of the conflict with the 'fortitude never heard of before' (Procop. *De bellis* VIII 11, 41). Let us notice a very similar situation here: 'valiant' soldiers of the Roman garrison prepare themselves to die, but Totila – seeing their unshaken resolve – offers them terms of honourable surrender; at which point, those soldiers would choose to serve in the Gothic king's army (Procop. *De bellis* VII 36, 21–26).

[80] Procop. *De bellis* V 20, 15–18.

[81] Procop. *De bellis* V 16, 6, V 18, 12, V 18, 16, V 18, 18, V 29, 39, VI 2, 14.

[82] On this role of the orations delivered before battles, see Stewart 2020: 102–103, Różycki 2021: 204–216.

[83] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 23, 23–28.

'an audacity born of stupidity' (ἐκ τῆς ἀβουλίας ἐγγενόμενον θράσυς)[84] and it must be stopped before this madness (ἡ ἀπονοία) turns into something even larger. This stupidity (ἡ ἀμαθία), if unchallenged at the beginning, turns into boundless audacity (ἡ τόλμα), but ultimately ending in calamity for the fools. The Goths should therefore swiftly demonstrate to their opponents that – as typical 'Greeklings' – they are natural-born cowards (ἄνανδροι φύσει)[85] and that they are now displaying their audacity (θρασύνονται), instead of recognising their defeat. Here is exactly where this not-so-obvious equating of audacity with cowardice takes place: 'For cowardice (ἡ ἀνανδρία), when merely despised, is emboldened, because audacity (τὸ θάρσος) loses its restraints merely by being allowed to exist.'[86] If the Goths demonstrate their fortitude in combat, the opponents will not be able to put up resistance for too long. The arrogant pride (τὸ φρόνημα), which does not go hand in hand with the actual strength, seems to reach its height before a battle, but it will soon disperse when the fighting begins.

In actual fact, then, the aggressors' audacity is the result of their mindlessness and only serves as a disguise for their cowardice, which would be eventually revealed in a confrontation with the real fortitude of the Goths. Unbridled, and prone to losing all control and growing to a tremendous extent, in the end it is bound to lead *audax* to an even more devastating calamity.

The irony of the situation lies in the fact that the speech of Gibal and Gundulf will prove to be just a display of boastfulness, because the Roman sailors will turn out to be superior to the Goths (inexperienced

[84] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 23, 23. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 515 translates 'the daring to which their stupidity has led them'.

[85] For the Goths belittling the martial value of the 'Greeklings' (οἱ Γραικοί), see Procop. *De bellis* V 18, 40; this scornful name for the soldiers from the Eastern part of the Empire can be found in Procop. *De bellis* V 29, 11, VII 9, 12, VII 21, 4, VII 21, 12, VII 21, 14, VIII 23, 25 (where it is used by the Goths), IV 27, 38 (by the African usurper Gontharis). But this situation is complicated by the fact that – as Procopius complains – Imperial officials also reportedly mistreated some soldiers under the pretense they were 'Greeklings', because of some negative stereotypes connected with the people of Greece (whatever 'Hellas' in this context would mean) – cf. Procop. *Historia Arcana* 24, 7).

[86] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 23, 26: ἀνανδρία γὰρ καταφρονηθεῖσα ἐπὶ παρρησίαν ἐξάγεται μείζω, ἐπεὶ τῷ προϊέναι τὸ θάρσος ἄοκνον γίνεται (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 515).

the Roman sailors will turn out to be superior to the Goths (inexperienced in naval warfare) in the forthcoming battle.[87] Regardless of who is 'objectively' right here, it is worth observing just another conviction, found in some pre-battle rhetorical pronouncements: true fortitude cannot be reconciled with a nefarious motivation.[88] This criticism appears to be particularly justified where the opponents are portrayed as rebels against the established order: 'For a throng of men united by no law but brought together by injustice is hardly able to perform fortitudinous, as virtue cannot cohabit with lawlessness'[89] – as Belisarius argues in his speech just before the battle against the revolting Roman soldiers, in his further words depicting their leadership as a newly established tyranny which, unable to inspire either respect or fear among its soldiers,

[87] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 23, 29–38. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the anonymous reviewer of my article for adding a very significant argument, cited *in extenso* as follows: 'More could be said here. I would suggest they prove to be real Romans and not Greeks. Procopius indeed lays bare the lies concerning the Goths' pre-battle set speech, proclaiming that "The Romans … handled the fighting ἀνδρείως and their ships skillfully, putting their boats head on and neither separating far from each other nor crowding together closer than was necessary, but always keeping their movements toward or from each other properly coordinated." In sharp contrast, the Goths – whom Procopius tellingly describes as "barbarians" – through "a lack of experience in sea fighting", (…οἱ βάρβαροι ἀπειρίᾳ τοῦ ναυμαχεῖν …) cannot control their ships or their emotions and so fight in a disorderly and individualistic fashion. As the chaos amongst the Gothic ranks grow, the marines lose control of their emotions and shout at one another. Incapable of controlling themselves they are unable to control their fleet; their ships break formation and smash into one another, while other warships become separated from the group. Left to fend for themselves the Gothic ships are easy prey for Valerian and John's *dromōnes,* which methodically sink thirty-six of the Gothic warships. Only Gundulf manages to escape with eleven *dromōnes*. Heading straight to Ancona, he delivers the news of his defeat to the besieging army, which retreats to safety. Gundulf, learning a lesson from the mistake the Romans had made at Laureate, then burns his *dromōnes* to keep them from falling into Roman hands. So, from a literary sense, the story of Gundulf and the Gothic fleet begun at the end of Book 7 comes full circle here in Book 8.'

[88] Cf. the remark on Thuc. III 82, 4 above.

[89] Procop. *De bellis* IV 15, 24: ὅμιλος γὰρ ἀνθρώπων οὐ νόμῳ συνίοντων, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ ἀδίκου ξυνειλεγμένων ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι ἥκιστα πέφυκεν, οὐδαμῶς τῆς ἀρετῆς τῷ παρανόμῳ, ξυνοικίζεσθαι δυναμένης. (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 225, modified: for the reasons I have explained in the second section of this article, I have chosen to translate ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι as 'to perform fortitudinous' instead of 'to perform bravely').

fails at enforcing discipline in the ranks.[90] The rebels are obviously impudent (*audax*) men: they rose against the emperor, murdered innocent African civilians, and dared (τολμάω) to lunge at their own brothers-in-arms.[91] It is significant that – on the other side of the battlefield – the rebel leader Stotzas sees his soldiers' fortitude exactly in their readiness to fight for freedom they gained by forsaking their allegiance to the emperor.[92]

Also in the speech by Narses prior to the battle of Taginae, the Goths are depicted as rebellious servants of the emperor, who appointed a simple man as their 'tyrant'.[93] They move into battle against any rational judgement: 'They are courting death through a kind of mindless audacity and displaying the rashness of frenzy, thereby daring to embrace certain death and not even seeking refuge in some plausible hope, nor even looking forward to see what may happen to them through a strange and unexpected turn of events, but being indisputably led by God to the punishment earned by their political actions.'[94] The course of events seems to confirm the Roman general's words as the Goths take up a suicidal tactic that the historian himself calls 'stupidity' twice (ἡ ἀβουλία).[95] As the narrator, however, he does not ascribe it to the verdicts ordained by God's justice but to the blind Fate which had, until then, favoured the Gothic king Totila for no apparent reason and now, also for no reason at all, it brings doom upon him.[96] He thus

[90] Procop. *De bellis* IV 15, 25.

[91] Procop. *De bellis* IV 15, 19–20.

[92] Procop. *De bellis* IV 15, 30.

[93] Procop., *De bellis* VIII 30, 2.

[94] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 30, 4: οἱ δὲ θράσει θανατῶντες ἀλογίστῳ τινὶ καὶ μανιώδη προπέτειαν ἐνδεικνύμενοι προὖπτον αὐτοῖς θάνατον ἀναιρεῖσθαι τολμῶσιν, οὐ προβεβλημένοι τὴν ἀγαθὴν ἐλπίδα, οὐδὲ τί ἐπιγενήσεται σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τοῦ παραλόγου καὶ τοῦ παραδόξου καραδοκοῦντες, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ διαρρήδην ἐπὶ τὰς ποινὰς τῶν πεπολιτευμένων ἀγόμενοι.(transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 530, modified; I have chosen 'a kind of mindless audacity' instead of 'irrational boldness' (θράσει … ἀλογίστῳ τινὶ), and also 'political actions' instead of 'actions against the republic', as it is not stated clearly if the alleged revolt of the Goths would have been an act against the specifically Roman order or the political order in general.

[95] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 32, 7–8.

[96] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 32, 28–29.

shows he is far from sharing the judgement expressed in the Roman commander's speech.

In his warnings against 'audacity' directed at his own soldiers, it cannot appear, of course, as a fruit of moral malignancy, since it would be rather imprudent temperamental behaviour and choosing a senseless exposure to danger. Prior to the battle of Callinicum,[97] in an attempt to persuade soldiers eager for combat, Belisarius makes no moralising claims, only mitigating the ardour of his men and pointing out that they have no need for exposing themselves to danger in a situation when the Persians are in retreat anyway.[98] Nonetheless, the soldiers' demeanour itself, at least as demonstrated by those most loudly shouting for rushing into battle (recruits from Lycaonia), is in this case a classic example of audacious arrogance: first, they revile their own commander, accusing him of cowardice, but when the time comes to make a stand, they turn out to be too frightened to draw arms even in their own defence.[99] At Sisauranum, Belisarius warns against the 'irrational eagerness'[100], inducing soldiers to march far into the enemy territory with no regard for the well-defended fortress left in the rear. On this occasion, he speaks the following maxim: 'Inexperienced audacity leads to destruction, but prudent hesitation always saves those who adhere to it.'[101] The two virtues, 'fortitude' and 'prudence', turn out to be inseparable.

[97] Procop. *De bellis* I 18, 24–25. The version of events in Procopius defends Belisarius, who was probably accused of the defeat at Callinicum as well as fleeing from this battlefield, cf. Malalas XVIII 60–61 (464–466), Pseudo-Zacharias IX 6b (97). Different judgements on the value of three accounts on this battle are proposed by the authors such as Greatrex 1998: 193–207, Hughes 2009: 59–64, Brodka 2011, Whately 2016: IX–XI, on the older statements see Greatrex 1998: 194 note 5.

[98] Procop. *De bellis* I 18, 19.

[99] Procop. *De bellis* I, 18, 38 – about the earlier insolent behaviour when they approached the commander and accused him outright of being a coward; cf. Procop., *De bellis* I, 18, 24. Both the soldiers and Belisarius, in an attempt to justify this behaviour, call it ἡ προθυμία (Procop. *De bellis* I, 18, 24–25). For a more extensive analysis of this event see Stachura 2024a.

[100] Procop. *De bellis* II 19, 10: ἀλογίστῳ σπουδῇ (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis: 112).

[101] Prokopius, *De bellis* II 19, 10: τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀμαθὴς ἐς ὄλεθρον φέρει, μέλλησις δὲ σώφρων ἐς τὸ σώζειν ἀεὶ τοὺς αὐτῇ χρωμένους ἱκανῶς πέφυκεν. (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis: 112, modified: I have chosen 'inexperienced audacity' instead of 'stupid daring', which seems to me also closer to the literal meaning of τόλμα ἀμαθὴς, and 'prudent' instead of 'discreet', as I am convinced σώφρων points here to ἡ σωφρωσύνη).

and prudence, only referring to fortitude through its association with prudence.[102]

However, Belisarius' prudence shown at Sisauranum is shaded by Procopius' comment in the *Historia Arcana* to the effect that he actually decided to order a retreat to be able to return to his wife as soon as he could, and thus exposing himself to allegations of sacrificing the good of the state for his personal affection and passion.[103] His conduct at Callinicum also meets with some serious accusations.[104] It is possible that the above-mentioned both orations are formulated as Procopius' justification of his military commander, bringing up moralistic argumentation just in order to conceal some actual, far less glorious, motivations.

There is still no doubt that prudence is a remedy for audacity. In *De bellis* the most frequently used adjectives associated with 'audacity' are 'mindless'/'thoughtless' (ἀλόγιστος, ἄλογος)[105] and 'unreasonable'/'imprudent' (ἀπερίσκεπτος, ἀνεπίσκεπτος).[106] It could be inferred hence that the audacity aided by virtue and reason is still boldness, yet it loses its negative quality. The logic that connects it with lunacy is then reversed: a bold plan may appear as ostensibly crazy (μανιώδης), but it is implemented and followed through thanks to the commander's fortitude (ἡ ἀρετή).[107] It could be conjectured that the true fortitude was indeed behind the bold deeds which proved to be successful – just as Totila explains the Gothic soldiers' respect for Belisarius, yet suggesting that it was merely, in this case, a daredevil's (ὁ θρασύς)

[102] Procop. *De bellis* VII 1, 8–10 (justice and generosity), 11–12 (temperance), 13–15 (prudence).

[103] Procop. *Historia Arcana* 2, 18-25.

[104] According to Pseudo-Zacharias' account, he is pressured to go into battle not by the undisciplined soldiers but by the other Roman officers (Pseudo-Zacharias IX 4 (95). Malalas contrasts the procrastinating general Belisarius with the *dux* Sunikas, the real hero of the campaign. As he recounts, Sunikas saves the day for the Romans, while Belisarius fled from the battlefield (Malalas XVIII 60 (463–465). For a comparison between Procopius' and Malalas' accounts cf. Brodka 2011.

[105] Procop. *De bellis* I 3, 17, II 9, 5, VI 1, 33, VI 3, 32, VI 10, 7, VI 16, 4, VI 18, 2, VII 34, 34; cf. also VI 30, 18, where resisting the temptation of audacity is associated with an experienced soldier's prudence.

[106] Procop. *De bellis* IV 21, 15, IV 25, 14, VII 27, 5.

[107] Procop. *De bellis* VII 24, 1.

lucky fortune.[108] Even with this most favourable interpretation taken into account, 'audacity' would still appear to be constantly inclined to the risk of getting out of reason's control. It can be heard in another maxim, as spoken by Solomon, Belisarius' successor in the African theatre of military action: 'For audacity, when it is commensurate with one's strength, may be of some benefit to those who use it, but when it exceeds that, it leads into danger.'[109]

At the same time, we should make a clear-cut distinction between the guilty mindlessness and the fight of a desperado when nothing but the valiant death in combat can be the end. The end of king Totila,[110] *magister militum* Sittas,[111] and also the death of *bukelarios* Ricilas[112] is recognised by Procopius as unworthy of their earlier fortitude, since each one of these deaths was the result of the stupidity of an otherwise valiant commander or warrior.[113] In contrast, the historiographer admires the fortitude of those who choose death over the disgrace of surrender. As Mundilas, commander of the desperately embattled garrison of Mediolanum, explains to his soldiers: all people shall die in due time, but it is up to each man to choose the way they will die – while those who were born as men (οἱ γενναίοι ἄνδρες) accept death valiantly and gain glory, those who are unmanly cowards (οἱ ἄνανδροι) will die after previously drawing upon themselves the laughter and scorn of their enemies.[114] The disgrace of surrender could have been somehow

[108] Procop. *De bellis* VII 25, 14–15.

[109] Procop. *De bellis* IV 11, 35: τόλμα γὰρ τῇ μὲν δυνάμει ξυμμετρουμένη τάχα τι καὶ τοὺς αὐτῇ χρωμένους ὀνήσει, ὑπεραίρουσα δὲ ταύτην ἐς κίνδυνον ἄγει. (transl. Dewing-Kaldellis 2014: 214, modified: I have chosen to translate ἡ τόλμα as 'audacity' instead of 'daring', although I agree that in this particular context it is rather more about following the martial ardour which may – but does not have to – be a sign of the vice).

[110] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 32, 28.

[111] Procop. *De bellis* II 3, 26.

[112] Procop. *De bellis* VII 11, 25.

[113] Let us refer here to a slightly different opinion by Agathias (Agathias, *Historiae* I 14, 3–7) on the valiant but senseless death of the Herulian warrior Phulcaris, caused by his unbridled barbarian *thrasys*. In this specific case, however, his vice appears to co-exist with the real *andreia* (for a discussion of this instance in a broader context, see Stewart 2022: 114).

[114] Procop. *De bellis* VI 21, 31–32.

their enemies.[114] The disgrace of surrender could have been somehow justified if it had saved the inhabitants of the city[115] – however, the bitter irony behind this sentence is in the fact that the soldiers, while failing to obey Mundilas' orders, really saved their own lives at the expense of the civilians they were to defend.[116]

The inconsistency of Procopius?

Although Procopius seems to be sparing in dispensing words of praise for the enemies of Rome,[117] he can certainly appreciate – with much admiration – the fortitude of those who choose to fight until the end. The case in point is the previously mentioned Persian garrison of Petra (these Persians preferred to choose death rather than the shame of surrender, and they all died in flames, inspiring admiration among the besieging troops),[118] but also participants of the 'final battles' of their nations, such as the Vandals at Tricamarum[119] and the Goths on Mount Lactarius.[120] The honours given to Teias and his comrades are even greater in view of the fact that the account of their last stand comes at the close of the *History of Wars*. Even though the Romans show examples of valour during this confrontation,[121] it is the Gothic, not Roman, virtue of fortitude that turns out to strike 'a strong chord' at the

[114] Procop. *De bellis* VI 21, 31–32.

[115] Procop. *De bellis* VI 21, 33.

[116] Procop. *De bellis* VI 21, 39–40.

[117] If already in the first sentence of his work, Herodotus I, pr. declares that he shall depict valiant acts of both Hellenes and barbarians, Procopius is definitely more willing to describe the fortitude of the Romans, and the barbarians in Roman service, than that of the barbarians fighting against the armies of Justinian. The unambiguous instances of the opponent's fortitude (in the narrator's commentary or uttered by the Romans, not the barbarians' boastful affirmation of their own fortitude) all refer only to the Goths (Procop. *De bellis* III 2, 15, VI 12, 24, VI 27, 29, VIII 23, 30, VIII 35, 20), Vandals (Procop. *De bellis* III 18, 6, IV 3, 14) and Persians (Procop. *De bellis* I 7, 31, I 11, 5, I 13, 33, I 18, 22, I 18, 31, II 18, 8, II 29, 35, VIII 8, 26, VIII 11, 41, VIII 12, 2).

[118] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 12, 14–16.

[119] Procop. *De bellis* IV 3, 12–14.

[120] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 35, 20–32.

[121] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 35, 21.

conclusion of Procopius' narrative. For this one time, the historiographer reaches the poetic heights, likening Totila's fortitude with the valour of heroes from ancient stories.[122]

At this point, I believe it is appropriate to draw attention to some surprising circumstance. The moralistic discourse, even if applied for perverse reasons, refers to some commonly accepted truths and values. But if we should take the statements expressed in *De bellis* at face value, the struggle already deprived of any hope or sense of purpose should be considered as an expression of reprehensible audacity rather than genuine fortitude. Certainly, there is no prudence in it, it is not about sacrificing one's own life for any kind of good, except maybe for fame – but here we are confronted with *circulus vitiosus*, because fame, as the prologue to *De bellis* might indicate, springs exactly from the sort of fortitude revealing itself in action. Perhaps then, it is not by accident that almost all the more significant examples of the discourse on this theme, to be found in *De bellis*, are instances of a perverse moralising, where not-so-pleasant contents are hidden under the guise of pretty words, going so far as to justify cowardice and condemning as audacity exactly those choices which were in fact motivated by the greatest fortitude.

In an attempt to show the specific character of motivations guiding Justinian in his conduct, already distant from the values of Antiquity, but still very far from those which the modern world could recognise as fair and just, Hartmut Leppin ends his monograph on this emperor with the words: 'Modernity was far away and the ancient world was gone.'[123] Perhaps also Procopius, the most eminent historiographer of Justinian's reign looked at the arguments of the ancient moral philosophy with some reserve, inclined to observe them, first of all, as a tool of moral hypocrisy. And perhaps also he may have already looked towards the future, where fortitude would be discerned also in some attitudes eluding the ancient categories of virtue; to the time that would come

[122] Procop. *De bellis* VIII 35, 20.

[123] Leppin 2011: 353. 'Die Moderne war weit entfernt und die antike Welt dahin.'

to produce this concept, not so obvious and elusive to logic, which we attempt to contain in the word 'courage'.[124]

Abbreviations

TLG – Thesaurus linguae Graecae. A Digital Library of Greek Literature
TLL – Thesaurus linguae Latinae, Online Database De Gruyter

References

Arnold J.J., 2014, *Theoderic and the Roman Imperial Restoration*, Cambridge, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107294271.

Ayto J., 1990, *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins*, London.

Bassi K., 2003, 'The Semantics of Manliness in Ancient Greece', [in:] *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity*, R.M. Rosen, I. Sluiter (eds), Leiden, pp. 25–58, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047400738_003.

Basso F., Greatrex G., 2017, 'How to Interpret Procopius' Preface in the *Wars*', [in:] *Procopius of Caesarea: Literary and Historical Interpretations*, Ch. Lillington-Martin, E. Turquois (eds), London–New York, pp. 59–72, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315602288-5.

[124] A broader context for this observation is perhaps drawn in Borri 2023, referring to the transformation of the model of manliness in Late Antiquity and the departure from *virtus* of the older aristocracy towards the warrior's savage manliness. Borri's proposition of particular interest is to seek the origin of that transformation not in any influence of barbarian origin, but in ideals rival to those of the Republican period, born in the milieu of the Imperial Roman army during the Principate. Nevertheless, this is still a highly generalised hypothesis with a need for further verification through extensive and more detailed research on relevant source texts. Prospective researchers should be aware of the potentially misleading fact that those texts were written by, or at least for, the adherents of the ancient Classical ideals. It is easy to draw and use such information out of context. For instance, in the above-mentioned example (note 48), the soldiers of the Gallic legions are described as savage beasts in Ammianus (Ammianus XIX 6, 3), but it is in agreement with the author's more broadly conceived archaising convention where the contemporary inhabitants of the Gallic provinces are represented as if they were still those savage barbarians from the period before Caesar's conquest (Ammianus XV 12) – this particular archaism is, of course, intended to satisfy the literary tastes of the definitely conservative-oriented reader, the recipient of Ammianus' work, and it has nothing to do with insisting on the new patterns of courage.

Borri F., 2023, 'Savage Dreams: Militant Masculinity between Antiquity and the Middle Ages', [in:] *Masculinities in Early Medieval Europe: Tradition and Innovation, 450–1050*, F. Borri, C. La Rocca, F. Veronese (eds), Turnhout, pp. 113–125, https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.5.135241.

Brodka D., 2004, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie. Studien zu Prokopios von Kaisareia, Agathias von Myrina und Theophylaktos Simokattes*, Frankfurt am Main.

Brodka D., 2011, 'Prokopios und Malalas über die Schlacht bei Callinicum (19.04.531)', *Classica Cracoviensia* 14, pp. 71–93.

Brodka D., 2015, Prokopiusz z Cezarei, *Historia wojen*, vol. 2: *Wojny z Gotami (ks. V–VIII)*, transl., introd., comm. D. Brodka, Kraków.

Brodka D., 2022, *Prokop von Caesarea*, Hildesheim–Zürich–New York.

Czekalski T., 2014, 'Trwoga na polu bitwy – wybrane aspekty dziewiętnastowiecznych dyskusji o żołnierskim strachu', *Prace Historyczne* 141/4, pp. 863–870, https://doi.org/10.4467/20844069PH.14.043.2941.

Dewing H.B., 1919, Procopius, *History of the Wars*, vol. 3: *Books V–VI.15*, transl. H.B. Dewing, J. Henderson, G.P. Goold (eds), Cambridge–London (reprint 2000).

Dewing H.B., Kaldellis A., 2014, Procopios, *The Wars of Justinian*, transl. H.B. Dewing, revised and modernized, with introduction and notes by A. Kaldellis, Indianapolis–Cambridge.

Greatrex G., 1998, *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532*, Leeds.

Hughes I., 2009, *Belisarius: The Last Roman General*, Barnsley.

Kaldellis A., 2004, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity*, Philadelphia, https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812202410.

Kaldellis A., 2004–2005, 'Classicism, Barbarism and Warfare: Prokopios and the Conservative Reaction to Later Roman Military Policy', *American Journal of Ancient History* 3–4, pp. 189–218.

Klein E., 1971, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*, E. Klein (ed.), Amsterdam–London–New York.

Kruse M., 2017, 'Archery in the Preface to Procopius' *Wars*: A Figured Image of Agonistic Authorship', *Studies in Late Antiquity* 1/4, pp. 381–406, https://doi.org/10.1525/sla.2017.1.4.381.

Leppin H., 2011, *Justinian. Das Christliche Experiment*, Stuttgart.

Liddell H.G., Scott R., 1996, *A Greek-English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement*, H.G. Liddell, R. Scott (eds), Oxford.

Meier M., 2004, 'Zur Funktion der Theodora-Rede in Geschichtswerk Prokops (BP 1,24,33–37)', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 147, pp. 88–104.

Onions C.T., Friedrichsen G.W.S, Burchfield R.W., 1966, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, C.T. Onions, G.W.S. Friedrichsen, R.W. Burchfield (eds), Oxford.

Pazdernik Ch., 2006, 'Xenophon's *Hellenica* in Procopius' *Wars*: Pharnabazus and Belisarius', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 46, pp. 175–206.

Pears D., 1980, 'Courage as a Mean', [in:] *Essays On Aristotle's Ethics*, A.O. Rorty (ed.), Berkeley, pp. 171–187, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520340985-013.

Rawlings L., 1988, 'Caesar's Portrayal of Gauls as Warriors', [in:] *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments*, K. Welch, A. Powell (eds), London, pp. 171–192, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvvn9jz.12.

Różycki Ł., 2021, *Battlefield Emotions in Late Antiquity: A Study of Fear and Motivation in Roman Military Treatises*, Leiden–Boston, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004462557.

Signes Codoñer J., 2003, *Kaiserkritik in Prokops Kriegsgeschichte*, [in:] *Freedom and Its Limits in the Ancient World: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, September 2003*, D. Brodka, J. Janik, S. Sprawski (eds), Kraków, pp. 215–229.

Stachura M., 2022, 'Żołnierze Justyniana w Afryce – okupanci czy wyzwoliciele?', *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy* 4/282, pp. 67–95, https://doi.org/10.32089/WBH.PHW.2022.4(282).0003.

Stachura M., 2024a, 'Niewczesna brawura na polu późnoantycznej bitwy w ocenie Ammiana Marcellina i Prokopiusza z Cezarei', *Prace Historyczne* 151/2 (forthcoming).

Stachura M., 2024b, 'Inspirations from Herodotus Found in Procopius' Account on the Fall of the Vandal Kingdom', [in:] *Proceedings of the 11th International Symposium on Byzantine and Medieval Studies 'Days of Justinian' Skopje 10–12 November 2023* (forthcoming).

Stewart M.E., 2003, *Between Two Worlds: Men's Heroic Conduct in the Writings of Procopius*, San Diego.

Stewart M.E., 2014, 'Contest of Andreia in Procopius' *Gothic Wars*', *Parekbolai* 4, pp. 21–54.

Stewart M.E., 2015, 'The *Andreios* Eunuch-Commander Narses: Sign of Decoupling of Martial Virtues and Masculinity in the Early Byzantine Empire?', *Ceræ* 2, pp. 1–25.

Stewart M.E., 2016, *The Soldier's Life: Martial Virtues and Manly Romanitas in the Early Byzantine Empire*, Leeds.

Stewart M.E., 2017, 'The Danger of the Soft Life: Manly and Unmanly Romans in Procopius's *Gothic Wars*', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 10/2, pp. 473–502, https://doi.org/10.1353/jla.2017.0025.

Stewart M.E., 2020, *Masculinity, Identity, and Power Politics in the Age of Justinian: A Study of Procopius*, Amsterdam, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11hpsx6.

Stewart M.E., 2022, 'To Triumph Forever: Romans and Barbarians in Early Byzantium', [in:] *The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium*, M.E. Stewart, D. Parnell, C. Whately (eds), London–New York, pp. 107–122, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429031373-8.

Van Nuffelen P., 2017, 'The Poetics of Christian History in Late Antiquity', *Studia Patristica* 92, pp. 227–246.

Whately C., 2016, *Battles and Generals: Combat, Culture, and Didacticism in Procopius'* Wars, Leiden–Boston.

Weische A., 1966, *Studien zur politischen Sprache der römischen Republik*, München.

Wirszubski Ch., 1961, '*Audaces*: A Study in Political Phraseology', *Journal of Roman Studies* 51/1–2, pp. 12–22, https://doi.org/10.2307/298831.